MDOC NEWS

Newsletter of Manchester and District Orienteering Club

SEPT 2014

Peter Ross at the foot of the Matterhorn

LAKES-5 WHITE ROSE

SWITZERLAND

CZECH REPUBLIC

NORWAY

JOHN O'GROATS TO LAND'S END

MEMOIRS OF 'SUPERORIENTEER'

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Andrew Gregory

Normally I don't favour the wearing of red O-tops, as it is very annoying when scanning a forest for a control to find that the flash of colour you saw is only another competitor. However I will make an exception for the splendid picture of Peter Ross orienteering at the base of the Matterhorn during the Swiss O-week. It makes a refreshing change from the predominance of green in most of our pictures (forest and our O-kit!).

I have been aware of two environmental factors have affected our orienteering this year, and we should perhaps consider their implications. One has been the unusual thickness of vegetation this spring and summer, due to a particularly mild winter with very few days of frost. Brambles and other forms of undergrowth are usually inhibited by frost and only grow back slowly, but this year they have been much thicker than usual. This was especially noticeable at some of the summer evening events, and also at the British Championships where winning times on many courses were much longer than expected due to undergrowth impeding progress.

The second factor, that was very evident in some of the forests used for the Lakes-5 week, was the number of fallen trees that have been just left to lie on the ground and had to be climbed over or avoided by a long diversion. In managed forests the tendency now is to fell whole blocks of forest at a time and it is clearly not felt to be economical to remove single fallen trees from otherwise good forest. This may be a result of the increasing tendency to subcontract more and more jobs, which has probably affected forestry and led to a change in practice. A related issue is that is now much harder to find out a definite date for planned forestry work, due to the timing of subcontractors' work being unpredictable, so courses have often had to be altered at the last minute.

The AGM of the club will be held on Thursday 16th October at the Ladybrook Hotel in Bramhall. All members are very welcome to attend. After the formal business of reports and election of the officers and committee hot food will be provided (free!). Some years we have had a visiting speaker, and this may still be arranged for this year. In any case there will be the opportunity for an open discussion, so do come and share your thoughts about orienteering in general and about the club, for example:

Do you enjoy urban and sprint events and the night street league, or do you think we should concentrate on the more traditional countryside events?

Are we doing enough to encourage juniors, or do we need a junior squad having special sessions with a coach?

Should we have more social events?

Do we need a printed Newsletter when so much communication is now done online and with smart phones?

How can we encourage more members to become involved in organizing, planning and controlling events?

Finally, many thanks to all contributors for this bumper summer holiday issue!

SOW: The Swiss Six Days

Peter Ross

Eating one's egg and bacon in the Walliserhof Hotel, plumb in the middle of Zermatt, one couldn't help look out the window and notice an intermittent procession of orienteers punching the control across the yard. They looked wet and bedraggled. The rain was heavier than it looked. Certainly made sense to continue with some excellent bread and jam. So I did. Jillyan had another bowl of muesli.

It was still raining, but not too bad actually, when it became our turn to run the Zermatt urban. Half way round Jillyan spotted a cunning route choice involving running down some stairs. A bit of a problem when she discovered a set of steel doors at the top, and a bit of a bloody miracle when they opened automatically for her - as did a similar set of doors at the bottom.

Day two was to be our first taste of the mountains. It was drizzling down in the valley in Zermatt. We took the cable car up high to the assembly area above the clouds. Sadly the start was actually below us and back in the cloud, as indeed was the finish and the rest of the course. I messed about for a long while in said cloud before getting to the first control, Jillyan did much better in what was an excellent complex area. Very grateful for the mint tea and energy bar supplied at download.

The third day was a poser for the organisers: the event planned for the day was to be at a very high altitude. The weather forecast however was dreadful so day three was swapped for day five which was merely at a medium altitude. We had 8.30 ish starts which meant catching the 7.00am cog railway from Zermatt. Come the day it was raining and cold. The obvious thing to do was call in a sickie but we caught the train anyway. It was packed. We broke through one layer of cloud as we got to the top so the rain reduced to drizzle and the visibility became fair to middling. Even better, there was a restaurant serving tea and coffee. We saw hundreds making their way to the start. No escape then. It turned out that the terrain wasn't too complex and the planner was overly kind - the controls appeared on the top of hills and on the friendly side of knolls. Very grateful for the complimentary hibiscus tea and energy bar at the finish all the same.

Crawling back to the hotel we couldn't help but notice that the church bells in Zermatt chimed the first line of "three blind mice" each quarter hour, but they never continued to "see how they run" despite the number of orienteers in town. (Make mental note: remind organisers of Swiss 2016 to sort their clocks out).

Looking at yesterday's results it seemed that the winner spent less time doing all the controls than I lost on my errors. 10 minutes less actually. Something to aim for in the future I guess. And no, I wasn't last.

Rest day, and alleluia it wasn't raining. The Matterhorn was visible and not a cloud in the sky. We took the tunnel train - the whole thing is built at sixty degrees to the vertical - up high. We then took the ski lift higher, and then the gondola up higher still. It was so high that some people ran off the edge at the top and paraglided all the way down to Zermatt. One big danger they faced were the helicopters and their huge dangling buckets of ready mix concrete they were carrying up to the construction sites on the mountainside. It would jolly well hurt bumping into one of them I can tell you.

We walked down rather than flew. It was a garden of alpine flowers. Beautiful. Half way through the afternoon there was thunder and lightning and more rain.

Day four. Raining again. The assembly area could be accessed either by a train and a forty minute walk or the tunnel train followed by two ski lifts and a twenty minute walk. We went for the latter, and arrived with just 10 nail biting minutes to spare. The area was complex and very steep. I nearly bumped into a roaming paramedic with a hi-vis jacket and a first aid box. That would have been a stupid injury. Someone else had to be taken off by helicopter. Perhaps he or she had collided into a first aid man. More likely, judging from the PA which began urging us not to step on a slippy rocks, the poor unfortunate probably stepped on a slippy rock. By then, of course, the only real means of avoiding slippy rocks had flown off to Zermatt A&E with a slippy rock victim.

The event was classed as middle distance but most people finished on empty. Turns out the climb was understated by 30/40 percent, but the rain had cleared up. You can't have everything. Very grateful for the mint tea and energy bar. Especially the energy bar. I had a closer look - it was made by Farmers and was citron flavoured.

There was excitement at the cable car jump-on point on the way back involving a mum with a large carry cot complete with small baby. The cable cars were tiny and by the time the mum manoeuvred the carry cot through the narrow doors it seemed that she hadn't given herself enough time or space to get inside too. A huge queue was forced to contemplate the thought of a tiny infant in its cot being whisked up into the skies all alone. Abandoned, as if some sacrifice to the god of steel cables and immensely powerful 3 phase electric motors. But phew, the mum jumped in just as the doors shut. But then horror returned to the queue as we watched her looking helplessly out the back window as the next logistical heart stopper unfurled, this time starring her elder daughter, a very young sister and a large wheel chair. They made it, and we all shuffled forward as if nothing had happened.

Day five. Now this was the one. The sun was shining and the event, dominated by the Matterhorn, was at an altitude of 3,000 metres. The terrain had only just emerged from beneath a glacier. No plants at all except for a very few startlingly blue gentians, and there were large patches of snow to run through. I had a very nice cafe milch in the restaurant and a terrible run. Jillyan had a Lipton's tea and a flier. Just goes to show.

The sun was still shining but the preferred cable car conked out for the return journey leaving us a choice of (a) an extended cable car route with a two hour

queue or (b) a couple of short cable car rides plus a hike with a 700m drop but no queue. We decide to go for option (b) and a piece of chocolate and an energy bar. What's not to like?

There was a problem with day six. In order to make our flight back to Manchester we would have had to start our run at 8.00am having caught the 6.00am cable car, then trust for an error free run, and a problem free homeward bound cable car. The second option was a nine o'clock breakfast and every chance of making our train connections to Zurich. We chose the breakfast option. And eating one's egg and bacon in the Walliserhof one couldn't help but notice that outside it was raining heavily.

Whatever the weather, and I'm pretty sure that we were unlucky, the event provided every competitor with exciting terrain in daring locations, and the Swiss organisers and helpers worked hard to look after us and make us feel welcome. So, for example, there were always water/first aid stations in the competition area, there was a standby emergency helicopter, a restaurant at assembly, and the equivalent of tea and a biscuit at download. Not bad really. The next SOW will be in 2016 and well worth considering.

LAKES 5 DAYS

Five major events on a variety of different areas, with a variety of weather conditions during the week. Many club members were helping as well as competing, as we had offered to do the computing and central services for the whole week.

Day 1 (Sunday) on Swindale, near Shap, was advertised as fast intricate open fellside. However rain and strong winds made running conditions very difficult. Dan and Karen Parker, ex-MDOC members now living close to the area, had planned excellent courses, but those who did venture out onto the fell were more concerned with survival than appreciating the subtleties of the planning. Many of us were thankful for Jane McCann's invitation to tea to celebrate her birthday afterwards.

Day 2 (Monday) on Simpson Ground was a complete contrast. A beautiful sunny day and a middle distance race in woodland with complex contour features. The high car park gave excellent views in all directions, with very clear visibility after the previous days rain.

Day 3 (Tuesday) was Grizedale Forest – rather thicker and with a substantial number of fallen trees that impeded progress. Again a high level car park had attractive views down onto Elterwater and the surrounding hills. John Britton was the controller for this day, but was not to blame for the fallen trees!

On the Tuesday evening Andy Thornton had organized a countryside score event based on Cartmel. This provided a very good venue, with a good network of footpaths, and several points within the intricate network of streets in the small town. Afterwards we gathered for a meal in one of the pubs in Cartmel (not the Michelin starred L'Enclume!). Fewer people turned up than expected, possibly as rain was predicted, but it didn't in fact arrive. Chris Rostron was 3rd on the 90 minute score.

Vicky Thornton at Simpson Ground *Eddie Speak at Grizedale*
(Photos by ActivNorth)

Wednesday was advertised as a rest day, although an urban event had been arranged in Ulverston in the early evening, and this was well attended. The assembly area and finish were in a large park with a good café, but Ulverston proved to be surprisingly hilly. Matthew Fellbaum won the Short Green course and Liam Corner was second on the Brown course

Day 4 (Thursday) was the tough one, and that was just the climb to the start. Pike O'Blisco is one of the high fells in the Langdale Valley. A good field for parking and assembly gave a forbidding view of the 2km distance and 400m climb required to reach the start. One hour was the recommended time to allow, and certainly one needed at least 10 minutes to recover ones breath before starting. Luckily the day was again fine and sunny, so competitors could appreciate the extensive views and the detailed technical fellside on the courses. Day 5 (Friday) used the limestone pavement of Hampsfell near Grange. A very tricky area with relatively small rock features, and a need to avoid the limestone pavement when possible, as it is very slow to traverse.

We were very pleased to see Edouard Salathé and family from France again, and another ex-member present was Phil Colville, running at Pike O'Blisco.

The overall results are based on the position each day, with the total from the best 4 of the 5 days counting. In the case of a competitor being a planner or controller, such as John Britton controlling Day 3, the best 3 days are taken.

Class	*No.*		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Overall
M10B	*7*	Dominic Wathey	-	-	-	4	6	6
M14A	*36*	James McCann	-	12	15	11	10	12
M16A	*42*	Matthew Fellbaum	2	6	18	2	5	3
M18L	*32*	Alistair Thornton	12	7	5	2	3	5
M20L	*13*	Alex McCann	7	5	7	3	6	6
M21S	*39*	Andrew Stimson	8	8	-	-	-	23
		Ian Farrell	-	16	12	-	-	29
M40L	*37*	Liam Corner	12	21	19	19	14	16
M45S	*35*	David Wathey	-	-	-	-	24	34
M50L	*89*	Steve Dempsey	11	9	8	15	8	8
		Andy Thornton	31	24	26	27	14	18
		Trevor Hindle	17	46	49	31	35	31
		David McCann	40	36	33	28	34	33
		Stephen Fellbaum	45	37	35	29	46	41
		Jim Trueman	10	12	38	-	-	43
		Stephen Bingham	61	-	-	-	-	85=
M55S	*42*	David Dann	-	19	14	23	20	19
M60L	*79*	John Britton	1	-	2	2	3	1
M60S	*42*	Martin Green	-	3	4	-	3	12
		Eddie Speak	14	10	-	11	17	13
M65L	*97*	Peter Ross	44	30	46	35	25	34
		Chris Rostron	48	45	50	44	27	39
		Ian Watson	48	34	45	46	53	44
		Chris Kirkham	47	72	77	-	-	81
		Tony Wagg	-	63	-	82	-	96
M65S	*30*	Geoffrey Millan	9	-	-	-	11	26
M70L	*53*	Peter Lomas	40	-	38	-	37	42
M70S	*13*	David Mawdsley	-	3	1	2	2	2
M75L	*43*	Andrew Gregory	3	6	6	6	14	5
W16A	*28*	Laura Hindle	9	15	10	4	8	7
W18L	*26*	Carolyn Hindle	22	23	18	14	12	18
W45L	*50*	Jane McCann	13	20	12	27	13	13
W50L	*52*	Vicky Thornton	1	5	1	6	9	2
		Hazel Hindle	33	26	34	29	31	31
W50S	*38*	Heather Fellbaum	2	2	3	1	1	2
		Kath Speak	-	6	18	12	-	21
W55L	*64*	Marie Roberts	-	-	38	33	-	55
W60L	*38*	Jillyan Dobby	12	7	6	7	9	7
		Kate Bryant	-	22	13	14	10	15
W65L	*40*	Alsion Doyle	22	22	31	25	20	21
		Julie Brook	-	16	22	22	-	24
W65S	*24*	Jan Ellis	2	7	-	3	5	4
W70L	*24*	Rae Lomas	-	8	-	-	10	19
W75L	*10*	Sue Birkinshaw	4	4	7	-	4	5

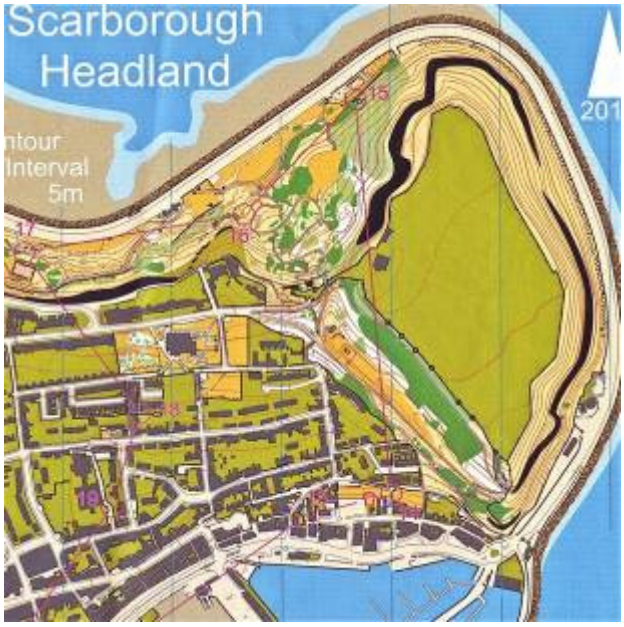
WHITE ROSE 2014

Andrew Gregory

Scarborough was the venue for this year's White Rose weekend. A seaside town instead of an impenetrable forest! We hadn't been for years, but this seemed too good an opportunity to miss. Could we do it all by public transport? An hourly through train from Manchester to Scarborough, a good bus service in the town, and staying in a very central Premier Inn. Why not? It all worked fine, but we were grateful for lifts from Peter & Jillyan and from John & Jen that saved two long walks to the bus stop.

The campsite was on level fields on top of Oliver's Mount, a hill that is sometimes used for motor racing. A large variety of events, started with a sprint round a small campus – quite easy but controls were always the wrong side of a fence or hedge. The main event on the Saturday started on the complex landslip area of South Cliff, with a detailed network of paths, steps and steep slopes and most courses extended into the urban areas. The two longest courses went over the headland with the castle (seen in the background of the picture), with a long leg giving a difficult 'over or round' decision.

Dominic Wathey at the finish



Map of castle headland

A Middle Distance event the next day used the steep wooded slopes surrounding the campsite and a mere at the bottom. The same area was used for the Team Event on the Monday bank holiday. Also provided were Trail-O (Julie Brook was one of the joint winners), Mountain Bike-O, various mazes (done several times by River Edis-Smith and the Wathey/Fenerty family), a quiz (John & Jen Britton were 2nd) and a photo-O.

In the combined results for the two main events, class winners were Dominic Wathey in M10B, Andrew Gregory in M75L and Margaret Gregory in W75S. John Britton was a close second in M60L and Ben Dempsey second in M12A. Irene Crawshaw was third in W70L and Paul Watson third in M40S.

John O'Groats to Lands End

Alice Fellbaum

1000 miles and 13 days after setting off from the very top of Scotland I finally reached Lands End, with 0 punctures, 0 crashes, 0 falls and 0 injuries. I'm still not quite sure how I managed that! I first started playing with the idea of undertaking this challenge back in October when a few friends asked if I would be interested. I have never been much of a cyclist and would always have picked running over a bike ride but I think this made it appeal to me more as I love a challenge and quickly found myself saying yes.

This charity bike ride was set up a few years ago by a Leeds medical student who wanted to raise money for Great Ormond Street as a consequence of his younger sister being a patient there. This annual bike ride has continued to support this extremely worthy cause and this year we also decided to raise money for Leeds Children's Hospital. After Christmas I commenced training and started going on 'proper' bike rides. This mainly consisted of cycling to York (visiting grandparents for tea!) and back. Training never really took off though, with exams, holidays and other priorities getting in the way. Before starting I had probably only cycled just under 60miles in one day so I knew I was going to find it tough.

Unlike most others undertaking this journey, we were cycling from north to south and despite being told this was the 'wrong way' because of the prevailing wind, I didn't quite appreciate how much of a difference it would make. We experienced strong head winds on most days which became very tiring and occasionally even made cycling downhill difficult! However, reaching Lands End made it all worth it, crowds of tourists cheering us on, bright sunshine, and an altogether more celebratory atmosphere was a much better reward than finishing in a fairly dreary John O'Groats. There were also many comments prior to starting that it would all be downhill, and I think this did help psychologically. However I think it is safe to say, it is definitely not all downhill. The further south we got the bigger and steeper the hills seemed to get, making Scotland and the Lake District seem flat in comparison. I'm not going to be in any hurry to cycle in Shropshire or Dartmoor again, far too many steep hills. I also haven't quite mastered unclipping on steep hills, so it was a bit worrying that once I started a hill I had no other option than to get to the top … or fall off. However this did mean that I managed to cycle up every hill without getting off.

We were very lucky to have a support team to transport our kit, cook meals and help out with technical bike issues along the way. They were fellow medics who had completed the ride last year so had prior knowledge and experience of what to expect. We camped every night bar one when we were treated to some luxury in one of the organiser's houses in Bristol. This was following a day of riding nearly 90 miles in a thunderstorm so was a very welcomed break from a wet cramped tent. I think we experienced just about every form of weather possible over the two weeks: blistering heat, hail, thunder and lightning, severe downpours, fog, strong head winds, the only thing missing was snow. The rain definitely made it harder to keep spirits up and carry on cycling at times. Some days were the kind of days you would look outside and not even contemplate going for a bike ride but we knew we had to keep going. The temptation to get in the bus was also very hard to resist at times but I'm proud to say no one gave in.

I could tell that my fitness improved over the two weeks. I started off finding 60 miles hard work, probably mentally as much as anything. I had never been on a bike for so many hours before. However by the end I was happily cycling 70 miles and it didn't seem so far anymore. I am also happy to report back that there was practically zero chaffing and my cycling shorts and chamois cream did the trick. The most painful thing was my back. Rather stupidly on the second to last day someone mentioned that my handlebars were lower than they should be and I realised they hadn't been put back correctly after being moved to be transported up in the van. So I had spent 11 days cycling leant over far more than I should have been, not the best idea in the world.

Alice (3rd from right) at Lands End

Looking back now I can definitely say it was one of the best experiences of my life so far. It was probably one of the first things where every day I questioned whether I could actually get to the end. However I got to cycle through some beautiful parts of the country, a personal favourite was going through Aviemore and riding past forests I had orienteered in. I have also been overwhelmed by the support everyone has given me, before and during the ride. People would come up to us during our lunch breaks and to say well done and donate money and when we were getting close to Lands End people slowed down in their cars to give us encouragement.

I would like to say a massive thank you to everyone in MDOC who supported me, through sponsorship and offering lots of advice. This definitely helped when I was going through rough patches and all I wanted to do was get off my bike. I look forward to seeing how the money is going to help the two very worthwhile charities and already know how much it is appreciated.

NWJS TOUR TO NORWAY AUG 15-25 2014

Ali and Vicky Thornton

From a coaches perspective I have to say this is possibly one of the best organised and planned training tours I have ever been lucky enough to go on. The trio: **Sue Butterfield** the NWJS Fund Raiser Co-ordinator and bookings officer eg flights etc, **Sue Roome** Chief Organiser of: Juniors, Coaches/Drivers, Control Hangers, Cook eg Duty Rotas etc and **Richard Tiley** Lead Coach & Tour Itinerary , Planner & Map Provider etc. had all done such a FANTASTIC job in advance of the Tour. Once on tour Sue R quickly whipped the juniors into shape with their daily tasks while Richard ensured that everyone benefitted from the X2 training sessions most days on a selection of complex terrain + varied competitions and fun events – lake swimming jumping/diving, marsh football and briefing & games in the evenings.

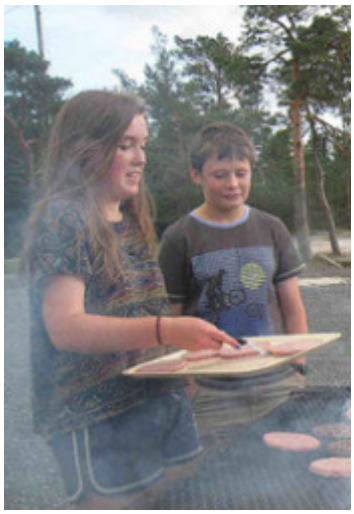
We had 5 juniors from MDOC: Carolyn & Laura Hindle, Ali T, Matt F and James McCann with 28 juniors in total from across the NW clubs, 9 coaches and one cook – a special thanks to Nadine Newby for feeding us all. Richard allocated coaches to the different year groups and provided us with a wealth of different training exercises to go at – stars, loops, compass, pick, trains, line etc, which became progressively harder to end on 'windows' and 'corridors' for the older ones. Also included in the action packed 10 days was a Norwegian 5.7k forest race, an urban/forest sprint race, the tour champs, a local event and an evening race on a military area complete with rocky features & 'trenches' for added route choice interest. MDOC juniors held their own in all of the races with their fitness, speed, strength and stamina improving daily.

The only wildlife I spotted were a few deer, a moose (which was "awesome") and a bee, which must have been briefed for the 'distraction test' since it flew up Ali's O suit trouser leg on his arrival at the cairn during the 'windows' exercise and stung him on the thigh (which was not "awesome") and interrupted 'control flow'.

On day 1 the juniors were asked to let their coaches know what they felt they needed to work on - this may have been anything at all eg ability to hold a straight bearing, route choice selection (to match their strengths), aiming off, quick relocation, planning ahead, etc and then specific exercises were selected to practice & improve skills and techniques. Also with the available staff ratio there was plenty of shadowing opportunities so there was no slacking from the coaches.

There were plenty of stories to be told by the end and I know what happens on tour stays on tour....however.... 'one pair of O socks & O bottoms Ali', 'no sleeping bags Thorntons', 'dancing queen Carolyn', 'cereal boy Matt', 'dive bomber and coolest swinger around James' and 'keep a low profile (except when armed with a hose) Laura'....all spring to mind."

Over to Ali: The thing I improved the most was my simplification techniques and map to ground interpretation. This helped to improve my speed over the long legs at the events we went to. I found the swimming, diving boards and BBQ the most fun. It was all brilliant experience for me and I would like to say thank you for this opportunity and the support I had from the coaches & MDOC. It is sad that this will be my last NWJS tour in Norway - unless I can get on one in the future as a control hanger and/or assistant coach.



Vicky's tips:

- The map is your friend – look at it! - Especially when getting started + lots of quick glances while running – 'traffic light' in the correct places.
- Doing nothing on route? – you're doing it wrong!....There is always something to do to maintain full concentration throughout....'C.A.R.' Control-Attack point-Route, check description, fold your map, plan ahead, foot placement etc etc.
- Keep focused by keeping busy
- Aim for 'best performance' to keep calm (ie not to win) and maintain 'flow' throughout.

FUND RAISING FOR NORWAY 2016 HAS STARTED!

World University Orienteering Championships – WUOC2014 Tour

Ian Watson

WUOC2014 took place in the Czech Republic in the second week of August. The event centre was in Olomouc (pronounced roughly as Olomoats) which is fairly close to where Kevin (my son for those who don't know him) now lives. Reports of the main event can be found elsewhere but I took part in the public event, on the same areas, which was called the WUOC2014 Tour. This comprised a sprint event followed by four middle distance events, the last of which was a chasing start. The sprint was stand alone but the other four were decided on cumulative time. There were about 400 competitors in total, the majority were Czech but with a handful of various other nationalities who had presumably come with WUOC competitors. There were only two UK competitors (Kevin has gone native and runs with Radioklub Blansko), myself and Nick Barrable who was doing the commentary for WUOC. The sprint was partly urban and partly parkland. It took place in Kromeriz (pronounced roughly as Kromyejeej – the moral here is not to ask for verbal directions in the Czech Republic, particularly if the letters have accents – which I have omitted). Fortunately I had the services of a native speaker (Kevin's wife Vera) so all was well with directions – well initially anyway.

I took part in the oldest class in the sprint event which was H65 and the week started well. I managed 12.25 for 1.7k and finished in 2nd place (out of 12) 1.29 down on the winner. As a result I ended up on the podium. It has to be admitted that the opposition didn't look particularly strong and my hopes were high for the rest of the week.

The weather for the sprint had been warm and dry. Unfortunately the weather broke for the rest of the week heralding the coldest wettest August in the Czech Republic in living memory. Temperatures were no higher than those in the UK. Day 1 of the forest events took place in a very hilly area (I'll give up on names from now on) with a map which had a lot of green. Here is where the excuses start. My interpretation of the map seemed at odds with the mapper and I ended up fighting through several areas of head high brambles when I was expecting 'walk'. I also had to give up on my glasses about half way round because of the rain. There were 9 competitors in H65 and I finished in 6th, 18 mins down on the winner, not a good start for my total time.

Day 2 was on a flatter area and the map looked less green. I was obviously keen to make amends. I haven't mentioned so far that the control descriptions were available in the assembly area. I arrived at the start which was 400m. from assembly and 2 minutes before my start time realised that I had forgotten to pick them up. It was a timed start and I didn't know what would happen if I missed it. However, I had this uneasy feeling that I hadn't noticed descriptions on the map for the previous events, but I started and they weren't! I couldn't afford to make a mistake otherwise the last two days would be meaningless. I decided that I needed to navigate very defensively but, as long as I didn't

make mistakes, I might not lose too much time. However, on unfamiliar terrain, with mapping that I still hadn't really come to terms with, this proved difficult. There were two controls that I ran away from only to return later, one of them twice. On the map it was clearly a stream source, on the ground it was a dry re-entrant. On the third visit, having relocated from diverse directions, I decided to punch it. That control alone lost me 9 minutes. In the end I finished 8th out of 9, 20 mins. behind the same winner as the sprint and Day 1. Things were not going well but at least I hadn't mispunched and was still vaguely competitive although 8th out of 9 overall.

Day 3 I got right and finished 2nd, 4 minutes down on the same winner, but things weren't looking too good for the chasing start. I was now in 6th place overall, 2 minutes off 5th place but 9 minutes off 4th. The course was only 3.4k so making up significant time was going to be difficult. Inevitably I started too fast and made two 2 minute errors in the first three controls but then I settled down. However, I hadn't seen anyone who looked like an H65 until, approaching the last control, I spotted him about 20 yds ahead. I put in a desperate sprint and when I passed him on the run in, it was too late for him to respond. So, I finished 5th out of 9 overall, a bit disappointing given the good start to the week. Nick won H40 with two first places and two seconds.

As you may have gathered, competition in the older age groups was not that strong. In the forest events there was an H70 class with 8 competitors an H75 with 2. The oldest women's class was D60. In contrast there were over 80 H21 and over 30 D21 competitors, and there were approximately 80 of each Hs and Ds in the 18 and under categories with lots more juniors on novice courses. Orienteering seems a much younger sport than in the UK. The overall atmosphere was informal and friendly, helped by the beer tent but not by the weather. Although nice forests, the terrain in that part of the Czech Republic didn't seem particularly technical compared to other Czech maps I have seen. However it was enjoyable and clearly challenging enough for me.

The next three weeks were spent helping to entertain my four grandchildren, two sets of twins aged 2 and 4. Now that was a real challenge!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Earlier this year South Ribble OC announced that they were dropping the name of South Ribble and just calling themselves: 'SROC – Red Rose Orienteers'. This obviously led to the question of what do the letters SROC now stand for?

I asked for suggestions and received a few (not particularly complimentary), such as:

Some **R**ather **O**dd **C**haracters
Slow **R**unners **O**ff **C**ourse
Scarlet **R**unners **O**rienteering **C**lub

The best suggestion was from Karen and Dan Parker, now living in the Lake District:

South of ***R****eal* **O**rienteering **C**ountry

NOT LOST BUT SENT BEFORE

Forty Years (give or take) of Orienteering (Part One)

by Graham Phythian

It was Easter 1976, when I was trying to get fit for my contribution to Sale Harriers' attempt on the 100x1 mile world relay record (no, really, I've got the photos to prove it) and a couple of flatmates gave me a lift down to Alderley Edge. They went for a romantic stroll, and my intention was to have a go at some *fartlek* training in the woods. For different reasons, we'd have preferred an uncrowded forest, but to our surprise the place was heaving with people carrying maps. They were either standing still looking absorbed, or darting around with a pensive look, quickly disappearing through the trees. It was the sort of swarming yet purposeful activity that demanded your attention, and stimulated a desire to find out more. I remember copying down – and subsequently losing – Frank Rose's contact details from the side of a camper van.

I'd heard of orienteering before, but had no precise idea of what it entailed. (At least I wouldn't have displayed the ignorance of that Lakeland landowner, who when asked permission to stage an orienteering event in his forest, refused, saying he would have nothing to do with that black magic stuff.) I'd done a couple of cross-country point-to-points while training at Sale, and thought that was it. The real deal, of course, was far richer and more intriguing than running your chosen route to a familiar landmark on an area you already knew.

In 1976 I was teaching in a Manchester High School, and in those all-too-few years in your professional career when you have spare time at weekends and energy to burn, I was looking for an extra-curricular activity I could organise. The other two possibilities, chess and cross-country/athletics, were already being ably taken care of by other teachers. Orienteering fit the bill: the school was big enough and the kids were keen enough for the sport, after an initial period of uncertainty, to take off big time. I accompanied four pupils to Greenfield in October 1976, and under the watchful eye of Pete Conway, jogging past (and missing) the first control on the yellow course. Pete politely called after us and pointed to the banner, lurking in a ditch by the side of the path. We'd made the error of approach, common amongst beginners, of concentrating on running rather than keeping our eyes open.

Other events followed. There were a couple of lean months, then the sport's popularity snowballed. It soon became clear that it was counter-productive for me to try and mix my own performance with that of the pupils. In other words, I had to choose in advance in which events I wanted to compete, and in which ones my attention would be given to the beginners and improvers. Trying to combine the two was the worst of both worlds, as each area of concern would detract from the other. That sounds obvious once it's been said, but overwhelmed as I was by this gripping new sport (well, it was new to me) it took a while for the penny to drop.

One problem was sorting out transport to the more distant events. For the closer ones we took the bus, and an occasional source of amusement was the expression on the face of the Sunday morning bus driver, as his expected quiet and uncrowded journey morphed into a weekday rush hour feel as thirty-odd muffled and bobby-hatted kids and a teacher with a rucksack piled on. For further afield we used the school

minibus. Since driving a car is a skill which has always been beyond me, various methods were used to inveigle members of staff to do the honours. Looking back, I'm amazed at my cheek, and what I got away with. (Incidentally this persuasive skill which I apparently possess was wittily satirised in a poem composed and read out by Rae Lomas at a club social in – I think – 1983. Nice one, Rae, but Del Boy I'm not.)

If the minibus wasn't available, there was always the St. Bede's College bus. A single-decker that looked as if it had done service in the First World War, it nonetheless broke down but rarely, and was a godsend to a non-driver with a bunch of young orienteers. I used to sell a sob story to Ray Parkinson, who of course wasn't fooled, but who with typical genial generosity welcomed the dozen or so extra passengers, refusing to hear about any sort of payment.

I say "a dozen", but the numbers varied. What happened was something along the lines of the following:

Tuesday a.m.: announcement in school assembly that there would be an orienteering event in such-and-such a park that coming Sunday (the day later changed to Saturday, but the point I'm making remains the same). All those interested to attend a meeting in Mr. Phythian's room that morning break. Typically 50-60 pupils turned up, which was obviously an unmanageable number. I waited until every chair, desk and most of the available knees had a seated occupant, then simply told everyone that, though I was pleased with the response, I couldn't possibly look after this many. I announced that there would be a further meeting at morning break the next day, then dismissed them.

Wednesday a.m.: the number would now be about 30. Still too many, but at least I could now spend the break telling them what orienteering was all about. I could spot the really interested ones by the look on their face, and finished by telling them that the final details (what to wear, what to bring, where to meet, etc.,) would be given out at the third and final meeting on Thursday.

Thursday a.m.: down to about 15 now, which was about right. Allowing for eleventh-hour drop-outs, the expected number of 10-12 (although the record was 35) – all obviously keen as mustard – would turn up on the Saturday or Sunday. From these I knew I would eventually get two or three Manchester Schools' Champions, or at least medallists in the top three in the City.

Local events of thirty or forty years ago would look pretty primitive to those brought up on modern luxuries of pre-printed, bagged maps and dibbers. A list of things to bring on the day would include a red biro, safety pins, and transparent polythene bag (how many covers of vinyl LPs were pilfered for this purpose?) In those days copying down your course onto the map counted as part of the time taken, but obviously it was in your interest not to rush things here. I remember one lad, thinking he was saving time, marking his course not on the map itself, but on the polythene covering, not realising that the covering would shift, meaning he was looking for non-existent control sites. It took us a long time to find him. Thankfully it was a summer event.

Howlers weren't confined to my pupils. Once in a Lake District event at Arnside Knott, a complex but scenic South Lakes area with a sea view, I consulted my cheapo compass whose needle hadn't stopped swinging from the movement of my running, and in fact for a crucial second or two was actually pointing *south*. Without waiting for it to right itself, I set off from a minor summit 180° in the wrong direction, and eventually

spent a depressing amount of time wondering what Morecambe Bay was doing in the east.

There were no dibbers then, but you recorded your visit to a control by punching your control card, which was usually attached to your front or sleeve – which explains the need for safety pins. Each punch, a red gadget that looked like a small stapler dangling from the control post, left a different pattern of holes in the required square of your card. It was theoretically possible to pull a fast one by taking the controls out of order (of course Big Brother computer won't allow you to do that these days) but nobody seemed to want to take this sneaky kind of short cut.

Eventually orienteering enjoyed quite a cult following in the school. I devised a performance league, in which pupils were awarded points: 100 if they won, or for each minute they finished behind the winner, one point was deducted. Bonus points were awarded for harder courses. It was a system which was eventually taken up by Manchester schools for their own performance league, back in the days when Manchester schools actually did some extra-curricular competitive orienteering.

The people to thank for that initial launch of schools orienteering in the late seventies are Roy Jennings (at the time at Reddish Vale High), Pete Lomas at Dialstone then Offerton, Pete Conway and Ray Parkinson at St. Bede's, Chris Williams at Marple Dale, and your humble narrator at Wright Robinson High School, now a Sports Academy.

Prior to editing and producing the MDOC Newsletter in the early eighties (who remembers SUPERORIENTEER?) I decided to bring out an orienteering magazine for the school team. It contained news, theoretical navigational puzzles, attempts at jokes, details of upcoming events, and the occasional photo. I bashed it out on my old typewriter, and the cost of photocopying, thanks to the interest shown by the Headmaster Glyn Young, was borne by the school. I have still have copies of most of the issues.

Two of my protégés were later to become MDOC Newsletter editors: Tony Greenhalgh from Wright Robinson, and Phil Winskill from Newall Green. More of Phil later, but talking of Tony reminds me of one particularly close finish to the school performance league, I think in 1981-2. Throughout the season Tony was neck and neck with fellow sixth former Paul Melia, with never more than a handful of points separating them. It all came down to the last event of the year at Gibraltar Mill on the Tame Valley. Tony was poised to take the championship until he botched the penultimate control on

his course. A slower-moving Paul Melia overtook him, won the league by about five points, and Tony was left gnashing his teeth in frustration for many years to come. (I know, because he told me, some twenty years later!) For what it's worth, Tony, you were the better orienteer, and your enthusiasm outlasted Paul's by several decades.

My own results, despite a plodding nightmare in the 1977 British Championships at Cannock Chase, went through a bit of a purple patch over the next five or six years. I won't bore you with the details, but those were the years when I was still pretty fit (annual Piccadilly Marathons saw to that) and my navigational skills had been honed by constant practice. I spent most of one summer holiday hitting the permanent courses up and down the country. Those I recall are Primrose Hill in Cheshire, Hampstead Heath, Hainault Forest in Chigwell, East London, and a small offshoot of Cannock Chase whose name escapes me. The following season I reached National Silver standard, and Blue in the North-West award scheme.

(To be continued)

BRITISH SPRINT AND MIDDLE DISTANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

This year the Sprint Championships were on the open campus of the University of Keele, and the Middle Distance Championships on Cannock Chase near Rugeley.

In the Sprints a Prologue race in the morning determined whether you were in the A, B or even C final. The finals were run in the afternoon on a different part of the campus. The overall positions were then only taken from those in the A final for each age group. Vicky Thornton was 2nd in W50, Matthew Fellbaum 3rd in M16 and Sue Birkinshaw 3rd in W75. Just missing podium places were John Britton 4th in M60, Andrew Gregory 4th in M75, Laura Hindle 5th in W16 and Rae Lomas 5th in W70.

The Middle Distance Championships were run on a complex area with many of the spurs and re-entrants that are found on Cannock Chase, and other detailed contour features. There was a significant amount of bracken and brambles that impeded progress. The courses consisted of a succession of relatively short legs, so continuous concentration was necessary. Course winners from the club were Matthew Fellbaum on M16 and Andrew Gregory on M75. Others in the prizes were John Britton second by a few seconds on M60, and Vicky Thornton (W50), Rae Lomas (W70) and Sue Birkinshaw (W75) all achieved third place. Dave Mawdsley just missed out with fourth on M70 and Irene Crawshaw was fifth on W70.

MDOC AUTUMN EVENTS

Sat	13 Sept	Chorlton Water Park, Manchester
Sat	4 Oct	Wythenshawe Park, Manchester
Sat	8 Nov	Woodbank Park, Stockport
Sat	29 Nov	Bruntwood Park, Cheadle

OTHER EVENTS

Sat	20 Sep	PFO Introductory event, Lee Quarry, Bacup, Rossendale
Sat	27 Sep	PFO Introductory event, Carl Hey, Haslingden
Sun	28 Sep	SELOC level B event, Clowbridge near Burnley
Sat	4 Oct	PFO Autumn event, Aiken Wood, Barley
Sun	5 Oct	DEE level B event, Formby Dunes
Sat	11 Oct	SROC Autumn series, Eaves Wood, Silverdale
Sun	12 Oct	BL Cumbrian Galoppen, The Beacon, Penrith
Sat	25 Oct	SELOC Park series, Nuttall Park, Bury
Sun	2 Nov	LOC Cumbrian Galoppen, Tarn Hows, Coniston

North West Night League

Sat	8 Nov	DEE, Arrowe Park, Birkinhead
Sat	22 Nov	SROC, Williamson Park, Lancaster
Sat	29 Nov	SELOC, Beacon Country Park, Skelmersdale
Sat	6 Dec	PFO, Towneley Park & Colliery, Burnley
Sat	10 Jan	LOC, Summerhouse Knott, Newby Bridge
Sat	17 or 24 Jan	*(provisional)* MDOC, Irwell Valley, Prestwich

Night Street League

Tues	28 Oct	Didsbury	Thur	22 Jan	Disley
Thur	13 Nov	Macclesfield	Tues	3 Feb	Poynton
Tues	25 Nov	Marple Bridge	Thur	19 Feb	Wilmslow
Thur	11 Dec	Altrincham (area)	Thur	5 Mar	Altrincham (area)
Tues	6 Jan	Hazel Grove			

Wednesday Runs

17 Sep	Rostron	High Lane	8 Oct	Richard Evans	Romiley
24 Sep	McCann	Hazel Grove	15 Oct	Roberts	Bramhall
1 Oct	Simon Mawdsley Macclesfield		22 Oct	Gregory	Didsbury

Committee Meetings

7:30 Ladybrook Hotel, Bramhall — Mon 13 Oct, Mon 10 Nov, Mon 8 Dec

MDOC Annual General Meeting

Thursday 16th October 2014

7.00 for 7.30 p.m.

The Ladybrook Hotel
Fir Road, Bramhall, SK7 2NP

Hot food will be provided

LAKES-5 PIKE O'BLISCO

Wathey family *Start with Sue Birkinshaw and Liam Corner (Photo: ActivNorth)*

SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIPS PRIZEGIVING

John Britton, Steve Fellbaum and Matthew Fellbaum *Sue Birkinshaw*

WHITE ROSE PRIZEGIVING

Dominic Wathey (1st M10B) *Ben Dempsey (1st team) & Dominic Wathey (2nd team)*