



MDOC NEWS



Newsletter of Manchester and District Orienteering Club

SEPTEMBER 2008



JUNIORS WIN PETER PALMER RELAYS!

**SUMMER TOURS & EVENTS
NEW EVENT STRUCTURE
HOW TO USE PERMANENT COURSES
RIVERSIDE PARK**

MDOC JUNIORS WIN PETER PALMER RELAYS

Dave McCann

The Peter Palmer Memorial Trophy was held in Middleton Park near Leeds and included the traditional elements of a night with very little sleep, an early morning (5 a.m.) and less than perfect weather; the torrential rain over night luckily held off for the race itself but did make conditions underfoot difficult. Last year we were 7th, but this year we went several better and came first, winning the Peter Palmer Trophy. 33 teams from across England and Wales gathered to take part, including many of the most talented juniors in the country. We entered two teams.



MDOC1 were fourth at the end of the first leg following a solid run from Tom Fellbaum and we were always in contention for the overall lead, gaining it after legs 2 and 4. Elliot Malkin, our final runner set off in third, just over a minute down on good runners from SARUM and EBOR. He then had a run of 6.4 km and three visits to a spectator control. On the first and second visits he was still third and on

the third visit was second but still a minute down on the leader. Another loop in the woods and a final big push up the hill saw him emerge at the final control around 20m ahead, maintaining his lead until the finish. A total distance of over a half marathon was covered and the margin of 8 seconds demonstrates just how close the result was. Our second team also ran well, coming a very respectable 20th.

Well done to ALL runners on BOTH teams, you all did really well. Thanks also to Vicky Thornton for coming along as a helper and provider of insight into how the courses might be planned - invaluable. We both learnt things we can use next year to defend the trophy.



*Photos by Dave McCann:
Above: The Start, with Tom
Fellbaum in the centre
the Spectator Control*

Elliott Malkin just ahead at

Cover picture: Our winning team, L to R, Rebecca Humphreys, Tom Fellbaum, Elliot Malkin, Roger Bryant, Alice Fellbaum, Alex McCann, Catriona Paton, Alana Birtwhistle

The two teams, in running order were:

MDOC 1
Tom Fellbaum
Roger Bryant
Alice Fellbaum
Alex McCann
Rebecca Humphreys
Catriona Paton, Alana Birtwistle
Elliot Malkin

MDOC 2
Stephanie Bryant
Mike Clowes
Rebecca Devine
William Humphreys
Alistair Thornton
Tom McCann
Sean Malkin

Chairman's Chunter

John Britton

First up ... the best news for, more or less, EVER. A truly brilliant result for Dave McCann and the Magnificent Fifteen, at the PP's.

The Committee has already discussed the Financial Plan for 2009. One reason for having such a thing is to save valuable Committee time when the subject owner should really be empowered to forge ahead as long as they stay within budget. Another is it is a jolly good idea full stop. Ah, but ... what should it say? Before you can start, you have to ask the fundamental question of ... what is the point of all our money, and in whose direction should it be directed?

My personal priority list is not exactly radical, but is driven from the point of view of delivering best service to our active orienteering members. I think we need to keep everything as fresh and up-to-date as we can, and that means being pro-active about event stuff and especially maps. Members have generated the funds; members should see constant improvement and innovation.

1. Equipment ... We should budget for anything that Stores, SI and Printing need to keep us able to do the events we want to do, to highest possible standards.

2. Maps ... We should budget to acquire one significant new asset per year. All major/Regional event maps (e.g. Twin Peak) should be updated professionally as normal business. Local maps can be updated tactically wherever possible.

You could take lots of other more radical positions:

E.g. if you think (not without reason) that falling numbers are the biggest concern, you might want to put something aimed at new members as top of the list. We know we're pretty good at orienteering stuff; we are manifestly pretty poor at doing non-orienteering stuff like advertising, pitching to the right local targets in the right local ways.

Maybe bring in education-background professionals for driving schools links and potential family members.

Maybe bring in local-authority-background professionals for driving community involvement, links with health initiatives, etc.

Maybe bring in people to run many more simple local events on our amazing number of local areas with POC maps than we could ever do with volunteers.

Maybe set up a base at Woodbank Park, and run training sessions alongside Stockport Harriers.

Another significant event coming soon to an AGM near you ... Ed Nicholas, BOF Director (NW), presenting the new Event Structure which is apparently less than 4 months away. You could take several dim views of the absence of mandate, tardiness of information, general bonkers-ness of some of what we have seen, etc. But it would be a good idea if we all understood what was happening, what it is trying to achieve, and how we can make the best of it for ourselves.

The AGM also provides the annual opportunity for new blood to join the Committee. This doesn't have to be intimidating or onerous, but it is essential that we have an active, representative Committee. Volunteers please.

And finally, this will be my last Chairman's Chunter. I'm very happy to step aside and resume my seat in the stands. I would like to say a sincere thank-you to all the Committee members for their constant and forgiving support during my stint. It has been a significant learning experience and a real privilege.

NEWS

Congratulations to Thomas and Alice Fellbaum who have both been selected for the 2008-2009 Start Squad. This is a reflection of their excellent results both in the UK and abroad during the last two years. Tom has also been selected for the BOF team in the European Youth Championships in October.

Unfortunately the SELOC regional event at Naden Valley on Sun 12th Oct is cancelled due to access problems.

MDOC Saturday Morning events this autumn will comprise a 45 minute score event. You have 45 minutes to visit as many controls as you can. These will be at:

Longford Park, Stretford	Saturday 4 October
Wythenshawe Park	Saturday 25 October
Sale Water Park	Saturday 22 November

The Greater Manchester Schools Score Championships will have a similar format and will be held on Saturday 13 December at Torkington Park, Hazel Grove.

The club's next major event will be a Regional event at Crowden in Longendale on Sunday 9 November. This is a tough area, bisected by the Pennine Way, and populated by mountain hares! There will be courses for all ages and abilities. Look out for requests to help, but you should be able to have a run as well.

The club AGM will be held at 7.00 for 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 2nd October at the Nursery Inn, Heaton Norris Stockport.

Ed Nicholas, the BOF Director with responsibility for North West Clubs, will talk about the new event structure

NEW EVENT STRUCTURE 2009

Sue Birkinshaw & Andrew Gregory

(from notes taken by Sue at the Major Events Conference September 6-7th 2008)

Major changes will take place to the structure of orienteering events in 2009. At present it is felt that there are too many poor quality Regional Events, too few Local and District Events, and too few Middle distance and Sprint Races. A consultation document was published in September 2007, and a BOF Conference took place at the end of October 2007. BOF Council has now agreed a new events structure, and Events Committee has produced a list of recommendations.

There will be three **levels** of event: **National**, **Regional** and **Local**.

National events will include JK, British Championships and Area Championships (Southern, Midland, Northern and probably Scottish, Welsh and NI). These will continue to have age group courses.

Regional events are as at present, except that courses will be colour coded, using a wider range of colours than at present. There is a statement that age class competition should be permitted within the colour structure, but the details of how this will be done are not yet clear.

Local events include all other events, and may have only a limited range of colours.

In addition there will be three different **formats** of event: **Long**, **Middle** and **Sprint**. These are intended to be quite different formats, not just differing in course length.

Long will be the normal courses that we are familiar with.

Middle distance will be in technical, largely forested areas, with winning times of about 30 minutes. The courses should require continuous concentration, with no long legs, plenty of changes of direction and mistakes should be relatively costly.

Sprint events would mainly be in parks or urban areas, possibly including some fast-run forest, with a winning time of 12 to 15 minutes. The map scale would typically be 1:4000. They would have relatively easy controls, but difficult route choice requiring good mental alertness and quick decision-making.

There will be British Championships in all three disciplines from next year.

Ed Nichols from BOF will be speaking about these changes at our Annual General Meeting in October, and should be able to answer questions and to clarify some of the details.

The implications for us as a club are considerable. Will regional events continue to be so popular? Will branded events, such as "Twin Peak" still attract so many competitors? It is hoped the new structure will be more attractive to newcomers, but will it continue to satisfy the established orienteers? Should we start to put on Middle distance and Sprint events? One idea is to add a Sprint class to our Saturday morning events in the Spring. There is plenty to think about in quite a short time before it all starts. Do come to the AGM to hear the full details.

TEACHING ORIENTEERING AT BRAMHALL PARK

Roger Bryant

From Monday the 7th of July to Friday the 11th of July, a number of MDOC members spent their afternoons teaching kids from Bramhall to orienteer as part of Bramhall High School's annual activities week. As we soon found out, it definitely wasn't going to be easy.

Every day we had to teach a different group of 30 rowdy year 7s, who had never tried orienteering before in their lives, the basics of orienteering. On Monday, Dave Bryant introduced Tom and I as two of the top junior orienteers in the country and this seemed to have the desired effect on the kids as they immediately respected us.

This was a great help for us in the first exercise at 12 noon, where each one of us had to take the kids on a half-hour map-walk, where we tried to encourage them to keep their maps the right way round and to learn what symbols on the map meant and what features on the ground looked like on the map. This was difficult as some kids were better than others and needed more attention.

Then the kids had their lunch break and during this time, we put out a number of controls with codes and punches on, which were to be used for the exercises after lunch. At 1, the kids were rounded up by their teachers and taken down to the start point of the exercises, where each team of three kids was given a map for a particular exercise and they were all set off at the same time, on either the star exercise (getting one control code, then coming back to the start, then going to the next etc.) or one of the two loops. Unfortunately, most of them thought they were going the same way as everyone else and they were lost before they'd started.

Tom and I were perched at various points around the park, ready to help confused people and they really seemed to need the help. However, as people finished their first exercise and moved on to their second, they gained in confidence and started to work as a team. Some teams finished all three exercises in under half an hour and were really happy with what they'd achieved. Others took more like an hour, but they still enjoyed their day. One boy said, "Well it's better than school" and I guess that shows everyone got at least something positive out of the day.

As the week went on, we got more experienced and as a result, taught the kids better, which meant they did better at the exercises in the afternoon. By the end of the week, some teams were completing all three exercises in around 20 minutes, which was great! Not only had we taught the kids something which they could remember, we'd enjoyed ourselves as helpers and learned how to teach orienteering effectively to large numbers of people.

The helpers during the week were me, Dave Bryant, Tom Fellbaum, Annie Price, Heather Fellbaum, Beren Airstone and Vicky Thornton (who did most of the organisation). We all enjoyed the week and hopefully we will be able to do a similar thing with Bramhall High School next year!

RECENT RESULTS

Some results from recent regional and other events are listed (mainly club members achieving a position in the top 10 on their course (L course for seniors))

Stockport Town Centre Race

June 22

<u>M Open</u>	<u>M60+</u>	<u>W Open</u>	<u>M/W16-</u>
Roger Bryant 9	Chris Rostron	3 Jane McCann	5 William Preece 4
Thomas Fellbaum 17	Andrew Gregory	4 <u>M/W16+</u>	John Dempsey 6
<u>M45+</u>	Dave Mawdsley	5 Alex McCann	2 Kristian Birtwistle 9
Steve Dempsey 2	Ian Watson	6 Alice Fellbaum	3 Alannah Birtwistle 10
Stephen Fellbaum 18	Grahame Crawshaw	9 Sean Malkin	4 Romane Salathé 11
Tony Mason 28	Ted Smith	11	

Great Tower

July 20

JM5S Alex McCann	1	M60L Peter Ross	6	W50L Marie Roberts	6
JM5L Roger Bryant	3	Tony Wagg	9	W55L Jillyan Dobby	1
M40L David McCann	3	M70L Andrew Gregory	1		

Croeso 2008 Aug 3-9

Overall

Individual days

M16A Roger Bryant	3	8	4	3	2	3	4
M18L Elliot Malkin	4	4	2	2	-	-	6
M40L Edouard Salathé	9	13	7	10	5	16	9
M60L Cliff Etherden	15	-	-	8	23	3	10
M75L Frank Rose	11	9	16	10	6	13	12
W12A Romane Salathé	7	8	7	8	6	4	4
W16A Stephanie Bryant	5	6	13	4	3	11	7

White Rose

August 23 & 24

(Langdale & Barns Cliff)

JM2 Hector Salathé	6	M40L Edouard Salathé	1	JW3 Romane Salathé	5
Jason Salathé	7	M45L Simon Proud	10	W40L Heather Fellbaum	6
JM3 Matthew Fellbaum	9	M75L Frank Rose	6	W55L Jillyan Dobby	1
M21L Stephen Lang	6	JW2 Clemence Thuliot	5	W70L Sue Birkinshaw	2

Ilkley Moor

September 14

JM1 James McCann	1	JW3 Carolyn Hindle	6	W40L Vicky Thornton	1
JM3 Matthew Fellbaum	5	JW5S Alice Fellbaum	3	Heather Fellbaum	4
Tom McCann	9	M40L Jim Trueman	9	Jane McCann	6
JM4 Alex McCann	2	M45L Dave McCann	8	W45L Elaine Weston	7
JM5L Thomas Fellbaum	4	M60L Cliff Etherden	6	W55L Jillyan Dobby	10
Roger Bryant	10	M65L Dave Mawdsley	6	W70L Sue Birkinshaw	5
JW2 Laura Hindle	7	M75L Frank Rose	4		

Swindale North

September 21

JM1 James McCann	1	M40L Dave McCann	4	W40L Heather Fellbaum	2
JM3 Alistair Thornton	1	M45L Andy Thornton	3	Vicky Thornton	3
Matthew Fellbaum	6	Dan Parker	4	W55L Jillyan Dobby	7
JM5M Sean Malkin	3	M55L John Britton	1	W60L Jan Ellis	6
JM5L Elliot Malkin	1	M60L Cliff Etherden	10	Irene Crawshaw	7
M21L Steve Lang	7	M65L Dave Mawdsley	9	W65L Rae Lomas	3
M40L Jim Trueman	3	W40L Karen Parker	1	W70L Sue Birkinshaw	4

GREATER MANCHESTER ORIENTEERING ACTIVITIES

As I see it from the Chair – September 2008 *Beryl Blackhall*

It has been another busy two months since the last newsletter, when maps were the theme, something that has continued throughout the summer to produce many new maps. The following are now available from GMOA for your enjoyment:

Queens Park, Bolton – SD707094 – area details in last newsletter.

Leverhulme Park, Bolton – SD739085 – area details in last newsletter.

Moss Bank Park, Bolton – SD693109 – area details in last newsletter.

Burrs Country Park, Bury – SD799127 – the map has been updated and extended, plus the courses all re-planned. You are never far from water on this site as the River Irwell twists through the area, which also includes ponds and sections of canal. These produce paths at a variety of levels so the navigation is not quite as simple as a first glance at the map might imply. Standard courses up to Orange level, including one accessible to wheelchairs. There is an outdoor activity centre on site and you may see steam trains on the East Lancs Railway passing through the site.

Chesham Woods with Clarence Park, Bury – SD812123 - the map and courses have been updated, following changes in the area. This is a mix of linked small woodlands, recreation areas and a small, smart, formal park. Standard courses of Yellow and Orange level, including one accessible to wheelchairs and tackling all the controls as a Score is an interesting option.

Nuttall Park, Ramsbottom – SD795164 - the map has been updated, with a small extension and the courses all re-planned. Another site by the East Lancs Railway, with the River Irwell winding through it. There is a contrast in areas between well-manicured recreation areas and wild woodland that has taken over an old industrial site. Standard courses up to Orange level.

Blackleach Country Park, Walkden – SD737038 - the map has been updated and courses at Yellow and Orange standard added to the original Star and Loop exercises. A contrast in areas between that well trimmed around the old reservoir and the larger block of the wilder nature reserve, through which both courses pass. A Visitor Centre on site.

Philips Park, Prestwich – SD797042 – the map has been partially updated and courses revised to accommodate a change of Start, due to alteration of parking arrangements. Courses range from White to Red, which at 6.0km is quite a serious challenge.

Bowlee Community Park – SD850072 - the map has been updated due to extensive alterations in the park. Only just finished but should soon be available for purchase. This is a flat area with a good path network, giving courses of White, Yellow and Orange standard. There is also a Trail O course at this site, using a separate map, which has yet to be updated, but is fine to use, as the trail has not been changed.

VOLUNTEERS are the bedrock of GMOA, as they are of every orienteering club. It is not just the more familiar names on committee, or others with responsibilities for special sections, but many of you members out there in the parks, who act as Post Checkers.

GMOA run a Maintenance Contract, which at present 30 parks have taken out with us. For an annual fee each course is checked, with undergrowth trimmed where required, by a club member, at least 3 times a year, who then reports any problems to us so that we can take further action. If new posts are required these are made and installed by Jim Nightingale; if required post letters and codes are cleaned and/or repainted; if the map becomes outdated an update is undertaken; if necessary courses are re-planned. All this is included in the fee, if payment is continuous year by year. Those courses that are self-maintained need to purchase replacement posts from us and pay for map and course updates.

A big, THANK YOU, to all of you out there who check out those 30 courses and send in your report forms to Grahame Crawshaw, who co-ordinates it all, and to the park concerned. As far as we know we run a unique system, which helps to keep our courses in good order. It is the envy of other clubs.

VACANCIES – At present we have vacancies for Post Checkers at two courses:

Moss Bank Park, Bolton

Philips Park, Prestwich

If you could undertake this task, at either park, please let me know a.s.a.p.
– 01942 254835.

SHORT OF EVENTS THIS SUMMER?

FEELING THE BITE OF FUEL PRICES?

BE GREEN AND TRAIN LOCAL

USE A GMOA POC

Here are a few ideas for starters. In all of them you are out there, training with a map in hand, which is what orienteering is all about.

As I write this it is summer, so remember it is when Nettles, Thistles, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed are at their best – or worst as far as orienteering is concerned! Plan your routes to avoid such areas.

Suggested Courses

You will usually find these on the reverse of each map. What is on offer depends on the size, physical terrain and technical difficulty of the area concerned. Choose a course suitable to your ability.

Challenge Score

If the courses are too short and easy for you, try a full site Challenge Score. Visit every control site but in any order. Time yourself, go home and look at your route to see if there was a better way, then return another day and see if you can better your time.

You are warned that attempting this on areas such as Haigh Country Park, Lyme Park and Dove Stone is quite a serious undertaking.

Alphabetical Score

Are you super fit and your selected area is rather small? Then Challenge Score might not be enough training. Try Alphabetical Score, where you must visit the controls in alphabetical order. Research your area well before you start, as most courses do not have a continuous alphabet. Then at some sites there are double letter controls, such as FF or VT, to consider. Decide how you are going to include these, either in with the main alphabet or after the last single letter? Now list your running order along one border of your map. This preparation is still orienteering training, as you are reading and thinking about maps and routes.

Attempting this at Bruntwood, Reddish Vale or Queens Park, Bolton will certainly give you a busy session on a small area. Try it at Crompton Moor and it will be a physically demanding session.

This is the first of what I hope will be a series of short articles, on ways to train and have fun on your local POC's.

Beryl Blackhall

MDOC A3 PRINTER

I am looking to hand over the A3 printer to another person after Christmas please. I have a map run for SELOC (Naden) coming up, and presumably the MDOC regional event (Crowden), but I am just too busy at work these days to have any time free during term and that tends to be when these events are. I am sure that there are lots of eager young members (or possibly retired!) out there who would jump at the chance. I can prepare a "job description", and would be willing to act as adviser in the first few months after handing over.

I have done the club's A3 printing for 8 years now – time for somebody else to take a turn please.

Phil Colville

6 JOURS DE L'AVEYRON

Several club members travelled to the French 6-day event at Aveyron in the south of France. The terrain was very challenging with a complex pattern of rocks and vegetation, and maps that were accurate but difficult to read. In spite of the problems, some very good results were obtained by club members.

Overall position:

H12	Alistair Thornton	12	H65	Dave Mawdsley	12
H45	Andy Thornton	19	D45	Vicky Thornton	14
H55	Ian Gilliver	46	D50	Marie Roberts	26
H60	Ian Watson	18	D55	Jillyan Dobby	7
	Peter Ross	22	D70	Sue Birkinshaw	1
	Trevor Roberts	23			

NORTHWEST JUNIOR SQUAD TOUR TO NORWAY

1. *by Roger Bryant*

For ten days this August, around 40 members of the North-west Junior Orienteering Squad and 10 coaches flew to Oslo in Norway and then on to Fredrikstad in the Ostfold region of Norway. The tour would be very useful for all of us to improve our Orienteering technique as the maps in Norway are some of the toughest in the world. Personally, I hoped the tour would also improve my fitness as many of the areas in Norway are physically challenging as well. But most of all, we all wanted to have a great time.

We spent the first day using the map of the area around the hut we were staying in to familiarise ourselves with the type of areas Norway had to offer. We were all immediately struck by how different the maps are from the ones in England. For example, boulders that would almost certainly have been big enough to be marked on a map in England were completely ignored on the Norwegian map; only the biggest boulders are mapped.

The remainder of that day was spent swimming in a fjord, which was great fun as the water was not only surprisingly warm there but there were also some ten-metre diving boards to jump in from. We weren't just swimming for fun though - the swimming was very beneficial after a day of running as it soothed our muscles and helped prevent stiffness and injury the next day.

Evenings were spent relaxing with friends at the hut, which was a local Orienteering/Ski Club's meeting place. We had also been split into small groups before the tour and there was a rota for mealtimes, each group having breakfast, lunch and dinner duties once in the ten days. The quality of food was very good and the portions were ample, making sure we were energetic the next day.

While we were in Norway, we competed in three competitions, firstly the Ostfold Middle Distance Championships on the first weekend, then the next weekend, the Ostfold Long Distance Championships and the Ostfold Relay Championships. In the first race, I was fairly confident at the start, less so after finding the first checkpoint, which took me fourteen minutes when it should have been more like three. Fortunately, I had a good run for the rest of the short course and managed to finish in 45 minutes. However, I was left ruing my early mistake, which had cost me over 10 minutes on the Norwegian winner, who won in 28 minutes. I noticed that even without my big mistake, I still would have lost to the winner by six or seven minutes, which alerted me to the fact that I was not as fit as I should have been. This left me with a lot to think about in training, especially due to the fact that I had been beaten by some of my teammates

- some of them even won prizes.

For the rest of the week, I used the training days to try and improve on things I hadn't done so well in the race, such as compass-bearings and route-choice. We swam most days after training, so we began to get into a nice routine of things, showering and using the sauna when we got back to the hut and hanging up wet Orienteering clothes to dry overnight.

I was alerted to the state of my fitness when, on one evening, we went to Fredrikstad Skiklubb's training event, which involved running up a long, rocky hill with a map until reaching a certain point and then using the map to complete a short course back down to the bottom again. On reaching the bottom, we picked up another map and repeated the sequence, except this course was different. In all, there were six courses. Although I managed them all, I was left exhausted at the end, which proved to me how much I needed to improve my stamina.



A group of North West Juniors in a typical area of Norwegian forest

One day, after training, we went into Fredrikstad to do a relay event with some of the local juniors. This was very good fun as we were paired up randomly and then had to run two courses each in a relay-type format. I had some very good runs in this event and my team did very well to come fourth up against some much older teams.

On the Wednesday in the middle of the first week, we visited Oslo to do some shopping and visit the Oslo Art Museum, which contained famous paintings such as 'The Scream'. After that, we drove up into the foothills near Oslo to take part in a special race with the local club. The race was unique in the fact that everyone started at once, everyone had the same map, every checkpoint was either in a marsh or pond and that random bits of the course were drawn by hand in a completely different scale to the printed map. This was highly confusing but it all made for one of the most exciting races I have ever taken part in. There were scrums to register at each point and many people got stuck in the marshes and had to be rescued. I managed to do very well and was quite near the front of the race when, very near the end, I forgot about the change in scale and ran completely off the map and was lost for over an hour. But when I returned, drenched, from the forest I was happy that I'd even found my way back onto the map, which I thought was quite an achievement.

The next main event for us was the Tour Championships, which some of the coaches had organised. We had raced in a short prologue the day before, to decide who started when. The faster you finished the prologue, the later you got to start

the tour champs, which was seen as an advantage. Out of all the boys on Tour, I managed to come fifth on the easy prologue. But the real race was to be completely different (after the race we were told it was probably the hardest area we'd ever run on due to the fact there was hardly a single path on the map). However, I had honed my technique since our first race and I managed to have a good run with very few mistakes and although I finished in around 74 minutes for the seven-kilometre course, I managed to come first, which I was very happy about, seeing as there had been boys two years older than me on the same course.

I actually had my best run two days later in the Ostfold Long Championships, in which I came fifth out of 21 people, behind two Norwegian boys and two Great Britain runners from my squad, who had brilliant runs. But this performance, a week after my first race, showed how much my fitness and technique had improved in such a short time. I was very pleased to win a towel for this performance to add to my running top I had won in the tour champs.

In the relays, my team did not do so well against the quality Norwegian opposition, but one of our boys' teams came third in our age group and one of our girls' teams came a magnificent second in their class.



A game of marsh football

On that, the last evening, we celebrated our success by every group performing in a last choir standing-type competition, judged by some coaches and also a dragon's den-orienteeing-style competition. These were both hilarious contests, especially some of the inventions, which included knee-protectors (made from a pillow), a whistle that attracted moose and a headband which when put over your eyes directed you like a tom-tom to your checkpoint.

Then every junior was presented with an 'alternative award'. These included 'the lost property award' for most property lost, 'the ladies' man award' and 'the loudest scream award'. I was awarded 'the dark horse award' for my great successes after starting the tour so badly on the first checkpoint of the first race. It was a fitting end to a great tour for me and I can't wait for the next one!

2. by Stephanie Bryant

After a flight to Oslo and a long drive through a mysterious new country, we found ourselves at the Skyhytter (pronounced something like *shee-hutter*), the central meeting point of Fredrikstad Skiklub, on the outskirts of Fredrikstad.

The subsequent morning we were all excited by the prospect of orienteering in a country that seemed so different from England, so after breakfast we split into groups and did a few fun but simple training exercises in the seemingly endless forests around the Skyhytter to try to get to grips with differences between Norwegian and British terrain. Some of the more interesting differences included the fact that in Norway many of the trails marked on the map are predominantly used during the winter as ski runs and therefore the path is marked by paint splodges on trees, and is not so clear on the ground, whereas in Britain paths tend to be fairly obvious at ground level. Consequently it took a while for us to get used to searching for paths at head height!

Later on in the evening, after a swim in one of the nearby fjords, we paired up to do a fun clock relay, which involved the first team member running to the first control point with an object, the second team member would then run to control 1 and move the object to control 2 and so on.

The next day everyone was very nervous because there was a middle distance competition happening locally. It was to be our first real chance to test our ability. I managed to complete the 3.5km course without making any large mistakes or getting hopelessly lost so I did very well compared to most of the girls in my age group, and even beat some of the boys who are usually much faster than the girls, because they had made more mistakes.

Over the following days we trained in a variety of Norwegian forests, each one giving us different things to think about, such as identifying the many different rock features that occur in Norway, such as the differences between a crag, a large boulder, a knoll (which in Britain tends to be a small earthy mound but in Norway appears to be a large rocky bump) or even the forest floor which can often consist of bare rock interspersed with a mixture of bilberry bushes and moss.

The highlight of the week was a trip to Oslo, followed by an evening 'training' event held by a club local to Oslo, which involved crossing an uncrossable marsh in which you could sink up to your shoulders quite easily, as well as swimming into a lake to reach one of the control points. We all agreed afterwards that it was one of the most fun and interesting events any of us had ever taken part in, but I think the coaches were very much relieved once they had made sure that everyone had managed to survive in the gruelling and deep marshes. Luckily we had all been too wet to notice the rain which made the day the wettest day of the entire trip.

On Friday, we held our tour championships at a very technical area, which caused quite a large number of people difficulties, in locating the control points. However the large majority of people finished, which before our week of training many of us would have found almost impossible or at least highly daunting.

Saturday held another orienteering competition, this time the long-distance course, and although a few people (myself included) were forced to retire disappointed due to an injury on the rough and physically demanding terrain, many members of the squad finished high up the results boards, a very impressive feat when competing against fast and confident Norwegians on their home soil.

Finally Sunday included a relay competition against many different Norwegian Clubs. A number of our 3 people teams again finished high up in the places, some even ending up on the podium: a remarkable achievement.

All in all, I feel that absolutely everyone benefitted greatly from the 10 days. We all gained confidence in our strange surroundings, as well as building up our fitness levels and the ability to cope with difficult terrain. I believe that a number of us will have been inspired to maintain these fitness levels after taking part in physical training sessions run by nearby orienteering clubs in Norway. I hope that my new confidence will transfer itself to competing in Britain with greater success, because, with confidence and high fitness levels, speed can be built up to ensure success in orienteering competitions.



We all found the 10 days a highly useful insight into the way the Norwegians can produce such successful orienteers, and I think that we have all been inspired by the enthusiasm of the Norwegians, and I would like to thank all the people who made this trip possible, including the coaches, everybody involved in the



fundraising, particularly those organisations who helped us with our funds and finally, the Norwegians who welcomed us graciously into their country and allowed us to join in with their training sessions and competitions.

I hope this report has helped people to understand what our trip involved.

Roger and Stephanie Bryant demonstrate different ways of crossing an 'uncrossable' marsh!

Photos by Martyn Roome of SROC.

RIVERSIDE PARK

The first in the series of autumn Saturday morning events was held at Riverside Park Macclesfield on September 13th. This was very efficiently organised by Richard Preese with a good team of helpers from the club. The elongated area is bisected both by the river Bollin and by the main Macclesfield to Stockport railway line. This creates problems in planning a normal course, but is fine for the 45 minute score event that was planned.



One innovation was a special competition for “kid & parent”, going out separately but adding their scores together at the end. There was successful local publicity, and a good number of parents competed, some with children already competent at orienteering, and others who went round with younger children.

Some of the comments heard after completing the course:

“I was hauled down by my son. I can’t find the motivation to just run, this is great, enjoyable, exhilarating.” *(parent)*



“Fun! I found them. It’s good to do sport!” *(child)*

“Nice! I ran through the puddles and fell over.” *(child)*

“Something for all the family!” *(parent)*