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WAFFLE

July 2011

Chairman's Column

I'm writing this column in the middle of the SW Relay season. These days, I'm afraid that I'm a liability in a conventional relay team: you don't see many first leg runners setting forth carrying a stick as I did today at the Adams Avery event at Dyrham Park.

But not all the events in the season are conventional relays. Some are handicap affairs, where the time allowance for my age makes life a little fairer for a team with me running in it; but not much. Better by far are the unconventional relays.

The Harris relay format, much used by the army, with competitors all running a short spine course of compulsory controls and sharing out the collection of the remaining controls between team members, works very well. It also means my fellow team members can go for a long run collecting lots of controls, whilst I potter round the spine and perhaps collect just a couple of the other controls in passing.

Towards the end of this month, we've got our own WIM speciality, the Furrow Hoppers relay, which not only operates with an age handicap, but also has multiple short courses which have to be run by several team members. Get the organisation right and slow team members like me can safely be hidden in the middle of the action. Get it wrong and the fastest runner can be left, waiting fuming for the final map to become available. This year's relay at Blandford Camp promises to be a very interesting and entertaining mix of terrain and course type.

Other than relays, traditional orienteering events tend to be a bit thin on the ground during the summer months, as access restrictions to our areas during various breeding seasons prevent us from using them.

2.

There is still plenty going on. The monthly club sessions have proved popular, and the weekly joint WIM/WSX club evenings based on Parkstone Grammar School have built up a regular following including a number of novices who are gaining the skills necessary before they move onto more taxing orienteering out in the forest.

British Orienteering is keen for this sort of thing to be developed and only this week, the new Regional Development Plan for the West landed in my email in box, as BOF looks to increase participation in our sport. Its implications will be discussed by the committee and we will report back in the next issue of Waffle.

At the same time, we were informed that our Clubmark accreditation has been renewed for another four years. WIM was one of the earliest clubs to achieve this and we are grateful to Lynn Branford who has again piloted this through its various stages.

Another way of increasing participation in orienteering has been in our work in local schools. For example Adrian Mitchell, with the help of other club members, has for a number of years run an inter-school competition between the middle schools feeding Purbeck School at Wareham. A couple of weeks ago we organised the final of that competition at Upton Country Park.

Di & John Tilsley do a great deal of work like this in schools around Dorchester & Weymouth, and also in the last year or so, in areas of North Dorset around Sturminster, working with the local Schools Sports Partnership. Unfortunately the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, in his wisdom, has seen fit to axe these partnerships, just as the work they were doing to enhance school sport was seen to be bearing fruit.

However, every cloud has a silver lining. Recently Di was informed that this schools partnership, as it wound up its affairs, had decided to spend some of its remaining budget on the purchase of its own SI kit, rather than having to borrow ours for its events, as it has done for the last few years.

As a club, we have been asked to maintain this kit for them and to help provide coaching and guidance in its use. We will also be able to use the kit for use at our own events. Our schools SI kits are heavily used and, in particular, our stock of dibbers, are beginning to show signs of wear and tear, so this is extremely good news and the club is extremely grateful to Di for facilitating this.

Dick Keighley

Save trees – and save the Club money!

The cost of orienteering is steadily going up, and this process could accelerate in the next few years. Forestry Commission charges are increasing (and any sales of FC land could lead to new owners charging more), and British Orienteering levies may also rise as various kinds of funding to national sporting organisations are cut. So event entry fees are likely to increase.

Your Club Committee would like to counterbalance that by ensuring that, if at all possible, club membership fees rise as little as possible. Some of the main expenditures paid from membership income by the Club at present are postage on our magazine, Waffle, and the SWOA magazine, SINS, and Waffle printing costs. There would be considerable financial benefit if we could reduce, or even eliminate, these costs.

We will therefore be putting a proposal to the AGM that in future the default position for Waffle will be that this will be distributed electronically. When a new edition of Waffle is available, members will be sent an email containing a link which will take them directly to that edition on the website. (You can of course then print it for yourself if you wish, but we are confident that most will read it on-line). Those of you who have looked at the website version currently available will know that the quality of the reproduction is much better than the circulated printed version, and includes colour photos. Any member who does not have internet access may specifically opt to continue to receive a printed copy through the post.

Although the club does not print SINS, we do pay for its postal distribution to our members –so we will be looking to follow the same procedure in respect of this. Taken together, these two measures should reduce the club's costs and also SWOA's printing costs – as well of course as reducing the amount of paper needed!

If you have any questions about this in advance of the AGM, please don't hesitate to contact your committee members.

Martin Cross

Furrow Hoppers Relay – July 24th Blandford Camp

Please don't forget that we need to know who is coming. Whether you are coming as a competitor, helper or spectator we need to know so that we can pass names to the Army security authorities. You will need to show photo ID and a copy of the event details to gain entry to the camp. Entries before Monday July 18th need to be sent to Dick Keighley at entries@wimborne-orienteers.org.uk. If you want help in making up a team please contact Trevor Bridle 01258-454811. For any other general enquiries the organiser is Chris Branford 01258- 453716

4.

WARNING: Titanium can seriously damage your Orienteering.....!

John & I decided it was about time we took the step to actually receive some personal orienteering coaching to try to improve our often mediocre results! This was quite a novel experience for us (being coached) as we spend a lot of time coaching other people, but always at a rather basic level. Neither of us had ever been on the receiving end of specific orienteering coaching! We had heard good things about the personal coaching courses run by Colin Dickson & Dave Rollins and at last, in early June, we were able to attend one of their weekends.

What an eye opener!! To start, the course was superbly well organised, with exercises logically running in sequence & location, and we moved seamlessly from one exercise to the next. Colin & Dave are inspirational coaches, with the right mix of technical input, well planned exercises really making you think and learn new skills, and all mixed with humour!

Saturday (one of the hottest days of the year...) covered starts, control flow (forward planning), compass confidence, concentration and aiming off & finished with a course to put all these skills together. Sunday (fortunately cooler, but with a little rain) covered route choice, relocation, a contour-only course and again finished off with a "proper" course. All of these skills we vaguely knew about, but doing them successfully was another matter. Take "control flow" for example. A lot of the time I do work out, when approaching a control, which way I will exit from it, to stop me from waiting by the control frantically planning my next leg, all the time giving the location of the control away to anyone in the area! However, what I'd never even thought about, let alone attempted, was looking ahead to the next leg, on an "easy" section of the previous leg, to plan my route! I know I'm a woman, but multi-tasking like that appears to be beyond me, unless I'm on a very straight forward bit of terrain.... Hopefully, with practice, it will get easier. Concentration is another area of mine which I'm very bad at, particularly when I get tired. Out in the forest at the next event, if you hear me shouting "Map" it's my new technique of "re-focussing" my attention.... We did a brilliant exercise with 14 of us in a very small, very technical area, with masses of controls, doing lots of different courses. Staying focussed on your course & your controls and ignoring everyone else was really challenging, particularly with an added competitive element to it! I did well on my first 2 mini-courses but tiredness set in & near the end of my 3rd course, lost concentration for just a few seconds & I followed someone else..... who was going to a different control.....! Damn!! Took me minutes to relocate (we didn't do that exercise until Sunday!) and I got very cross with myself, which didn't help at all. Afterwards, we were told to use a "key" word to say to yourself to blot out any distractions.

The "brown" only contour exercise was one I really wasn't looking forward to. You are given a map with only the brown features on it (plus in this case the blue water features, for safety reasons!) You must focus on land shape to get around the course, and you need to be able to translate/visualise what you see on the map, to what you see on the ground. Fortunately we were given a full map, to keep hidden away & only use in emergencies and yes I did have to use it once!

I think the main advantage of a coaching course like this is that you can focus on & practice the skills, without the complication of competition! Would you ever consider using a competitive event to have a go at practising a particular skill? You would have to be strong to say to yourself "my result today is not important"! I have heard of the odd club

member doing this & perhaps it is something occasionally we all should try. When else can you practice a skill?

But my biggest revelation was when we were doing the compass exercise. Now I've been using a compass since my early teens, when I used to navigate my way across Dartmoor bogs most weekends. I have taught compass work in many different forms over the years, so this was one area I was confident in. I do use a baseplate compass, not a thumb compass. We were given a map that had nothing on it apart from the control circles, start & finish, grid lines and control description box! All you had to do was straight compass bearings from this "map" and judge the distance you had to travel. So there I was, standing at the start, took the bearing from the map & set the compass to see the direction I was going in. However, when I compared it to others in the group, they were heading off about 10° to the left of where my compass was aiming. I checked again, but no it was still sending me right. I called over Colin. He checked I had it in front of me (apparently a lot of people hold their compass to one side), did not have a mobile phone close by, no keys in my pocket, & other various things & agreed my compass seemed to be "off". Had I stored it next to metal? Had I noticed any inaccuracies before? Well, I had.... When we had come back from our first trip to New Zealand well over 7 years ago, I had an uneasy feeling that my compass was different. Was it because I'd been to the southern hemisphere & used my compass there? I asked various people who had all pooh-poohed the idea, so I accepted it was me! Since then I have always had a tendency to end up to the right on a long compass leg, but over the years have adapted by deliberately aiming a bit to the left, checking more frequently on intermediate features & adjusting my track as I go along. I just thought it was my poor compass work! So I tried to do the same through this exercise and I was hopeless, completely & utterly hopeless. I had nothing else on the map to readjust by! Fortunately I had a complete map & had to look at it on almost every leg to find the control. When I finally finished, Colin agreed that perhaps I should buy a new compass, although he felt that my NZ trip shouldn't have affected it!

So for the next exercise using a compass I borrowed a super-duper brand new compass belonging to Dave! This was going to make all the difference! I was going to be unstoppable now.....I took a bearing off the map, went to place it flat on my right hand and..... noticed as I moved it across my hand, the needle moved - deviated quite a long way..... I took it off & it deviated back..... Tried this several times & it happened every time. When the compass was flat on my right hand, it was again about 10° off. And all of a sudden, it dawned on me..... directly underneath where I always hold my compass is a lovely titanium eternity ring, given to me about 7½ years ago by my wonderful husband. It was this that was affecting my compass! Colin & Dave were gobsmacked!! Now, for the geeks amongst you, having "googled" titanium, I can tell you it is not ferromagnetic (ie a magnet won't stick to it), but paramagnetic (can affect magnetic fields eg the needle of a compass). The solution? Remove my eternity ring & wear it on my left hand when I am orienteering - and I don't have to buy a new compass!! (PS Gold rings will not affect your compass.)

So watch out..... I will be unstoppable now.....!! If you get the chance to go on a coaching course, jump at the chance, or at least make the most of the coaching sessions put on by WIM/WSX club coaches. It was the best £40 I've spent for a long time! If you want to know more, chat to John or I at any event.

Di Tilsley

6.

The French Family Finland Frolic

This was due to be a longer article but Andy got accosted by John Warren at the MTBO event in Moors Valley and agreed to give a more detailed talk at the AGM about our trip to Finland, so this is just a snippet to either whet your appetite or warn you off from attending!!

Many people thought we were crazy taking a 12 week old baby to Finland in order to take part in what must be the largest organised orienteering relay event in the world.

Every year at mid-summer the Finns hold the Jukola and the Venla. The Jukola is a seven man (or woman) relay race starting at 22.55 on Saturday night, and the Venla is a four woman relay race that started at 14.10 on the Saturday afternoon.

For those who don't know the Jukola has been run every year since 1949, and the Venla since 1978. In the last two decades the combined races have attracted between 2500 and 3000 teams. So with nearly 15,000 competitors and 25,000 spectators, traders and helpers it all leads to an orienteering event on a grand scale.

There is an inordinate amount of catering, toilets in numerous locations (marked by high flying coloured balloons) to reduce queues and a full set up of hot showers and saunas which are much needed after your run.



Campsite in Early Morning

The event is also very family orientated, with string courses, children's activities, special family queues for the food and baby facilities. To accommodate all the competitors and supporters, large areas of land are made available for private camping along with hundreds of army tents, which are available to foreign teams, which can sleep up to 16 people, at a squeeze.



Venla Relay Mass Start

In 2010 Karen took part in the Venla Relay whilst Andy spectated and looked after Grace, however he felt he had missed out and the urge to participate in such a momentous event, meant he was duly entered in the "London Lords" team for the 2011 event. Due to the timings of the two races it was easy to look after the children with Andy having to get them ready for bed whilst Karen was running the last 'long' leg. Karen didn't have the best of runs, but having only given birth to Alice 12 weeks before that can be excused, however the orienteering was very much enjoyed. For Karen the main aim was to enjoy the whole experience and the second was to get back before the cut-off time for disqualification, which was achieved with nearly two hours to spare.

Andy was running the fifth leg in the Jukola, which meant that he would at least go out in the day light, he was also lucky not to go out in the later mass start and for his first event in Finland had a good run.



Jukola Relay Mass Start

All in all we had a very enjoyable time at an amazing event. If you can wait until the AGM we will give you a fuller appreciation of the whole event and the sheer scale of it.

Karen and Andrew French

*PS The WIM AGM will be
at
Canford School
on
Friday October 7th*

8.

Route Gadget

One of the most interesting parts of orienteering is talking to fellow competitors about how they got on, what route they chose, where was time gained or lost etc. The buzz round results display at a large event is often one of the highlights of the day but now you can go further by using Route Gadget.

If you haven't already looked, there is a link on the WIM website to all of our events and similar facilities are available on most other club and major event websites.

Route Gadget uses course map files and competitor split times to show, using small animated coloured blocks, each competitor's time between controls in straight lines. What you can do is to modify the animation by drawing the actual route that you took on the map. By selecting other people's routes you can then compare times and route choices between controls. It isn't quite as personal as chatting, but it's more instructive, and you can choose who to compare yourself with and re-run the race as many times as you like.

Coast Path Relay – Saturday September 3rd

After a gap of a year WIM have entered a team to compete in the Coast Path Relay from Lyme Regis to Studland (Sandbanks Ferry). The run was originated by John Walmsley (WIM) and it gives an opportunity for members with a wide range of running skills to enjoy a day on the spectacular Dorset Jurassic Coast. Teams have numbered from single figures to over 40 with a support team ensuring that there are runners in the right place to take over on time. The race, which aims to raise funds for the SW Junior Squad, starts at 8am on the Devon/Dorset border and leading teams arrive at Studland ferry around 4pm. After that most teams go off for a club meal at Studland.

The total length is 104k with about 3000m of climb. The leg lengths can be decided by each club with the longest distances being run by the fittest members who are able to cover sections which may not be easily reached by car. In between these longer legs a number of runners (there is no limit) can pass the baton quickly uphill none of them needing to run more than 100m or so. These 'Sprint' teams play an important role in support of the 'Long Distance' runners who are therefore able to start at the top of hills.

The logistics of having everyone at the right place at the right time, ready for a handover, is complex and over the years the winners have been greatly helped by these practicalities as much as sheer speed of running.

Chris Branford 01258 – 453716 chris@branford.eclipse.co.uk has already recruited some willing volunteers, but more will be most welcome, in fact the more the merrier. You don't need to be either a fast runner or a long distance specialist to be a valued member of the team and a team of drivers to transport runners is equally important.

Recent Achievements

Following the successes of Kirsty Staunton in becoming British Middle Distance Champion in Sussex and British Long Distance W55 Champion in Yorkshire, and Nikki Crawford's Championships in W70 at both the JK and BOC, there are further excellent results to record.

Trevor Bridle won the M65 class in the British Long Distance MTBO Championships at Longleat, a new lease of life on his bike after knee trouble stopped him running.

Sue Hands and Nikki Crawford have just won the 'Wansfell' class (female veterans) at the Saunders Mountain Marathon in the central Lake District. We are told that all the courses were longer and tougher than in previous years with prodigious amounts of climb. Their winning margin of almost 19mins in a two day event is quite remarkable

Many congratulations to two of our best juniors, Becky Whittingham and Fraser Smith> They were selected to represent the SW Juniors at the Junior Inter Regional Champs held over the weekend of July 2nd/3rd in the Lake District. Each day was demanding technically, the Individual was on sand dunes near Barrow in Furness whilst the Relay was in tough hilly forest near Newby Bridge. Both Becky and Fraser coped well with the difficulties especially considering that they are both young in their age group. The SW Junior team was placed 5th out of 10 and everyone gained a great deal from the experience. We wish them well in the future.



10.

O Tops

The club now has a good stock of WIM O tops, a whole range of sizes and a mixture of long and short sleeves.

The new tops cost £32 each whether they have long or short sleeves.

We also have the last few 'oddments' to clear at £10 each, such as two of the original white mesh tops with horizontal bands of maroon and gold, both are very large. There is also a short sleeved top with a rather pale yellow and no club name.

They will be brought to every local event for you to try. Look out for a light blue VW Golf HG11 PFJ.

Trouble at Moors Valley??

You may have seen reports in the local press and TV that Hampshire County Council are considering a proposal to quarry sand and gravel from part of Moors Valley Country Park, which to put it mildly isn't good news!

The area affected is a broad strip about 400m wide and about 2.5k long adjacent to the B3081 Ringwood to Verwood road from Ebblake to the top of Watchmoor Hill. If you have the new edition of the New Forest 1:25000 Explorer map you can see the strip marked in a contrasting green shade to the rest of Moors Valley.

At this stage the proposal is in the HCC forward plan/consultation document which has provoked a vigorous response from the Verwood area and I was approached by a campaigner whilst at the MTBO event on June 25th seeking the support of users of Moors Valley.

It goes without saying that WIM are totally opposed to the proposal having already seen our areas eroded in Ringwood North by the northward spread of the Gravel Pits near Blue Haze. It could reduce the area of the Country Park by almost 25% creating a bleak, open industrial landscape that obviously would greatly restrict potential for Orienteering and many other recreational uses.

As with the proposed sell off of FC land we have learned that petitions are less effective than individual letters to Councillors and MPs so WIM will need to get organised to protest loudly.

You can find out more about the proposals and the local campaign on their website www.no2purplehaze.co.uk and raise any comments and objections by email to planning.policy@hants.gov.uk. The campaigner who I met was James Marshall whose phone number is 07796 172012.

John Warren

A new job for you?

After many years as editor of Waffle I have decided that it is time to hand over to someone else. I am hoping that there will be an enthusiastic response from a willing volunteer very soon.

John and I see many newsletters from other clubs. They vary tremendously. Some are friendly and chatty. Others are more formal. Some have lots of photographs. Several include pages of Results, Leagues, Ranking Points etc while others have more general articles on a wider range of subjects. Some include reports of committee meetings, training tips and junior pages. In the past every extra page has meant extra printing costs, but if the 'on -screen' version becomes the norm there would be no need to consider any limitation of pages.

If some of these ideas appeal to you perhaps you would like to take over Waffle and put them into practice?

I'll be happy to talk to anyone about what is involved. With a bit of luck there won't need to be much arm twisting!

Barbara Warren

Forthcoming Events

(Full details of forthcoming events can be obtained through the BOF website and individual club websites)

July

There are several midweek MLS events in July but notification/confirmation is at short notice. Use the BOAC website to check regularly.

Sunday 24th – WIM Furrow Hoppers Relay – Blandford Camp- Blandford Forum

GR: ST915075 **Pre entry only. See note elsewhere in Waffle about camp security requirements.**

Sunday 31st to Saturday August 7th- Scottish 6 Days – Oban area

September

(At present most of the following information is provisional – keep checking)

Saturday 3rd Dorset Coast Path Relay (Lyme Regis – Sandbanks Ferry)

also SARUM – Informal Limited Colour Coded event – Cannimore – Warminster

Monday 5th WIM/WSX club evening – Hyde Common – near Fordingbridge.

Saturday 10th City of London Race. Pre -entry via Fabian

Sunday 11th SOC Colour Coded Event – Sluffers Inclosure - New Forest

Sat/Sun 17/18th Caddihoe Chase – Burrator – Yelverton GR: SX555691

See flier for full details and closing date. No entry on the day.

Saturday 24th WIM Dorset School League/Limited Informal – Avon Heath Country Park St. Ives, nr Ringwood SU125031.

Training Evenings

The weekly WIM/WSX Training Evenings every Thursday have been enjoyed by members from both clubs and have been useful and sociable. There will be a break during August and the sessions will restart on Thursday September 8th.