

Forth Columnist

Issue 184

A u g u s t 2 0 0 8



Awesome performance from the British boys (Graham Gristwood, Jon Duncan, the other Jamie Stevenson) at the World Orienteering Championships in the Czech Republic – Relay Winners!

Contents

Editorial.....	2
Caption Competition	2
Club Training Weekend	3
Wednesday Evening Events 2008	4
Controllers Wanted.....	4
Jukola 2008.....	5
Cookery Corner	9
Rock and More Rock	10
LAMM 2008.....	11
Orienteering-Online Cup, Slovenia	14
French Orienteering	15
Club SI Kit – notes for organisers	18
Training for all!	19
World Master O Champs 2008	20
Crossword Solution.....	23
That Winning Feeling	23

Editorial

By Ross McLennan

It is unfortunate, but true, that in this current age we live in a culture of blame. Therefore, Brad Connor - Please Stand Up! Where are the three exciting articles you promised?! This magazine is a little later (and shorter) than planned and for that I apologise - on behalf of Brad. In fact, Dave Coustick became so bored of waiting for it to appear that he volunteered to do the next one. Please send any articles for that next issue to dave@coustick.co.uk – I'm sure he will be grateful.

However, you need not worry that in the intervening months since the previous magazine I have been sat at my desk frustrated, confused, idea-less, writer's blocked, desperately waiting for promised articles to appear. In fact, I have been off gallivanting. Parts of Finland, Czech Republic, Norway and Sweden have all been explored and you can read about some of my adventures in these very pages. It seems I am not alone in a-wandering over the summer: a wee read of this magazine will allow you to tread in the tracks of FVOers through Australia, Finland, France, Slovenia, Czech Republic and of course Scotland. Portugal should have been on that list too. After all a certain person did promise an interesting article about WMOC...

Enjoy the mag!

Ross

[Errr... post-production editorial here by a much-chastened Brad... Ross is quite right, I am a duffer, but I DID write my articles and since I've got my greasy paws on the mag before it goes to print, I've stuffed them in at the end!! Better late than never? And I already WAS standing up. ☺]

Caption Competition

Last Month (below) - the editor at the Carnethy5.



"Now I just need to get past the guy in the rhino suit!" - Louise

"Which one's the girl?!" - Gary

"I thought guys in kilts chased sheep!" - Jon

"I thought I was meant to be chasing the skirts!" - Ross

"..." - Jason (this one had to be edited - ed)



This Month (right) – Jon at the last control at the British Champs. Witty captions to Dave Coustick at dave@coustick.co.uk

Club Training Weekend

By Jason Inman

FVO are having a club weekend away in Speyside – Friday 26 to Sunday 28 September.

The weekend will entail:

Friday pm – a wee social and catch-up

Saturday am – orienteering coaching/training provided by yours truly and a few others (training will cater for all abilities so don't be afraid)

Saturday pm – more orienteering – put your skills to the test on a wee course of your choice

Saturday pm – Option for other activities after about 2pm (mountain biking? Glenmore climbing wall, walking, swimming, relaxing? Any other suggestions?)

Saturday pm – food, a wee social and perhaps a quiz?

Sunday am – we all take part in the SOL at Anagach – please enter yourselves for the appropriate courses – but bear in mind that this is a training weekend and you might wish to chose a more challenging course than you would normally run! Please collude with your peers to make sure everyone does the same course and can compare routes and splits.

We are staying at Rothiemurchus Lodge, a combined services (army, navy, airforce etc.) establishment which is accessed by a private road which starts at a padlocked gate immediately to the west of Loch Morlich. If you look at the OS map, the Lodge is marked due south of the junction with the "ski-road" road. There is wonderful biking, running and walking from the Lodge.

The cost for the accommodation is £20 per person (I think there could be a kids rate - tba) this will include a meal on the Saturday night and the club will pay for the training maps used on the Saturday.

For other food, please arrange your own thing on the Friday and bring your own breakfast, lunch and snacks stuff.

Louise Longhurst has kindly agreed to take people's names etc so please email her at longhurstl@aol.com to book a place.

We warmly welcome everyone along who is keen to take their orienteering further. But book soon as spaces are limited!

Wednesday Evening Events 2008

COME AND TRY IT!

No experience necessary: just come along on Wednesday evening between 5 and 7pm.
Cost: Adults £2 Juniors, Students £1.

Prizes for series senior and junior winners

For more information on Evening Events and location maps please visit www.fvo.org.uk
or contact Beccy Osborn on 01786 823171 or beccy.osborn@gmail.com

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

			OS Grid Ref
10.	27 Aug	Killearn Glen & Kirkhouse Wood, Killearn	NS 523 859
11.	03 Sept	Polmaise Wood, Cambusbarron	NS 775 923
12.	10 Sept	Laigh Hills, Dunblane (Cathedral Carpark)	NN 780 015

Controllers Wanted

YOUR SPORT NEEDS YOU!

Have you considered becoming a controller?

If you are an enthusiastic orienteer and want to improve your skills, have you considered becoming a controller? Even though you may not be a super-fast competitor, controlling provides an excellent opportunity for sharpening up your map interpretation and navigational skills.

To apply to become a Grade 3 controller, you must have planned 3 events (with at least one at Level 4), have organised a competition on the BOF Fixture List and have attended a Grade 3 Controllers' Course. Courses can be held near you and need not cost your club anything. *(You do not need to have fulfilled all the criteria for planning and organising events before attending a course.)*

An application form is available from either your club secretary or from Marjory Craig, Controller of Controllers for SOA, who is also willing to answer any questions you may have. Her email address is marjory.craig@dsl.pipex.com.

Jukola 2008

By Ross McLennan and Jon Cross

A few guys from FVO teamed up with JOK to experience the 60th anniversary of the most amazing race in the world – Jukola. It was a long, arduous and sometimes fraught journey to Tampere, Finland but well worth it. 1452 Teams. 10164 Runners. 76.2km. 175 controls. Mass start. All night. Relay. Do it before you die!



First leg for JOK/FVO – 11.5km, 26 controls

By Ross

Oh My Word.

It's really hard to know where to begin. There were so many emotions and sensations and activities and actions and reactions and thoughts and people and challenges and triumphs and disasters. And other things. And they all happened at once! For 97 really really intense minutes and 24 pretty intense hours.

Since it started at 11pm there was plenty of build up to the race and lets be honest, I spent most of it cacking my pants. I tried not to think about how I was a nervous quivering wreck - a jelly nay, a blancmange - and focused on other things like the Venla relay, the marvellous eye candy, the randomness of it all, eating, drinking, sleeping, staying calm. It really reminded me of the Le Mans 24 Hours. Not that I've been to that, but the Steve McQueen film really creates great atmosphere in the pre-race build-up - the tension climaxing as the clock ticks steadily towards the race start.

Miles out my comfort zone, in a way that it is important to do in life, I entered the warm up area nice and early. There were copies of the map there and I made sure I had a right good look at them. It looked difficult - exxtrrreeemely difficult, as the Finnish legend we met had described parts of the terrain.

Suddenly there were loads of folks in the warm-up area, dust was flying up as they ran about. I joined James Tullie for a bit of a warm-up; we chatted and swore a lot, as you do when you are nervous. We discussed tactics. We didn't have a clue what they should be. This did not reassure. I saw Alastair Brunton and there was more running and excited chat and then just before the start Mr Murray "This Is What We Do!" Strain. 5 minutes to go. We lined up under our maps, the atmosphere electric, the tension palpable, the heart palpitating. I felt religious - OhGawdOhGawd!

Nervous laughter: a wee false start. Sizing up competitors, stretching, twitching, breathing calmly!. Then....Duggaduggadugga! The anti-aircraft/start-gun fired and we raced off in the dust and on and on, into the dusk.

I was aggressive off the start, not really sure where I was, but ticking off the line features we crossed to gauge progress on the long first leg. I crossed under the pylons and into the area with the control as planned and then....Disaster! Wrong control! Major Panic! Find every gaffle control and some others but not mine! Runners streaming past. Good work undone. A really long all night race and I have ruined the team's fun already! Finally sort myself out and then take advantage of the long track run to 2 to claw back some of the many places I have just lost. Okay for the next couple until I....Get in with the wrong posse in the scramble up the hill to 5 and end up in a horribly tricky hillside. The only consolation is I am not alone in being alone. I wish it was SI so I could hear a beep. But it is not. I am too low. I go back up and find a massive group. "39?!" they exclaim. I tag on as, like a great shoal of fish, they dramatically swerve and swoop to the right and - Get In! - the control.

“...aggressive off the start, not really sure where I was...”

Afterwards, there are a few "please let this be my control"s but generally okay. I can't help feeling that I'm doing terribly, though. A couple of real big errors already. And the group I'm in seems to be going really slowly. But I can't get past - the terrain is tough out of the wee tracks. 9 though, gives another opportunity to make up time and I race round the long track route, hard. I am pleased - it has

a really good attack point and I have run hard. I go in carefully (although white on the map it is low vis) and am with another guy who checks I am going for the same one. At the last minute, though, I see a big posse on the right, they must have gone straight, and I veer over, stupidly. They are wrong. I am screwed. We play hunt the flag and our sweep is finally successful. After this I am better - steady, but not too fast. All the way I am terrified I mess up and at 17 suddenly I find myself all alone. I take a rough bearing and leg it! Phew, I've caught the next group. Finally it is through some man-eating bogs and I can relax as I pick off a couple of guys round the run-in. At the handover, Jon isn't there! I can't believe it! All I can do is shout his name: "Jon Cross! Jon Cross!" I cry plaintively and finally, he pushes through the crowd, I hand over his map and it is over. Wow. I've done it. It wasn't a great performance, but it could have been much much worse.

Afterwards, all the guys I meet are wired! Who needs drugs? High on life!

Second leg two for FVO/JOK – 12.3km, 27 Controls

By Jon

Felt curiously un-nervous and short of adrenaline in the warm-up pen, the setup maybe didn't help as runners waiting to go out could not see the big screen - and waiting at the changeover point did not give much of a view of people coming in.

I did use the clever 'check your team's progress' thing a couple of times - the first time Rosco wasn't at the third check when I thought he might well be - the second time he had picked up 150 places and was almost back - now that was good for the adrenaline!

Got to the changeover where there was about 4 yards of space per 100 teams and a huge scrum of people, couldn't see much through the crowd in the 500-600 section. Thought I could see enough though, right up to the moment when I heard Rosco shouting my name - oh bother(*slightly edited!* - ed) - sorry mate - could only have been a few seconds lost but more adrenaline.

Ran off telling myself to be calm, turned on my torch - looked at map - couldn't see anything - torch not working - oh bother(!) oh bother(!). Let's try full beam, that works, try the other again, success, thank goodness(!) for that, now be calm - long race - be calm.

And I was calm, could have gone faster on the long leg to #1 but settled into a line of runners going straightish without trying to leg it past them, splashed through the first man-eating bog thinking of the chaos there must have been there on leg one, kept reasonable track of where we were, picked it up okay nearer the flag, across the stream and up the little slope and left towards the control. Others stop at the boulder but I know it isn't mine (and in fact wasn't on leg two at all) and I see it ahead of me. Good start and I feel into the race.

Another long leg to #2 and I am straight out to the track option to the left, don't feel great and others are going faster but I am doing my own thing, confident enough to cut the corner through the green leaving the track, confident enough to ignore every single other runner heading up the marsh to my left whilst I go east-ish up the small hill. Confident right up to the moment when I stop - no flag - no people - I am wavering - aha lights ahead slightly higher than I was headed - get up there, open hill and runners all giving it that distinctive 'I hope someone else finds it' look - time to be confident, I thought they were too high, they must be, 15 yards down the hill there it is, I lead them all in but a minute or so lost, stupid.

#3 is common, #4 is easy on a road although the drinks throw me as there are two sets and I haven't seen the first set on the map, #5 looks very tricky and vague - must be careful, pick my way up the big rocky re-entrant and then lose touch on the vague slope, bother(!), idiot. Again there are lights everywhere. Ignore them all this time and pick my way slowly along it, relocate on the way, there it is!! Lots of lights at this one, all stood still trying to work out what the control is on - it may not be their's but it is mine, very satisfying! Probably a minute lost but disaster averted, big relief!

“The next section is rough and tough... I am struggling physically”

The next section is rough and tough and (it turns out) common. I am struggling physically to #6 and #7, my ankle is sore, my back is killing me I keep falling over, and it is really wet(!). Hopefully not too many runners around me understand my expletives. #8 is a long vague leg and looks very tricky, I am sure it must be gaffed after the common section in the open, and am relieved to see my catching feature show up after 5 minutes on rough compass, do my own thing into the flag and find it fine. Can't believe it in the week when I find out the control was common!

Easy leg to #9 and a track run to #10, no-one seems to want to cut off where I do so I bash through the next block on my own, control is tricky and lots of lights stood around, I am very pleased with myself as I pass them all and sneak straight into it. Maybe too pleased with my self and not concentrating, tricky short leg to #11 sees me get distracted near the control and dragged too low, a moment's thought and I know what is wrong but 90secs lost to get back up to the flag.

Another common section through more felled grot and another TV control, still feel I am struggling a bit and again lose a few places on the running even though no-one seems to be going that quickly, somehow I don't seem to be able to either. And then a tricky-looking section through some nice white forest, it all seems to be confusing people or very gaffed as there is lots of hesitating and running in different directions, but I know where I am and find #17. Then suddenly I am all alone again, trust my compass and bash through a vague green flat bit, think I know where I am but not 100% sure, it should be just there - another light coming in from my right - there it is!

Not that far now, off we go to #20, looks tricky but the rocky ridge is nice, cut down it to run along a flat veg change, don't think much of the white to my left as it is all low trees, but here's the hill - up onto it but it seems further to the top than I think, can't make it fit, runners everywhere asking "118? 118?". Even in my panic I expect to see moustachioed runners in GB vests appear any second. But no, nothing appears except some big cliffs where there should not be any - some desperate runners even descending them to search for the flag. Cliffs - big cliffs - on the north side - oh no - wrong hill - wrong veg change - all going wrong - am right over there - back we go - no problem with adrenaline now - here's the right hill, worryingly there are people thrashing around all over the place here too - careful, should be here - YES! IT IS! 118!

Forth Columnist August 2008

Get on with it after that but it is a single line of people to #22, I am a slow learner as again I think we are too high but stay in the queue and again the flag is not mine, start to drop down but then see another flag, check that out too - finally go to where I wanted initially and there it is, strangely dark and silent but definitely mine. Another minute lost; will I even break two hours??

Try and push the rest even though I am running along like some crippled old man, holding my back and digging my fingers into the muscle to try and loosen it a bit. Pick up a few places including Peter Hodgkinson for NOC (has passed me at #20), can't hold him off on the run in though.

Finish in under 2 hours with about 10 min lost to mistakes, 5 mins of them at #20. Pretty disappointed at the finish, struggled physically which I didn't expect particularly after feeling strong at Forssa, and raging about how stupid I was at #20. Would have been happy with a few minor misses as after all it was quite tricky and quite dark.

Am totally wrecked at the finish, soaked and muddy, stiffen up quickly and get very cold. So I know I tried! Rosco and Ian Cumpstey are there, they tell me that the hot showers are fab and the sauna is amazing - and they are right, what a lifesaver!

And the 5 mins was very significant at the time, if not overall.

On the leg I lost 49 places, from 313 to 362

5 mins quicker would have been a gain of 6 places, from 313 to 307

On leg time I finished 458th of 1368

5 mins quicker would have been 106 places higher, 352nd.

And we finished 256th, 5 mins quicker would have squeezed us 6 places higher and in the top 250 - would have been nice!



Cookery Corner

By Susan Hensman

Susan's Sweet Potato & Red Pepper Soup

Serves approx 10 people

Ingredients:



2 onions roughly chopped
5 red peppers de-seeded & diced
(Keep some finely chopped red pepper back to garnish when serving)
4 large sweet potatoes diced
2 teaspoons of crushed garlic
2 vegetable stock cubes made into 1½ pts of stock
3 glasses of dry white wine (or to taste ☺ !!)
Dash of oil
Salt & Pepper to taste
Tabasco sauce to taste

Method:

Put a dash of oil in the bottom of a large pot & sauté the onion, red pepper & sweet potato for approx 5 mins.

Add the garlic and vegetable stock.

Bring to the boil and simmer till the sweet potatoes are soft.

Add white wine and 'Whizz' with a blender to the desired consistency.

Add salt & pepper as required and a few dashes of Tabasco to give it a little zing!

Bring back to the boil and serve with crusty bread.

Enjoy!!

p.s. if anyone has and other lovely recipe's they would like to share then why not send them in to our editor of the month...



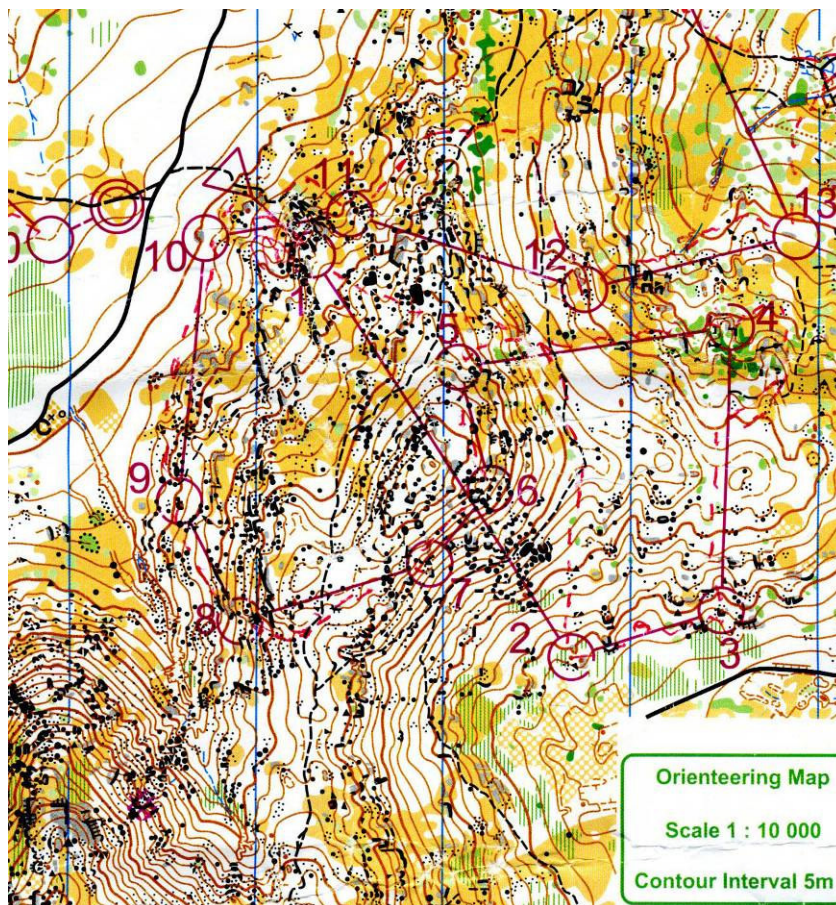
Rock and More Rock

By Dave Coustick (the next Editor!)

After my short piece about a street-O in Australia earlier this year I thought you might like to see a map of something more technical from the same part of the world. On my final weekend in Australia I took part in the Victorian Relays on the Saturday and a badge event on the Sunday. The relays were in an old gold mining area with lots of gullies and pits, making it ideal for a relay and I had a good run, with just a couple of small wobbles near the circle.

There was talk at the relay about the possibility of the Sunday event being cancelled in the case of a total fire ban, but in the end it all went ahead. However the starts were brought forward due to a forecast temperature of 36°! The elite (inter-state) race started at 8.30 with other starts from 9.30, but even by then it was approaching 30°. As you will see from an extract from the map there was a lot of rocky detail and I struggled to get in touch. The first leg was about 150m and this took me 10 minutes as I failed to identify some of the rock features correctly. After that I managed to hold things together and managed 4th on M45, though it was not a huge field.

Hopefully this experience of rocky Australian terrain will help me next year in the World Masters!



Part of the Mount Beckworth map

LAMM 2008

By Alison McQuillen

LAMM Day 1 - Fassfern to Glen Dessary

On Thursday lunch time I saw that the LAMM was going to be at Glenfinnan, having only ever climbed to the top of three Munros unaided this was a scary prospect indeed! That evening, I got my purse out of my handbag to get some emergency money and as if by magic out came a Bank of Scotland £10 note with the Glenfinnan Viaduct and Monument on the back, a good omen I thought as I stuffed it in my rucksack.

Friday morning came, Claire arrived and we spent all morning packing and sorting all the kit and food, weighing this and that, discarding non-essentials and testing out Jon's tent in the garden to make sure we could fit in - we did with a squash and a squeeze and so it was packed too.



Once we had set off I felt more relaxed, if we'd forgotten something now it was just too bad!

We arrived at the campsite in good time to pitch the tent, wolf down a Wilf's and have a chat with other people as they arrived. Slipped into something more comfortable - a midge net and oh how we laughed at people trying to pitch a tent covered in the wee blighters!

I didn't have a great night's sleep and our alarm clock was a piper, I do like the sound of bagpipes but NOT really at 6am... Anyway, there was a race to get on with so up and off we went in the bus to the start, choking on neat midge spray and smelly Helly whiffs as we wound our way along the road to Fassfern.

Sadly the midges followed us to the start but the sun burnt through the morning mist to reveal a glorious day.

The first control was at 590m and 3km and took us 1:36.08 - it was going to be a long day I thought... the terrain was not too bad underfoot but too steep to run on and none of the teams who passed us were running either, just walking faster. The route to #2 involved a steep descent followed by a long contouring stretch on a rough stony hillside and again nobody appeared to be running - it was too hard going for that. The next leg was 2.5km and 300m straight up a fairly bland hillside at the hottest time of the day (fortunately we found some water to drink on the way to re-hydrate) but we were rewarded at the top with a fantastic view across the glen and just had to cross a steep rocky valley to get to the control.

My favourite part of the route was #3 to #4; although Claire might say otherwise as she disappeared into a bog up to her thighs and I had to haul her out! You could see exactly where the control was from #3 and we just went for it, helped by the fact that it wasn't too steep and down hill! On the way to #5 we had to climb over a deer fence, "better find a sturdy post, just in case" said Claire. I collected a few bruises here. After that, Claire started running and I was very impressed, so I trotted along behind until we got to a beautiful river crossing. We were very tempted to cool off in the rock pool but we kept going, it was a race after all, straight up 200m climb and 500m to the next control.

Control #6 was a short leg across some amazing rock slabs and it was at this point I began to feel tired and my feet were sore. Claire chose the next route to #7 straight down to and along Loch Arkaig and I wished she hadn't! I cursed her all the way down that 45 degree slope through forest tight complete with rocks and crags and nasty bits to catch your

"It was here that I had visions of dead bodies lined up with sheets over them at the finish!"

feet in and she started cursing herself along a further kilometre of it, we decided that we would have been quicker swimming along in the loch. In fact, the further we went along the more I wanted to lie down and let the ground absorb me and it was here that I had visions of dead bodies lined up with sheets over them at the finish! This was the low point. We were a lot happier when we saw some other people and found a wee elephant track for the rest of the way to the last control. The finish was in sight but first there was a horrendous bog to cross and it was hard to find the strength to jump over the deep bits in order not to be sucked up and drown in it! Finally, all that remained was to wade across the river and dib at the finish!

I took a few paces and lay down in the middle of the finish area using my pack as a pillow, it felt heavenly just to shut my eyes in the hope that I would fall asleep, Kirsty B-J took my water bottle away to fill up with water and off I went into la la land... Claire came back from the toilets and said, "Get up, get the tent up, we need food NOW! Come on GET UP!" She meant it! I knew she was right, so I did!

The campsite was in a fantastic location with stunning views and there was a breeze - just enough to keep most of the midges at bay. I put the tent up but my legs were so sore that I had to do it crawling around on my hands and knees. Claire made dinner whilst lying down as a wind break. She set the grass on fire but the miniscule stove produced some lovely nosh, our next door neighbours polished off the extra portions when we were having our yummy hot chocolate custard drink concoction. As soon as the midges became unbearable everyone went to bed and then the snoring started and I woke up boiling - unbelievable!

LAMM Day 2 - Glen Dessary to Glenfinnan via Sgurr nan Coireachan

More bagpipes! A rude awakening at 5.20am. My legs were sore but my feet were intact, we taped our feet up, had breakfast, put waterproofs and soggy shoes on, packed up quickly and we were off at 6.40, no time to think about it...

Running as far away from the midgets as soon as possible was a good plan. The route to #1 was along a flat track to a bridge - how kind of the planner to think of an easy one and lull us into a false sense of security... before having to hoof it up 400m down to 250m and then up to the top of a Munro! The feeling at the top was great but going down to the next control was horrendous for me and with the slope going down to the right, my shoe kept cutting into my left foot just on my ankle bone - it felt like a hammer hitting it with every footstep. I pleaded with Claire for us to go up to the ridge but she wasn't for budging. I just had to grin and bear it for 2km but at least the clouds had lifted and the sun had come out!

We slid down the next descent on our bottoms as it was easier than walking, passed a few people here too much to their surprise! We weren't too chuffed with having to go up another 150m in a short distance to the next control but the views down Glen Finnan and beyond were absolutely worth it. It was pretty hot down last steep killer descent to the road and with only 3.5km to go we managed to run/jog/walk along before actually running into the finish. It was a great feeling to finish and still be walking - just!

It was a fabulous event and I might have whinged a bit at Claire but she was a great partner to have and I'm glad that I did my first LAMM with her - thank you Claire, you kept me sane. And yes, she did stop talking...!



Orienteering-Online Cup, Slovenia

By Jason Inman

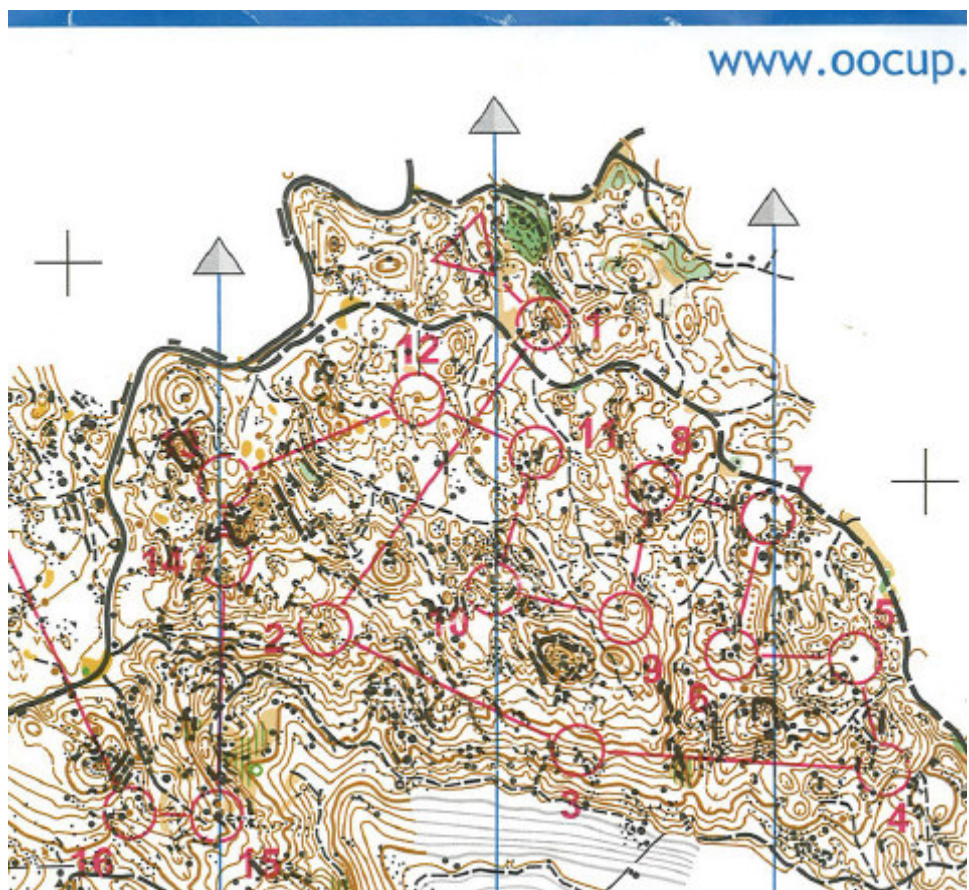
Here's an extract of the map of day 1 of the Orienteering-Online Cup 2008, Slovenia. The competition took place on 23 - 27 July 2008 in the West of Slovenia.

Scots who attended were:

Andrew Brown	M21E	34 th
Janine Inman	W21E	12 th
Jason Inman	M35	3 rd
Trish Coombs	W50	13 th
Roger Coombs	M50	Should have been top 5 but for a mis-punch on day 4!
Doug Wood	M60	Averaging top 30 but a mis-punch on day 2
Chris Wood	W60	Averaging top 15 but also missed on day 2

Excellent limestone terrain and beech forest meant >10m/km were the norm.

Look out for future excellent events: www.oocup.com



French Orienteering

By Grace Molloy, Age 8

My family and I went to the French six days in the summer. Peter and I ran the jalonee. You followed red and white tapes, hanging from branches and trees, you were hardly ever on paths. It is very nice not orienteering in pouring rain! On the jalonee you could take a shortcut or follow the tapes which I thought was a clever idea.

By the end of the week, I was getting really good at reading the map for shortcuts and I came 3rd on days 5&6 out of more than 100 people.

They only had one food tent but it was rather big. You got tickets at the food tent and could even buy beer! This was my dad's favourite part! Peter and I had a pain au chocolat every day.

One day we had to get up at 5.15a.m. because my mum and dad had really early start times.

We went to visit the Millau Viaduct – it was very high! I had a great time and I would recommend it to anyone!



Grace and Peter at the finish after completing their Jalonee course

You Know You Are An Orienteer When.....

Stolen from an Attackpoint discussion – which is now at number 226!

You know you are an orienteer when...

1. You show off your scratches and bruises with pride
2. You optimize your route choices to and from the supermarket
3. You contemplate moving to Sweden
4. You stand around after each race comparing results
5. You always have at least one O-map in the bathroom
6. You orient a street map of your town to the magnetic north, even if it means all the street names are upside down
7. When you begin doodling in a boring class, the doodles all look like contour lines and you feel a compulsion to add the tick mark showing which way is down
8. You hit the "refresh" button every 5 minutes while waiting for race splits to appear online.
9. You consider taping the shoelaces on your dress shoes
10. You start getting competitive about training volume on Attackpoint
11. You think that Gu makes a perfectly acceptable meal
12. You can recite your Sport Ident number from memory, but often have trouble remembering your phone number
13. You break out laughing when you realize your pile of dirty clothes looks like a dot knoll
14. While driving, you never actually get lost, you just make "x min mistakes".
15. You own a one-piece O-suit that has people asking if you were on tour with Olivia Newton-John or MC Hammer.
16. Somebody asks you how to work their GPS, and you launch in to a 20 minute tirade about how those things are useless for navigation.
17. You think there's nothing wrong with wearing clothes made up of 6 different colours.
18. Your "ultimate embarrassment" is getting lost on the way to an event.
19. You have your head upside down in the mall trying to orient the large neon store directory map.
20. You can't drive past open woods without saying "Oooh nice woods...that would make a great orienteering area"
21. You know exactly how many double paces it is from your house to the mail box, the grocery store, your kid's school, the neighbours' house....
22. You looked at all the people stuck on the interstate fleeing Houston, and wondered "Didn't they look on the map for a better route?"
23. When someone tries to give you directions to their house, you totally ignore them and say "Just tell me the address, I have a map and I can find my own way there".
24. You thumb your grocery checklist.....
25. You are no longer surprised at finding a control
26. At a new job, you actually look at the blueprint of your office floor. It's important to know all the possible route choices to the bathroom, right?
27. On a boring day at work, you draw a sprint-O course on your office floor blueprint.

28. You complain about people who park their huge mobile homes between two trees and announce they are "camping."
29. All of your white socks are no longer white or you buy grey or black socks so the dirt doesn't show
30. Your room or office is strewn with recent maps that you have yet to file in your map filing system
31. A lot of what you own has an orienteering sticker on it
32. There is a bag on the floor you have yet to fully unpack from your most recent orienteering trip
33. Your car and/or a lot of your clothes have a distinct "orienteering smell"
34. You have started to recognize a distinct smell to your orienteering stuff, and it doesn't come out in the wash
35. Your compass is one of your most prized possessions
36. You spend a lot of your time surfing random orienteering websites
37. You spend a lot of your time fantasizing meets you might go to in the future
38. You compare most life situations to orienteering problems
39. Your child knows the words orienteering, course and compass before he/she is potty trained.
40. Any piece of paper your child sees with writing on it is a "map"
41. Any line your child draws is a "trail"
42. OCAD is the only software graphics package you know how to use, so you do everything with it (e.g. make calendars).
43. Your child believes the three primary colours are lakes, fields, and out of bounds areas...
44. You've lived in your town less than 1 year, and can find your way round it better than people who've lived there all their lives
45. You go for a run with others in an area you don't know, and feel you have to look at a map afterwards to work out where you went (or even draw a map of where you went)
46. When travelling a long distance you think in terms of orienteering areas (not cities) that you drive past
47. (For recent Windows to Mac converts only) - You've kept that old Windows PC, but only for running all the orienteering software that only runs on Windows (eg OCAD, Catching Features)
48. Whenever you drive by forest, you assess runnability. If it's white, you really want to run through it.
49. Your five-year-old grandson draws you an O map for a birthday card.
50. You read all of the above and find it funny, not disturbing.

Club SI Kit – notes for organisers

By Brad Connor

Last autumn, as many of you will know, the club took the plunge into the technological age and invested in its own SI kit, comprising 30 controls, start/finish/clear stations, a download station, printer and 20 SI cards. It's designed to be run very simply, with no setup required, and is usually run with just a download and battery-powered splits printer at the event itself. It can also be used in conjunction with the SOA Central A 'pool' laptop, of which we have near-permanent custody (but don't tell anyone else!), to run an event with the SI software. Having already been in action many times in the last year, we've learnt a lot about how to make the most of it. With the addition of lightweight trestles, we now have a kit that is easy to put out, easy to use on the day, and great at producing the detailed results that we've become used to at larger events.



Whilst our experience over the year has been an almost entirely positive one, we have been unlucky enough to have had a fairly high attrition rate. In total, 4 of the 30 control units have been taken out of action, at a cost to the club of over £250. One simply broke (cheap tat!), but we've got that replaced. Of the other three, two were sadly vandalised beyond repair or stolen, whilst the last was lost. These things do happen, but we can take simple steps to address both of these issues, and minimise the chance of the problems happening again.

Firstly, to reduce the likelihood of units going for a wander or being burnt at the stake by local mafiosi, the event planner should check out the courses and decide if any of the control sites are 'high risk', for example are close to paths frequented by members of the public, near local crack dens, etc. It might be sensible to consider using alternative sites but, if that's awkward to achieve, the planner can simply leave it to the last minute to put out those controls and, if at all possible, arrange some sort of patrol during the event. If the area being used has lots of control sites that fall into the high risk category – say, Callander Park, for example – then it probably isn't sensible to use the kit there.

Secondly, to guard against loss (and it's easier to do than you think!), we'd ask the organiser to do a simple check of the control unit codes both when they receive the kit and then again at the event, once they're collected in. That way it's very unlikely that any would be lost either during an event or during the handover.

Kit usage notes will be made available on the club website in the near future. We may even put up some sort of booking system, but right now just get in touch with Brad, who looks after the kit. It's there to be used!

Training for all!

By Brad Connor

Contrary to popular opinion, your club committee doesn't just meet up every couple of months for a blether whilst consuming large quantities of coffee and home-made buns. Whilst the home-made buns are, indeed, often in evidence (yum!), we do occasionally have a bash at making sure that the club is thriving in all ways. A couple of the hot topics, if I were using geek-speak, are *recruitment* – attracting people into the sport by advertising, publicising, etc. – and *retention*, which is making sure that we keep a good hold of people once we've got 'em. Recruitment is an area we're continuing to put a lot of thought into, but the retention bit is what I'd like to talk about here; helping people keep alive their interest in and commitment to the sport. One of the areas in which we feel we have room for improvement as a club is in providing the facilities to help club members develop their orienteering, both technically and physically.

Traditionally, thanks to the efforts of many tireless key individuals, we've been very good at helping junior members improve. As a duffer who came into the sport as an adult, though, I missed out on all that quality guidance and have frequently found myself frustrated to the point of an extreme stop (as some of you have had the pleasure of witnessing) by my extremely poor technical skills. Likewise, there are others who have expressed their lack of motivation or knowledge about how to put in place a good physical training regime and stick to it. Does this sound familiar to any of you? Read on.

Thanks to the sterling services of a certain British Junior Squad Coach and our ever-enthusiastic Club Capitano, Mr X, structured club training nights are now a regular fixture and well attended. If you haven't made it along, give them a go when they restart after the summer break; the track, club run and hill rep sessions are a great motivation for improving your running, and are guaranteed to yield results by the time the big spring competitions come around. They're also good craic!

We're also thinking of ways of offering technical training to those of us who are keen to take their orienteering skills to the next level which, in my own case, is the bottom rung. Whilst we do already run one or two training weekends every year at which we put on training exercises, there is more that we can do. One-to-one training can yield great results, but requires commitment on the part of both trainer and student. I'm anxious that whatever we set up is not too onerous on either party. I believe that we could set up something relatively informal, based around events, whereby a trainer can help a trainee by asking them to focus and improve on specific technique(s) at an event, and sit down and analyse the results afterwards, preferably in a tea shop! This wouldn't impact too greatly on the trainer, as they could still compete, but could really deliver tangible improvements for the trainee. What I would like to do now is canvass for opinions, and hopefully even for both potential trainees and potential volunteer trainers. Equally, if you have any suggestions on what you think would really help you, or others, improve, I'd be very willing to hear it! Please drop me an e-mail at brad.connor@gmail.com, or trip me up at an event.

World Master O Champs 2008

By Brad Connor



This year's WMOC was on my calendar as soon as I saw that it was going to be held in the forests near Marinha Grande in Portugal. I'd been there before, for the Portugal O Meet in Feb 2002, and knew that the areas were lovely – generally clear underfoot, easy running, and good visibility. Throw in the chance of fine company in the form of the Gary, Louise, Abi, Martin, Hazel, Jon, Marie-Claire, Dave C and various other non-FVO'ers; stir in free crèche facilities; add relatively cheap flights and reasonable accommodation and, hey presto, one irresistible cordon-bleu summer holiday. It wasn't even likely to be too hot; whilst the Algarve is renowned for its ability to deep-fat fry hoardes of British holidaymakers, the Atlantic coast north of Lisbon stays bearable even in the height of summer. Well, mostly. Beccy was persuadable, so, off we went. Actually, we went out a week early to relax and acclimatise before the orienteering, but you're not interested in hearing about THAT.

Portugal is fab. Or, more specifically, *the Portugese* are fab. They're just so nice, man; you couldn't wish for a more welcoming nation. Just don't let them get behind the wheel of a car. Even the Italians whimper when faced with a Portugese behind the wheel of a Fiat Punto or, worse, on a scooter. Anyway...

WMOC was centred in Marinha Grande itself, in a large sports hall on the edge of the (mostly modern) town. Registration was efficient, although handing over the vast bag of goodies, training maps and programmes took an age. When we finally emerged into the light, we were very surprised to see that the chief O-trader for the event had already starting setting up his stall – and it was none other than Rick and Angela of Compasspoint! Not exactly a holiday for them, but they did a roaring trade all week, so it was worth the trip, and it was good to see Rick back in full action again.

The programme for the week was full. For the first time, this year saw the addition of the sprint distance to WMOC. So, in terms of competition, there was a sprint qualifier race, followed by the sprint final the next day. There were also two classic qualifier days and the final itself. Also on offer were four training areas, open races on the three non-competition days and open races on the competition days themselves for those not eligible to compete in the main event – step up, Abi! I madly pre-entered all three open races and also signed up for the training area maps; this was before I really thought about what the “rest” days were for, and before I crocked my knee. Damn. Nor had we realised that the course number one entered – such as “9”, for the hardest – bore a direction relation to the actual distance of the course, as in, 9km. Erk. We also hadn't really considered that there would be no crèche facilities on the non-competition days. Hmm. In retrospect, we really should have bothered reading the bumph (RTFM!). Och well.

Saturday 27th June saw us at our first open race area, Pedreanes East. I raced on this area at the POM 2002 (see above) and it was nice. Well it would have been had I not forgotten my “open race number” bib in the rush, and met the only Jobsworth start official of the week, who wouldn't let me start. Git. So Beccy went for her run whilst I fumed, and after I'd cooled off I grabbed a map and went for a run anyway. Yup, not quite as fast as I remembered, and rather warm, but v nice nonetheless.



The M35 start in Leiria castle

bamboozled, most unlike me, and headed off into the town. After another few minutes I realised that I was being chased by ex Aussie WOC team member Blair Trewin, and that pushed me on. I nearly made it all the way to the finish before stuffing up and letting him run through me, but in the end I qualified in ninth, got interviewed (along with Blair), and enjoyed a very pleasant coffee in the square before Beccy finished her run. She had a good run too, despite protestation of being unfit! All FVO'ers qualified reasonably comfortably, although Jon had a wee brain drain in the castle and had to work hard to make up for it over the rest of the course.

The sprint final was a shock to the system. Praia da Vieira is a coastal town, with a mix of old town with narrow streets and modern tourist developments. The map also threw us into some forest and an open sandy area to really make us think. Needless to say, I blew it: transitioning into forest at 1:4000 scale was too much for my feeble nav skills, and I lost 3 minutes. Not so Beccy, though, who hung on to finish 6th in the world! Even better was Dixie, who just missed out on a medal in 4th, with Sarah Dunn earning a great silver in W40.

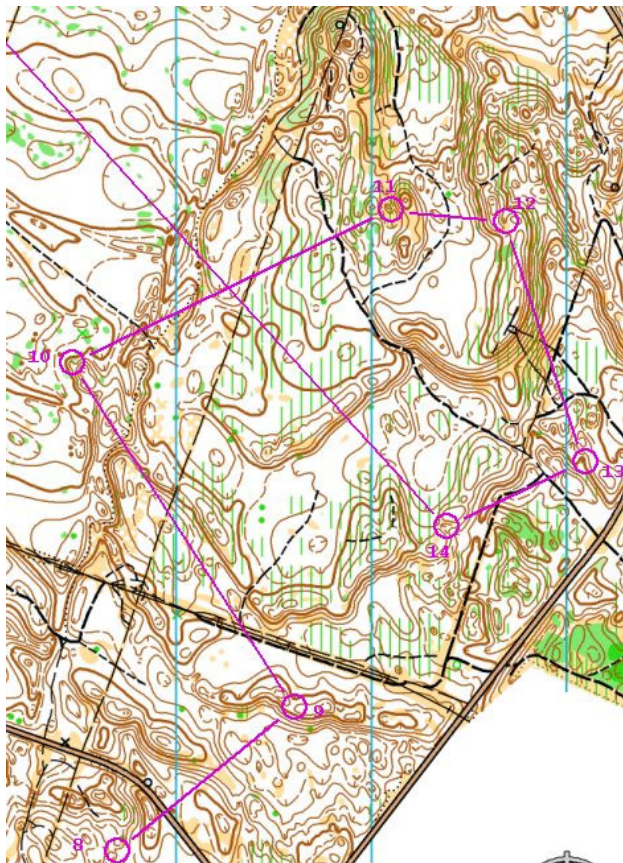
After a "rest day" picking off a few controls at the open race in the Praia forest, it was off to Patais forest for two days of long qualifying races. Patais is mostly similar to the Pedreanes forests, in that it's generally a sandy forest with reasonable visibility and good runnability. Not that that helped

All change the next day – some sprint race training in Marinha Grande. Sore knee. Near death traffic incidents. Strong coffee afterwards to recuperate. All in a day's fun. The next day, Monday, saw us starting the sprint race qualifier at Leiria. This turned out to be my best race of the week. Being in a "youngster" class, M35, there were only two groups of 80 competitors, so qualification for the final merely required me to be in the top half of my group. Those in the big classes – 50, 55 and 60 – had up to six groups, and really had to work hard to make it to the final. Does that say anything about the demographics of the sport? Anyway, one of the other benefits of being in a whippersnapper class was that we got to start our course in the ruins of the old castle of Leiria, which was a multi-level complex riot of super-detailed orienteering. I managed to survive without getting completely



Mr A. Punter finishes the Sprint final

me much on day 1, when I had a stinker, orienteering like a beginner and feeling very tired. I made up for it a little on day 2, but ended up missing out on qualification for the final by 1 place, not that I'd have deserved to get in if I had! Everyone else had much more solid runs, with all the other FVO'ers qualifying well. Beccy was 9th for the final, Dixie was top 5, and Hazel was leading; things looked good for the big day!



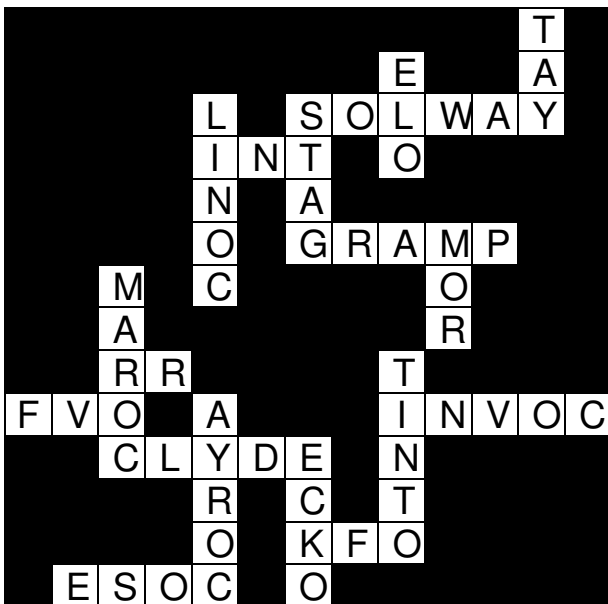
Excerpt from the Pedragao map

In a sudden outbreak of common sense, Beccy and I spurned the open race on the final rest day and saved ourselves for the big final at Pedragao on Saturday. Talk about a shock to the system. In complete contrast to the two qualifiers, the terrain was rough and tough with lots of contours and quite a lot of low visibility vegetation. Was I ever glad that I was only running 9.6km and 330m, instead of 11.5km in the A final? I was also completely useless, of course. Sadly the halo of my incompetence extended to the other FVO'ers, with Hazel making mistakes, Dixie not doing as well as he'd hoped, Jon having a mad 20 minute error, and Beccy mis-punching for the first time in years, robbing herself of a 9th-place finish. It wasn't quite disappointment all round, though, as Sarah Dunn had a storming run to take gold in W40, and Big Jon nearly matching her with silver in M45.

All in all, a good holiday, despite the disappointment of the big final. I only

started going on O holidays in 2001, but have had some great trips – to WMOC in Canada with Jase and Janine, to Norway for the Midnight Sun Galoppen, to the Rocky Mountain 1000 day in Wyoming. Despite frequently being fed up with my orienteering at some point on the holiday, they've always been sociable and challenging at the same time. Would I recommend Portugal as a venue? Yes and no – the forests were mostly nice and the people are friendly, but we felt a bit limited on the non-O activity side. I'd recommend anyone to go to the coastal forest areas when the Portugal O Meeting, which is held every February, use them again. This year we had two Iberian orienteering adventures, having also gone to the Spanish Champs near Murcia in April (instead of the JK), and are note that next year there is a week of orienteering near the lovely Costa Blanca hills around Easter time. Chances are that it'll be cheaper to go there than to the JK again, so maybe we'll see you there!

Crossword Solution



This space is sponsored by:
Forth Columnist – the
magazine for the discerning
orienteer

Well done to Gary Longhurst – the only person to submit a complete and correct entry!

That Winning Feeling

