

# NEWSTRACK DECEMBER 1996

APOLOGIES for the less than fulsome edition of Newstrack. Disaster struck in mid-print. It should have been a 12-page edition but, as I was printing the details of DVO's social weekend away and typing out the Contents list at the same time, the computer objected to doing two things at once and wreaked its revenge by wrecking my floppy disk holding the rest of Newstrack on it. (Yes, I know it should have been on hard disk as well; no need to rub it in). Being disinclined to spend Christmas typing out another eight pages all over again, for obvious reasons, I am putting out these four pages. Looking on the bright side, I had already printed out Ros Clayton's account of life in New Zealand, and this was the best thing in Newstrack as was.

It only remains for me to wish everybody a Happy New Year. May all your runs be gold standard.

Graham Johnson.

## LETTER FROM NEW ZEALAND

Dear All at DVO,

Happy Christmas from 'Down Under'. We are enjoying lots of sunshine and are well into shorts and sandals time of year. I hear it's been snowing over there - ha ha! We are not planning to go away for Christmas this year so will probably be celebrating with friends over the barbie and with a few bottles of N.Z. bubbly.

We are making good progress in our house since moving in at the beginning of Sept. The first task was to knock down a huge brick chimney so that we could make the lounge and kitchen into one big room but builders in Hanmer work on 'Kiwi-time' so we still have a hole in the ceiling, but at least the roof has stopped leaking! We decided to re-use the original wooden kitchen units and just replace the work tops - that means more jigsaw puzzles to get units to fit in their new positions, but we are winning slowly. The bathroom has been enlarged into what was an internal porch area and even looks like it may be finished before Christmas - well, we do live next door to the plumber! No, we haven't altered the bedrooms, they just needed decorating so, once the boxes of kitchen bits and camping gear are found a home, we will be ready for visitors. Outside we have a large wooden shed to move from the middle of the back garden to the side and then there will be room to put a decking on the back of the house (the sunny side of course). I have managed to plant a few vegis in some odd places but daren't do too much as it's all going to change.

We are both well settled into jobs. I (Ros) work Tuesdays to Saturdays 1 pm to 6 pm massaging and looking after the gym and Andy is working for Graham, whose business we ran, teaching outdoor activities to school groups. We won't get rich but it pays the bills and buys the beer!

We have been orienteering near Auckland and down at Dunedin and are looking forward to catching up with friends at the Aussie v N.Z. Challenge in Jan. I nearly had to become a real Kiwi and don a N.Z. orienteering suit but they decided that I haven't been here long enough yet (2 years), although there was talk of ignoring the rules! It's not that we are cheats over here - we just don't like the Aussies beating us.

Ever since Sue (Russell)'s surprise visit I have been feeling very guilty not writing to you all - no excuses, just so much to do out here and it's hard to sit down and write letters when the sun is shining and the mountains and forest are beckoning. It's great to get EMEWS and Newstrack and know what you are all up to - 600 and at a club event at Shining Cliff!! Over here we get 50-ish at club events and even the South Island Champs only got 150 competitors. Yes, DVO does have the South Island W21 Champion! - there were only 4 in the class and I won by over 10 minutes despite missing out a

control and losing 5 minutes by going back to it! Thanks for the photo of my trophy Liz - it's good to know that it's had a good home for the year. Is Val going to win it in '97?

The World Vets in 2000 is big news here. Everyone is really pleased to have got it here, but it seems they want to hold it in January. I spoke to the NZOF Chairman and pointed out that it would be an expensive time of the year for flights and that northern hemisphere orienteers may struggle to get enough time off, especially teachers, but he seemed pretty adamant that it would be Jan. On the plus side, it will be brilliant weather - too warm if anything - and the days will be long so it's a good time of year to make a holiday of it and come to South Island. The actual event will be in Sanddune, on the coast about 1 hour's drive north of Wellington, I think. It will not be anything like the World Cup jungle so don't worry about that. The forest we have raced in up there was mapped at 2.5m contours and was quite technical and fast so it should be good orienteering. You can be sure that the Kiwis will want to put on a good event and even though there aren't many of them (or should I say us) they will do a professional job. It would be brilliant to have a DVO group out - I'm already being pressured to run as a Kiwi by then - I think they want a World Champion - but I'll not decide my loyalties yet. I have to have lived down here for two years before I can run in the Aussie/N.Z. Challenge so that got me out of it this year, but one day I'll have to decide. I'll keep you informed as regards the World Vets as information comes to hand and if you need to know anything then just let us know.

We found out last week that our negotiations to buy Hanmer Outdoor Experience have been successful. That's the business we were running last time we were here so it will be good to own it and a big challenge to make a go of it. Nothing is signed and sealed yet but the price is agreed and we hope to be 'the bosses' by early Jan. It needs a lot of work to bring it up to the standard we will be happy with so we are going to be really busy for a while but it feels good to be self-employed and not answerable to anyone else. Winter - that's June to August - is a slack time so there will be plenty of time to ski in '97! We can always occupy any budding outdoor instructors who make it to New Zealand.

It's already past the last posting date for the UK so I guess this will arrive after Christmas - sorry! (Wrong!) We would love to see you any time if you get fed up with cold wet Britain. Take care, keep in touch.

All the best and keep saving for DVO in NZ in 2000!

Ros and Andy Clayton  
22 Torquay Terrace  
Hanmer Springs

Phone/Fax 03 315 7686

# **DVO Weekend & Annual Dinner**

**8th and 9th March 1997**

**Come and spend the weekend of the 8th and 9th of March  
at the idyllic location of Hartington Hall.**

**Walking, Running, Cycling, Board Games or simply  
relaxing before an open fire, the choice is yours.**

**For only £25 (adults) £15 (children 11-15) £10 (children  
6-10) and £5 (5 & under) we have booked sole use of  
Hartington Hall all day Saturday and Sunday, with access  
to all its facilities, a sumptuous candle-lit dinner on  
Saturday night, overnight accommodation, some in  
en-suite rooms, a leisurely buffet breakfast on the Sunday  
morning, and tea and coffee available all day. Friday night  
accommodation available too by arrangement with the  
wardens. Dinner alone is also an option at £13.00.**

**The Annual Dinner will consist of a four course  
carvery-style meal.**

**Wine, beer, cider and lager will be on sale at reasonable  
prices, although you are very welcome to bring your own.**

**Please complete and return the enclosed slip to Val to  
secure you place.**

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*Idea on this to Sue!*

## Report on the 1995 BOF Delegate Conference - Part 2

The second part of the conference was given over to a discussion of the environmental impact of orienteering, land access problems and what measures should be taken in response to these.

In 1991, Brian Parker predicted an apocalyptic future where orienteering was banned completely between April and August or September and outlawed altogether on any area with an SSSI on or adjacent to it, with any unusual flora, fauna or geology or under pressures from excessive public access. The consequences of this might be selection for champs, closed regional events, no orienteering in the Lakes, New Forest or National Parks, JK only every two years in Scotland with selected entry and an increase in coincidental club events.

Four years later, he examined "progress" towards Armageddon by noting an increase in the number of events with number limits and the abandonment of the planned JK in Dartmoor. Erik Peckett, the SW JK co-ordinator, explained this latter development was due to the authorities insisting on a numbers limit of 1250 and the event not taking place during the school holidays.

In view of the increasing difficulties in obtaining permission for the use of areas for large-scale, prestigious events, Erik recognised that consideration had to be given to ways of working within these constraints or seeking to avoid them by anticipating the problems and taking steps to prevent them arising. He considered a number of ways of doing this:

### 1. Reduction or Spreading of Numbers.

1. Extending start-times over 5-6 hours. The problems of this measure is an increase in unfairness of the competition, for example due to changing weather conditions (e.g. the recent S. Wales National Event), the development of elephant tracks over a longer period of time and the practical disadvantages of having to prepare for very early start times.
2. Parallel courses for two halves of the same age group, e.g. M40L. This would mean 2 M40L Champions.
3. Introduce an extra class, e.g. M40 Elite. This increases the number of courses and introduces problems of defining and selecting the Elite class.
4. Splitting the Champs (there was a surprising amount of support for this option and I got the feeling that this may well be the shape of the future). One suggested split was Juniors from 10-17, Seniors 17-40 and Vets 40+ (representing a numbers ratio of approx 1:3:2). The advantages are smaller numbers, smaller areas, less organisation/helpers per event. Disadvantages are transport to events for juniors whose parents have no run, champs taking up 3 dates and events rather than 1, more organisation/helpers overall, lack of atmosphere, no relays.
5. Do away with Short Courses. Lesser numbers but problems with people running up and with partners who run L and S.
6. Limit numbers to 30-50 per class. This would reduce the event to about 1000 and increase the status of the event.

However there would be the problem of selecting the 30-40, increased costs, decreased profitability and relays becoming impractical.

## 2. Selection

Possible options were:

1. The ranking lists - overwhelmingly rejected by everyone, which made me wonder just what purpose the ranking lists serve anyway.
  2. First Come, First Served - also rejected as unfair and too arbitrary.
  3. Regional Champs - in the old style, pre-National days when we had Southern, Midland, Northern etc. Champ events open to everyone on national event standard areas by and large. (This made me smile as I was never in favour of getting rid of these in the first place).
  4. Association Champs. As I understood the distinction between this and No. 3, this involved closed competitions, the winners of which went forward to the Champs, whereas under 3, you could qualify at any one of the regional champs.
- The last option would cause a problem for the officials, those who were ill, injured, abroad so there would have to be some sort of committee letting through "wild cards".

## 3. The JK

This was treated differently in view of its traditional "festival" status and entry from abroad. Measures discussed included:

1. Raising entry fee - universally disapproved as too crude and discriminating.
2. Designating certain areas as for use for the JK only.
3. Having 2 JKs in different parts of the country.
4. Changing the time of year.
5. Only having the event every other year.

Next up was David Thomas, BOF Chairman, espousing the virtues of the club event under the heading of "Small is Beautiful". The problem with large events are that they are perceived by the public/environmentalists as intrinsically damaging and give a bad impression with their sprawling car parks and flooding of an area for a short period of time. This, by the way, has indirectly led to the Ashdown Forest National Event being on the last day of the year; permission can only be obtained for it in Nov/Dec and this is the only Sunday free.

If one large badge event were replaced by, say, four colour-coded events in the same area, the advantages would be easier car-parking, reduced travel, easier to find officials, fewer courses, smaller areas, easier and quicker results, less annoyance to landowners, less (perceived) environmental damage, compliance with number restrictions and cheaper prices.

The disadvantages would be less profit, slower use of map stocks, need for four sets of officials and more requests for land permission.

After listening to this deluge of ideas, we all split up into

groups and reported back later.

Generally the feeling was that the JK would cease to be a competition worthy of the name if anyone tampered with it to the serious extent proposed, e.g. moving it away from Easter, so the message was "Hands off the JK". However it was recognised that the days of the British being open to all may be numbered and, of all the options for change, it was preferred to have qualifying races on a regional level as a means of entry. A BOF committee - surprise, surprise - has now been set up to look into ways of limiting numbers for the British.

Where overwhelming numbers at events, particularly badge events, is a problem, like the South-East, there was a general vote in favour of holding coincident colour-coded events as counter-attractions (not sure whether instead of or as well as).

These discussions threw up many other interesting topics too. there was a suggestion at one point that all badge events should be banned but this was generally jumped on. Just as surprising was the hostility towards the CompassSport Cup which was felt to have outgrown its original purpose and now to be a bad influence, distorting colour-coded events. the days of this competition may well be numbered.

Finally one idea approved which i think should be universally adopted is the separation of female results in colour-coded events. Most women probably compete at Green or Brown level, but their achievements are lost in the huge number of male competitors on the same course. Comparisons with their counterparts would still be possible if the results were separated but the achievement of, say, the first woman on Blue would be emphasised this way in the same way as the first Blue male. Worth thinking about but perhaps the women themselves should decide.