

NEWSTRACK SUMMERTIME SPECIAL

(SEPTEMBER 2002)



Judith Chalmers does not appear in this issue

Newstrack is the magazine of Derwent Valley Orienteers

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Newstrack

If it seems only a month since the last Newstrack was inflicted on you, this is not surprising, because it is. No, Newstrack is not turning into a monthly publication, heaven forbid, it's just that unless I make an effort and get this one out before the Bank Holiday, it's likely to be mid-September before it emerges blinking into the sunlight. Fortunately I have been blessed with a number of articles from DVO members returning from holidays far and wide and have enough copy therefore to justify an early issue.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue, particularly at this time of year when the garden calls louder than the keyboard. I hope everyone appreciates this. DVO is one of the few clubs which puts out a newsletter six times a year, four times seems to be the norm, and members should be grateful to those who are prepared to share their experiences with them.

So read on and see how Amy Kimberley fared in the Lakes, Tony Berwick in Finland, Liz Godfree in Sweden and li'l ol' me in the Czech Republic.

A Wayfarer's Guide to the Lakes 5 Days

As described by Amy Kimberley. Aged 7.

It was a long way up to the Lake District but at least the weather was good and I only asked, "Are we nearly there yet?" four times.

The campsite was quite good but we couldn't take the car onto the field. The really bad news was that the swimming pool next door was closed because of the rain that had come down in the last week.

Day 1 WaterMillock

There was a long queue for the car park and when we got to the field it was very slippery. Some cars had to be pushed. From the car park you could see a start banner very high up. There were even some clouds below the start! I wanted to walk up to the start but my Mum wouldn't take me. When Jessica (Gale) arrived, we both went to do the string course. It was easy but then it was the second time I had done it. I wanted to do the wayfarer course but there was no one to take us as it was some distance away. Still me and Jessica enjoyed ourselves in the muddy puddles, sometimes with wellies on and sometimes without wellies. The wellies weren't high enough anyway. All too soon the grownups were taking us away from the muddy puddles and back to the campsite. Still I knew I would see Jessica again tomorrow.

Day 2 Askham Fell

We arrived at the car park very early and went to assembly and sat on a hill overlooking the car park. The grown ups put the tent up and then a man came around and put the string course right at the back of our tent. Soon we could

see other children doing the string course round the back of our tent and then in front of it.

Me and Jessica soon did the string course and were cheered on by other DVO people.

Once Mum came back from her course we asked to be taken on to the wayfarers course. This was a long way through the village of Pooley Bridge and in the car park by the river. When we had started, I told mum not to come with us, so we went on our own around the course and mum went around backwards to make sure that we were alright.

Day 3 Place Fell

Again we arrived at the car park early, Jessica's Mum took us to the string course and when we came back there were two young sheep running around the car park and we tried to chase them. While our mums were out on their courses, Jessica's Grandma took us around the wayfarers course. The course was very rocky and we went up a rocky hill. It was like what I thought the main start on Day 1 was like, but we didn't go all the way to the top on our course. Later on while we were waiting for my mum to come back we went and played in the stream, we told the adults where we were going, but they forgot. Eventually one of them came to get us. They seemed to be quite worried, I don't know why, we were enjoying ourselves.

Day 4 Angle Tarn Pikes

We were in the same car park as Day 3 but in a different part. The grown ups looked a bit worried as the area they were running on was in mist. Dad wasn't running today (he had a blister) so it was his turn to take us on the wayfarers. This was on some of the same paths as yesterday but with a different start. There was lots to see on the course. There were canoes on the lake. They looked like they were having a race so we watched them go to the shore. We also kept looking for sheep and counting them. Dad kept on tricking us to run, but it didn't always work. Near the end it started raining and Dad kept asking us to run back to the finish, but we said we liked it in the rain and we didn't mind getting wet. He didn't look happy.

After the wayfarers we did the string course by then Mum had come back and so we left the event and Jessica, to go and look at a waterfall. We had to walk to get to the waterfall and it was raining again. The waterfall was very high and was really good. I wanted to walk further but Mum and Dad wanted to get out of the rain and back to the car.

Day 5 Birkett Common

After the club tent went up Jessica and I saw some controls on the string course. We decided to go and have a look for some more of the controls but we forgot to tell the adults what we were doing, we went around all of the

controls before the string was put out. Later on we went around the course properly when it was open.

We went on the wayfarers course when our mums were doing their courses, this time it was Jessica's Granddad's (Derek's) turn to take us. The start of the wayfarers course was at a ruined castle which we went in before we started the course. The course today went close to a river and we wanted to have a quick paddle in it but Derek said no we couldn't because we were doing our course. Later on we found a marsh on the course and Derek said we could play in it. After we got bored in the marsh we played in the river, it was not flowing fast where we were paddling, and after a while Derek said we had to come out and carry on with the course. We found some horses near the course and we tried to stroke one of the horses. We carried on the course up a muddy path to the finish where the helpers were waiting to pack up, we were holding them up.

Dad's Comments

As you can see Amy thoroughly enjoyed her Lakes 5 days, even though we adults felt that getting Jessica and Amy round the wayfarers was harder work than our courses. For the rest of the orienteering it was a bit of a mixed bag. All the days were on open fell ranging from quite technical (Days 3 & 4) to very boring (Day 1), though the mist on Day 4 added considerably to the technical nature of that day.

Day 1 also suffered with the parking problems. The queue was so bad that at one stage the police on the public road below the car park stopped people going in saying that the event was cancelled. About 200 people failed to start that day. Ironically later arrivals breezed into the car park.

Overall a good Lakes and at least the weather was OK, in fact definitely hot and sunny for the most part.

Steve Kimberley

Tony Berwick Goes To Fin 5.

Summer again, and where should I go for an interesting O-holiday? Being on DVO's free-transfer list (still no offers, Tony, I'm afraid - ed), I feel inhibited orienteering in front of DVO superstars, so where could I escape from all those super-critical eyes?

The Lakes 5 day? No, DVO bound to be there in large numbers.
The Swedish O-Ringen? No, Duckworths going there, and I can't risk Sarah seeing my slightly-less-than-perfect O-skills.
The Czech 5 day? Definitely not, Graham Johnson will be there!

It was then that I remembered an article by Hallie Hardy in Compass-Sport perhaps 15 years ago; HH was writing about Brits making their first event in

Scandinavian-O, and he was enthusiastic about the Fin 5. As I was unlikely to be under the eye of the DVO management, I entered the Fin 5 to be centred on Varkaus in south-east Finland.

This O-week was to be part of a longer holiday, which offered the chance of a less-than-direct route (does that sound familiar?), from Bergen, where the sun shone, 1200 miles by boat up the Norwegian coast, with a mid-way diversion for a week in the Lofoten Islands, north of the Arctic Circle, therefore in the land of the midnight sun, and yes, we did see it. The coastal voyage finished in Kirkenes at 71 degrees N, still in Norway, but only 100 miles from Murmansk with its fleet of ex-Soviet nuclear submarines rotting on the edge of the Arctic. Leaving the sea we came south through the full length of Finland, crossing Lapland by bus, then zigzagging southwards by train, a total distance of 1100 miles in 9 days before reaching Varkaus. All the way south was forested, firstly silver-birch scrub, then birch+pine but not very tall, then larger birch+pine+spruce with extensive marshes and lakes. Passing forest for hour after hour, I wondered how I would map it, and whether the Fin 5 terrain would be similar, but above all I wished that DVO could have just a few square miles of this undulating/marshy/sandy/boulder-fielded forest.

'What about the orienteering?', I hear you ask. With over 4000 competitors I was surprised to find only one other Brit and very few Scandinavians from outside Finland (too near the O-ringen?), but some 200 Russians. I met a Japanese, also M65, whom I had met at the World Vets in USA in 1997. The first three days used the same forest with different starts but the same finish/assembly etc, not quite the same challenge as at the Scottish 6 days with a new area every day. It was fully forested, undulating, much of it complexly contoured due to its ice-sheeted past, runnable but with low visibility making direct legs slow and risky. Maps were not bagged but printed on waterproof material (not Tyvek but similar) with no problems of rubbing off on folds, no control descriptions on the map, but loose descriptions, waterproof again, at the pre-start.

After the rest day cycling and sightseeing around Varkaus, the last two days were on a hillier area, climb similar to Cannock, with quite a lot of open due to felling, but still no rock; I had thought that all Finnish forests were rocky! On day 4 I puffed into the finish download to be told there was a problem, which turned out to that I had picked up both control descriptions and map for M60S instead of M65S. Idiot! Now new readers of Newstrack will understand why I am on DVO's free-transfer list! Day 5 was my best run, but with no final placing as all five days count.

An early start on the last day enabled me to get the afternoon train to Helsinki, where I met up with Carol who had been a free spirit for a week, including a day-trip to Estonia. A few days in Helsinki, then the last night in Stockholm in a youth hostel originally a prison with very thick walls, small windows and heavy doors, and thence back to Derby. Yes, I can recommend the Fin 5 day.

Tony Berwick

SKÖVDE 2002 – Liz Godfree's first experience of an O-Ringen

It was Steve who first suggested that DVO should go to the O-ringen this year as, for once, it fitted in with school holidays. We could fly with Ryanair to Gothenburg and catch the Inter-City train to Skövde.

So it was at 3:30 a.m. that Steve, Mike and I were heading down the M1 to Stansted. The heaving mass of humanity at Stansted on the first Saturday of school holidays, travelling to exotic Ryanair destinations like Knock, combined with a shortage of check-in staff, guaranteed a late departure. Steve did his best to smuggle his penknife on board but was thwarted by a thorough search of the first-aid bag in his KIMM-sac. Gothenburg City was rather a contrast, no more than a flying club, which closed down after our plane had turned round, before even the airport bus had left.

After attempting to buy train tickets at the bus ticket office, Mike joined the deli counter system in the railway ticket office for long enough to miss the first train. Swedish efficiency doesn't run to reservation labels on seats so we sat in several seats and on the floor for the hour to Skövde.

Having seen the Barracks from the train as we approached, we at least knew in which direction to head; there were even red and white streamers to guide us through town. I think the luggage trolley said "not to be removed from the station" but our Swedish wasn't up to that. Unlike others though, Mike had sufficient guilty conscience to take it straight back rather than use it as a washing line for the week or as a bridge over the camp-site ditches.

Having finally located area B, despite the distinct lack of signs, we entered the English-speaking enclave. The 3 DVO pitches at the end of a row which had seemed ideal on the site plan were less so on the ground – the end one was across a slight re-entrant and had already developed a vehicle track through it. Wisely we opted for an unclaimed knoll between EPOC and some Russians. Later in the week, that end pitch was to become a quagmire in which Sarah Duckworth paddled and the Kiwis attempted cyclo-cross!!

To accommodate such a vast number of orienteers, a whole village has to be created for the tents, cars and caravans. Many had brought bikes with them to cycle round the "campus", others had hired "sit up and beg" army surplus with back pedal (if you were lucky) rather than hand brakes.

In sanitary and washing arrangements the Swedes rival the Swiss in their ingenuity but owe more to the Ancient Romans than Brian Denness (see Newstrack passim). The marquee might be 21st century, as were the toilet seats and lids, but the pipe with running water was pure Roman technology. Modesty went out of doors as you entered the marquee – a row of thoughtful ladies, some talking animatedly to a neighbour! And miles of loo roll – they never seemed to run out.

In the Assembly Areas we were treated to privacy with an enclosed "thunderbox", none of your flush loo Tardises here. The first time I stepped

behind the hessian screen at the Start – fearing the worst – I was stopped in my tracks – there were some 2 dozen buckets arranged neatly in a rectangle with a bevy of beauties enthroned! One's mind wanders at such times. Why was the oriental lady wearing thermal long johns under her 'O' trousers?

Enough about sanitary arrangements (yes, I did become obsessed by them!), what about the orienteering? To allow for some 10,000 orienteers there were 8 Starts and 8 Finish lanes, each with its own sponsor. In fairness some of the Starts were adjacent (Mike had hanging baskets at his) but just think of the wo/manpower involved. Incidentally, unlike the Scots at the 6 Day, the organising clubs do not compete in the year in which they host the event. I doubt we'd have any major events in the U.K. if that were the case.

Swedish forests can be a dream to run in – no brambles, no nettles, no bracken; the bilberries at the Start are an energy boost after the long walk from Assembly. Of course, there were days when it was boggy underfoot. On the final day I saw folks swimming across a marsh to a control on a crag foot. My route choice suffered an abrupt change as I splashed along the edge of the marsh to my control rather than gaining the higher ground as I'd intended. Considering how many competitors there were I did not find an abundance of controls in the forests nor did I encounter many more people than at a JK. However at the end of one long leg, I did 'dib' 162 rather than 192, both on the southern edge of clearings some 50m apart.

Meeting up in enormous assembly fields was solved by meeting under the Union Jack – yes flags for each of the 40 or so nations competing. Andy made a good guess the day he arrived before flag-raising. Alphabetic order in Swedish, and not United Kingdom but Stor Britannia or thereabouts. I was impressed that the commentator corrected himself from "England" to "Stor Britannia" for the Union flag.

Although we were using SI punching there were no splits on completion. These were available at a price for each class in the evening at the event centre. Now there's a business opportunity with the DVO lap top and splits printer. However if you were 'Ej godk.' as I was a visit to the Problem Tent resulted in a print out of your splits and a view of the master map of all controls to explain your mistake. What annoyed me was that as I downloaded I was acknowledged with a smile, a nod and 'OK'.

Courses varied in length but on the whole were on the short side – perhaps as a concession to 5 days of competition in what could have been very hot weather. I certainly didn't feel I'd had value for money on the day I ran round in 33 minutes, just 5 minutes down from the winner. Day 5 was a Chasing Start – a somewhat pointless exercise for those of us who'd been disqualified. Many of the W50Ls just didn't bother to run (as had been my intention) so there was no chasing to do – a large gap in front of me and no-one behind.

Weather conditions over the week were mixed. I'm glad we took Goretex cags and umbrellas! I felt much warmer sleeping in a Lifa. But I would have preferred wellies on the campsite to paddling around barefoot in sandals.

Czech-point Charlie – Newstrack Editor checks out the Doksy 5 Days

Take a series of deep valleys parallel to or at right angles to each other. Line these valleys with massive crags 20 to 30 metres high. Separate these crags at intervals with narrow gaps or steeply inclined re-entrants, some up to 100 metres in length. Sprinkle the whole area liberally with boulders of all shapes and sizes so it is only comprehensible at 1:5000. Mix the whole together and you've got what we had to tackle on Days 3 and 4 of the Czech 5 Days.

It was quite unlike anything I'd ever orienteered on before, and these areas by themselves justified the trip into Northern Bohemia, an area about thirty miles from the eastern Germany border and about fifty miles north of Prague, itself now within two hours of East Midlands airport.

All five areas were within seven kilometres of the campsite (of which more later), and the first day was within walking distance. In retrospect the first two days were preparation for the last three. The first was probably the least typical, with courses almost twice as long as on other days and largely non-technical. I ought to have done better than I did, and put a poor run down simply to the unfamiliarity of the terrain, including three huge conjoined hills decorated with ranks of crags, halfway round. What made the whole week so enjoyable was the sheer runnable nature of the areas, (apart from the final day). So much orienteering in the UK represents a challenge of brawn rather than brain but I didn't see so much as a single bramble in the whole week in the Czech Rep. Bilberries carpeted most of the forests, providing an inexhaustible source of sustenance for hungry orienteers before, after and even during the events.

The organisation of the events, whilst functional, was sometimes endearingly casual. The whole of the DVO contingent, perhaps half of the UK's representation, were provided with just two copies of the programme on arrival. Although start times and course details did finally appear on the web in the week before the event, there were no advance control descriptions and no-one told us they would be available at assembly. When we arrived at the Start at Day 1, we found out we had to wear numbers on bibs. No-one knew their numbers so, along with several hundred others, we had to hunt for our name on lists randomly pinned on trees, and then locate the relevant number on washing lines or in boxes. It was like a giant party game and did at least break the ice.

Apart from this first day, transport to the event was by bus. It cost an amazing 3 euros per person for the whole week. Entries were about £20.00 per head for the week too. Generally the rumours of a low cost of living were true, so DVO could afford to eat out at the best restaurant in town for around a fiver a head, and that included drinks.

Punching was by Sport-Ident (they have purple, green and yellow dibbers out there; I was so jealous - I'd love a yellow dibber to finish off my yellow DVO O-suit ensemble). This worked well until the Finish when there was just one download station for a field in excess of 2000, very irksome on days like Day

4 when everyone had to stand in queues, sweating in the heat for lengthy periods. However these are minor quibbles about a truly memorable and enjoyable week.

Day 2 introduced us more formally to the sort of rocky features that were so characteristic of the latter part of the week. Controls were sited at the foot of crags and in re-entrants in clusters of hills separated by expanses of flattish forest, so short bursts of speed were followed by rapid successions of closely packed controls. This was a feature of the rest of the week. My course lengths for the middle 3 days were 4.9km, 3.5km and 4.4km, short even by multi-day event standards, but they comprised 18, 23 and 27 controls.

As might be imagined crags and re-entrants were the most common sites but I did have two caves one day. The definition of cave was fairly loose; the first was of Thor's Cave dimensions, but the second was a crag barely a metre high, slightly concave in shape. I also had a control which translated as 'Between Crags', but it wasn't until I got there that I realised that these crags were sited alongside each other vertically, rather than horizontally. ('Between Crags' horizontally seemed to be translated as }{ in the control descriptions, so there is room for variation even within IOF standards). You had to be very careful with boulders too. Some were situated less than a metre away from the sheer face of a crag and the side nearest the crag mirrored its profile so the gap, where the control was situated, was barely distinguishable.

The last three days were based around the same assembly area so we ran on maps roughly surrounding three sides of it. With courses so short, and controls so plentiful, Days 3 and 4 were an unforgettable experience, an incredible adrenaline rush. The terrain was more or less completely runnable, and, with no long legs, you were hitting a control, most of the time, every two or three minutes. The majority of controls involved some sort of descent or climb and usually both. The beloved tactic of the planner was to place one control at the top of a re-entrant, usually sandwiched between two crags, and the next one in a similar position but on the other side of the valley, so a descent at breakneck, or breakankle, speed was followed by an arduous ascent to regain the height just lost. I have no idea how much climb there was on these courses, and the planners were singularly coy about telling us, because each day's course details listed the height simply as '0m'. I suspect this was deliberate and, given the short lengths, the height gain not only transgressed the usual '5% of length' rule but was in excess of 10% too.

There were no concessions for age, old or young. On the last day, I shared a control with what looked like W12 or 14. It was on top of a crag five metres high. Believe it or not, I had the sense to go round the back of the hill it was on and attack it from the rear, but I saw one W12 clinging for dear life on to the crag, trying to scale it, while at the side, another was standing on top of someone else's shoulders trying to scramble up. I don't think they've heard of risk assessment in the Czech Rep.

There was no break in the orienteering, the five days were continuous, so this may have been a thrilling experience but it was also an exhausting one. The

only real beef I have about the planning was the last day's. By now, all but the most superfit orienteers were feeling the pace, and I would have hoped that the planner would have appreciated this but instead the courses, this time on a 1:10000 map, were longer than the previous two days, and over ground several degrees more physical too. The same tactic of planning repeated up and down legs was becoming a little wearisome, and I was frankly glad to finish. This was a shame after the memories of the previous four sybaritic days.

The campsite was also memorable, but for very different reasons. We knew nothing about what was billed as the official campsite in advance. It could have been a field like the Scottish, or based around a sports centre like the Swiss/Italian last year. But this wasn't the Swiss, pal, it was the Czech, mate. (Sorry, couldn't resist that). Official camping was on a public site, the central attraction of which was a 'Disko' whose proceedings subsided only in the wee small hours of the morning. I'm not even sure it was intended for camping at all, since like many Czech campsites, it was scattered with what might charitably be described as chalets, probably dating from the Fifties, and we were required to pitch in the gaps between them. Inhabitants of these huts were generally non-orienteers interested only in paartaying. It was weird because, just as we were preparing for bed, the huts were getting ready for their nocturnal activities, which lasted long after the Disko shut. Thus our nights were periodically interrupted by car horns, marauding clubbers or just people fuelled by drink who thought it quite natural to hold a conversation next to your tent at two in the morning. As if that were not bad enough, the hut behind us turned the radio on! They were raving, and so were we.

The Johnsons, Macdonalds and Addisons had formed a subcamp at one corner of the site. Viv and Ranald were probably the most direct victims of this policy of cohabitation when two rucksacks including O-shoes and DVO jackets were nicked from their tents. The reaction to the report of this suggested it was a commonplace occurrence.

I would go on to describe the toilet arrangements but you might be eating your tea, and have probably had your fill, so to speak, of this topic, having read Liz's Guide to Swedish Conveniences.

Meanwhile the Addisons were determined to qualify for the award of Most Accident-prone family. First of all Paul contracted an eye infection which kept him out of Day 2 and 3, then Marla contracted a stomach bug, Luke came off his bike and Jessica's cut the back of her head whilst being chased by a giant mosquito - in fact it was Luke pretending to be a giant mosquito which is actually probably more frightening. The last I heard of them they were setting off in the direction of Prague, Vienna and Salzburg. The fact that these places were declared disaster areas a few days later is probably coincidental.

You are invited to:

A DVO Closed Club Event

At **Longshaw** on Sunday 6 October 2002

at which the *DVO Club Champion* and *DVO Junior Champion* will be decided.

All Club members are eligible to take part – bring a picnic for afterwards (weather permitting)

Parking behind Longshaw Lodge Visitor Centre (267801) off the B6055

3 courses: **Junior** (Yellow standard); **Medium** - approx 4km; **Long** approx 6km

Starts from 10.30 am – please arrive at 10.00 am to receive your start time

If you intend taking part please contact me before **Wednesday 2 October**. Could last year's winners (Paul Robinson and Thomas Wright) please bring the trophies with them or arrange for them to be there. Thanks

Ranald Macdonald Tel: 01629 734307 or email: r.macdonald@shu.ac.uk

Remaining Wednesday Evening Summer Runs

Runs start at 7 p.m.

28th August Rob & Gwyneth Shooter's, Rose Cottage, Cat & Fiddle Lane, West Hallam SK431403

4th September Black Rock picnic site, SK290556, off B5036 at summit between Cromford & Wirksworth

11th September Allestree as usual – committee meeting.

18th September Val & Graham Johnson's, 12 Chevin Road, Belper SK337473
Turn left off A6 in Milford (opp. Strutt Arms) going north & keep going.

Then apart from AGM on 26th September. 1st & 3rd Wednesdays at Johnson's Belper, 2nd, 4th & 5th Wednesdays at Allestree.

Friday Night Circuits/Fitness Training

These start again on Friday, 6th September, initially outdoors till the dark nights make this impossible. Meet at the car park at Firestone Quarry, Farnah Green at 7.00 pm. The following Friday, there is a LARA 'Fell' Race, 3 miles, from Milford, at 7.00 pm followed by a Jazz trio and fish and chip supper. Anybody fancy it?

DVO Annual Long Run

Saturday 7 September

The run will take place on *Saturday 7 September*, starting and finishing at the Grouse and Claret pub at Rowsley, north of Matlock on the A6. We have asked the manager of the pub to let us park and use the showers attached to the campsite at his pub on the agreement that some people will have lunch there.

The route will be through Beeley to Hell Bank Plantation; across Gibbett Moor to the Robin Hood Pub; along Birchens Edge and then out to Wellington's Monument; across the A621 below Gardom's Edge back to the Robin Hood; across the top to Chatsworth, past the Hunting Tower and drop down to Beeley Lodge; back on the west side of the Derwent to Rowsley. Approximately 24 km with the possibility of cutting out the top loop.

Water and food will be available below the road crossing close to the Robin Hood.

Starts will be as follows:

08.30 The 'talkers' group – i.e. those who like to take their time and talk about things as they saunter along

09.00 A slower runners group

09.30 The main group of runners

The aim is to finish between 12.00 and 12.30, have a shower and then lunch.

Contact **Ranald Macdonald** (01629 734307) for more details

Editor's Note: Unfortunately this is the same day as Ann-Marie Duckworth's Whatstandwell Carnival Race, details of which were included in last Newstrack – but it is still theoretically possible to do both, though probably not recommended. Still it is an alternative option for those who are not up to 24 km. Don't complain that DVO does not cater for every taste.

AGM Change of Venue

DVO's 2002 AGM will no longer be held at Alfreton Leisure Centre – somebody forgot about the start of the bowls season, a far more important sport than orienteering – so it will be on the same date, Wednesday, 25th September, and starting at the same time, 8.15 pm, but at the familiar venue of the upstairs room at the **Queen's Head, up Chesterfield Road, Belper**. See you there.

Letter to the Editor

From the Derbyshire Council Tax-payers Association

Dear Sir,

Recently, whilst travelling from Matlock, I came across a copy of Newstrack for July 2002 left on the train and, being unable to pass by the printed word, I started to read. Much of it, although written in English, was barely comprehensible. With re-readings together with the aid of a dictionary, plus a chance meeting with my son's head teacher in Duffield, I came to realise that Newstrack is connected with an esoteric pastime (sport? or woodland masochism?) known as orienteering. Having discovered this much on the fifth reading I began to see daylight through the trees.

I unravelled the long article by James Allen all about his recent life, which seems to have been taken up by orienteering in the Forest of Dean, in Warwickshire, in Crich and Allestree Park, in the Lake District and in far off Hungary. Mr Allen also revealed that he is a serving Police Officer in the Derbyshire Force. With a bit of arithmetic, it became clear to me that Police Officer Allen has spent much of his time in pursuit of this strange activity. It is strange to read of Hay Wood with holes in the ground directly in front of the start, of Allestree Park where competitors apparently coloured their legs green and orange as well as having to wear gaffling boots (I think that is what he wrote), and, of Hungary, where he had to find controls whilst carrying a pistol tucked in his waistband (did I read that bit correctly?); dangerous that running over rough ground carrying a loaded firearm!

All this must have involved travelling thousands of miles and taken many days, so that I can only assume that PO Allen must be a very important member of the Derbyshire Constabulary, as well as having influence in the allocation of leave, as presumably he does not use all his annual leave orienteering (if he does I suggest he consults a psychiatrist a.s.a.p.).

Any sane adult would spend at least some of his annual leave doing some DIY and / or dog walking. Surely Mr Allen cannot have time to own a dog, or have any DIY to do?

I write this very brief letter as a member of the Derbyshire Council-Tax-Payers' Association, extremely worried that the Chief Constable, or perhaps the Home Secretary, has permitted this officer to spend many days away from his work, and risking injury to life and limb when he should be in uniform fighting crime, (as you know Derbyshire is not yet free from crime).

Obviously as editor-in-chief of a learned journal, you have no jurisdiction over PO Allen's working life, but perhaps a quiet word in his ear might help him realise his duty towards the heavily burdened taxpayers of Derbyshire.

I remain, sir, yours, a Concerned Council-Tax-payer of Milford.

Harvester 2003

We have had a fair break from putting on major competitions since the British Relays in 1997. The Harvester is also a relay competition but rather different. 5 and 7 man teams battle it out from a start about 1 a.m. such that roughly half the legs for the winning teams are in the dark. The name derives from the event's origins with a long defunct club called "Combine Harvesters". Needless to say the open trophy is a - - well a model one at any rate.

We plan to run the event on Longshaw with Assembly, Camping etc. in the fields behind the Grouse Inn over the night of Saturday/Sunday 14th/15th June next year. I have agreed to take on the role of co-ordinator on behalf of the club. Steve Kimberley is planning. So far I have a Safety Officer and an Entries Secretary. I am now looking for volunteers to take on some of the team leader roles for results, change-over and organiser. There will be opportunities to run and maybe even to sleep. The map is being revised by Dave Peel.

Hopefully we will attract up 80 to 100 teams in the two classes. The 7 man A class is an open competition. The B class is a handicap race with a number of trophies for various categories.

I look forward from hearing you volunteer before I need to come round with a clip board. But don't worry if you have a good excuse for that weekend, there is always JK 2004 day 2, which DVO members are planning, and the British Night Championships in 2004.

Mike Godfree 01332 515862 or Mike.Godfree@bosinternet.com

Sports Personality of The Month

My sympathies are extended to **Evelyn Ross** who travelled as far as the Italian 6 Days in the Dolomites only to retire on Day 1, having been unable to find a single control, and also to **Margaret Keeling**, for the second month running, for having known the date that Crich W.I. was founded even before she started the Crich Street event.

But neither of these are really in the same league as **Ranald Macdonald**, who whilst out and about on the very same Crich Street event, was suddenly confronted by no lesser literary leviathan than Thomas The Tank Engine, who, clearly a stranger to these parts, asked Ranald the way to Crich Tram Museum. How jealous we were.

In a lesser month's Ranald breath-taking achievement might just have won him the prize, but he reckoned without the sheer combined incompetence of **Mike Godfree** and **Dave Vincent**. Mike, when fixing the grid reference for the Poulter map, suffered an uncharacteristic mental aberration and inserted the wrong one. He neglected to tell the planner, Dave Vincent, who, not knowing exactly where Poulter was, located it using, you've guessed it, the grid ref on the map. Unfortunately for Dave, this put Poulter around ten miles from where it actually was - and well inside the Nottinghamshire border. Unsurprisingly Dave never found Poulter that day. Now, I've had problems finding the Start in the past, but even I have never misplaced an entire area before.

Orienteering in the Czech Republic 2003

Or

An alternative to the JK

There is a 3-Day event being held from 18-20 April 2003 – which is the Easter weekend - near Prague in the Czech Republic.

The terrain is described as follows: "Horizontally and vertically very complicated, deep as well as shallow valleys, sandstone rocks, small rocky towns (I assume they mean 'towers') (actually, Ranald, this seems to be the generally accepted way of referring to these clusters of rock pinnacles, since that is the description of them in the Lonely Planet Guide, but towers is, I agree, a better way of conveying what they resemble- ed), a lot of passages, good runnable pine or leafy forest in a Natural Reserve."

The leaflet shows pictures of the sort of terrain we ran in this summer at the Czech 5-Day and the map we saw of the area looked equally as challenging as that we encountered. Talk to any of the Buckleys, Johnsons, Addison or ourselves if you want to know what it was like and to see the maps.

Programme: Thursday 17 April – training

Friday 18 April – 15.00 shortened distance

Saturday 19 April – 10.00 classic distance

Sunday 20 April – classic distance (hunting start)

For accommodation it says – "hotels, pensions or hard floors in Prague or near the O-event centre" (which we think is a short distance north of Prague).

We suggest that, if there is enough interest, people arrange their own flights or drive there, that we either book accommodation together – 'hard floors'! – or you make your own arrangements, and that we get a minibus or coach to take us to the events.

We could also arrange the entries – classes are DH-10 ... DH21EAB, DH35AB ... DH65 ... H75, beginners

There is also a web site at:

<http://www.orianteering.cz/zavody/dkp/english.html>

which has details and maps of this year's event. Details for next year should be available from October.

Initial expressions of interest by the end of September, please.

Alternatively, you could go to the JK in South-Central region!!

Ranald and Viv Macdonald (01629 734307, r.macdonald@shu.ac.uk)



Derwent Valley
Orienteers

Local Event

***Poulter Country
Park***
(near Bolsover, Derbyshire)

Saturday 21st September 2002

By car: From the A632 in Nether Langwith, four miles east of Bolsover, take the minor road (Whaley Road) toward Whaley at the junction east of the traffic lights under railway viaduct. The car park is on Whaley Road at SK523704.

By public transport: Train to Langwith-Whaley Thorns on the Nottingham – Mansfield – Worksop route, then 200 yard walk south west into the Park; or bus to Nether Langwith from Mansfield or Chesterfield, then ½ mile walk.

Cost: Seniors £2; Juniors/Students £1

Normal Punching System

Registration: 1000 - 1130

Start: 1030 - 1130

Courses: White, Yellow, Orange and Score

No restrictions on dogs

Organiser: Val Johnson 01773 824754 or gmjandfam@aol.com