

THE WRITE TRACK

Newsletter of



Orienteering

Newcastle and Tyneside

Navigating from Tyne Banks to Tweed



Issue 2014/31

March 2014

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring Edition, which is a mixture of personal story, event reporting, some official information and guidance, together with requests for support and help at events, both major, in the form of the British Championship weekend, and the continuing regular events which form the basis of our sport. Also featured are opportunities to maintain your fitness in the parkrun series of events and use your orienteering skills in a different format in the Bike-O event..

Deadline for the Summer edition: TBA.

Peter Firth

Official Needs

An observation from Bill Burlton and a request from Patrick Smyth

I've always taken for granted the set up at orienteering events and apart from occasionally helping out with registration and car parking, hadn't really given any thought to what goes on behind the scenes in order to stage even relatively low key events. However, having volunteered to help out with some of the 2014 events, the first as organiser at Slaley on 16th March, it has become apparent just how much organisation there is a behind events and how essential is the experience of the limited number of people who do this regularly. The cumulative experience and judgement of just a handful of members is what holds most of NATO's events together and I can see why they are pressing for more people to get involved.

Bill Burlton

Patrick writes:

The officials list for the rest of the year is almost complete. I am, however, still seeking organisers for all the events in the autumn (Rising Sun, Jesmond, Gosforth Park and two usual Xmas fixtures. I also need planners for the two Christmas events (Plessey Wood and Bolam Lake). John and I are ready to mentor anyone who wants to try their hand at either the planning or organising. You will not be left to your own devices. It is important for your future enjoyment of the sport that we have a number of members who can gain experience of running an event from those who have gained expertise over tiime.

NEOA are to run a Controller's Workshop sometime in September. This will be of interest to all controllers but especially any at Level C wanting to upgrade to Level B. Anyone interested should approach Patrick in the first instance.

Also if there are any aspiring controllers who have planned 3 Level D events could they talk to Patrick.

The controller is the official who represents the competitor and liaises with the event planner and organiser to ensure a fair competition and acts as a second opinion on courses and other event arrangements.

Compass Sport Cup and Trophy - Guisecliff

The first round of the Compass Sport Cup and trophy was held at Guisecliff, near Pateley Bridge on February 16th. For the first time, club members travelled down in the knowledge that we would be competing in the Trophy rather than the Cup as we are now designated as a small club. Would that make a difference? Would we be more competitive than in the past? Absolutely!

After all the rain and miserable weather, we were blessed with a lovely sunny day and although the forest was very wet in places, it was a beautiful area. The longer courses included the moor above Guisecliff whilst the forest was very challenging in places with complex boulder fields leading in to more open areas towards the finish.

Almost 30 competitors from NATO took part and after a closely fought contest, we were eased into second place out of six by EPOC who scored 1286 points to our 1249 - a fantastic result which our club will be rightly proud of. The rules for the Trophy only allow for 13 scores to count with a maximum of 2 counters from each large (adult) class and one from each pair of small (junior) classes and these were as follows :

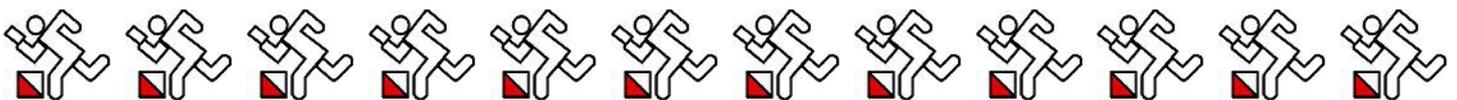
Patricia Davies	99	Sheila Sprot	97	George Hare	95
Jane Malley	98	Richard Purkis	97	Andrew Nicoll	95
Francis Shillitoe	98	John Phizacklea	97	Patrick Smyth	94
Neil Sprot	97	Alasdair Wilson Craw	96	Walter Wright	94
				Alexandra Phillip	92

It was hugely satisfying for all the club members who ran and helped to secure such a solid performance. As a newly designated small club, it bodes well for future events.

Finally, and on a personal note, as some of you will know, we are leaving the North East and moving to the Peak District. Both of our sons - Michael and David - have settled in Sheffield after attending university there, and we know the area well, having spent time there since 1998 when Michael first went to university. Our house here is sold and we have bought a property on the edge of a village to the west of Sheffield that looks out over Burbage and Longshaw. Our move will be complete by the end of March.

We have made many friends in NATO over the years and indeed, Michael and David's orienteering skills were developed and honed over years in the Junior Squad with Margaret and John. We will definitely be back up in the North East regularly visiting family and friends and will run in local events when we can. Hopefully we will also see some of you at future Peak District events.

Neil and Sheila Sprot



Puzzle Corner



Can you identify this map segment of one of the Club's areas? Answer on the last page.

parkrun

“parkrun” is the latest running phenomenon to hit the UK - a not-for-profit organisation that organises weekly, 5km timed runs in all parts of the world, open to all and absolutely free.

In the UK runs take place at 243 locations simultaneously at 9am every Saturday morning.

Locally events are held at Exhibition Park, Newcastle, Saltwell Park, Gateshead and Whitley Bay Links. Members of NATO already regular participants are Neil and Sheila Sprout, Richard Purkis, George Hare, Mary Rack, Alexandra Hare, Alasdair Wilson-Craw and Willard Wright.

Members of Northern Navigators Nigel Wright, Julian Warren, Debby Warren and Barney Warren regularly attend the Durham parkrun held at Maiden Castle.

These events take place in pleasant parkland surroundings, in a family friendly environment, much like orienteering. Runners of all abilities, shapes and sizes are encouraged to take part from club runners and harriers to those taking first steps in running or returning in later life.

A brief history

Paul Sinton-Hewitt first started Bushy Park Time Trial (which became Bushy parkrun) in Teddington, Middlesex back in 2004 with 12 fellow running enthusiasts. By popular demand he started a second event in Wimbledon in 2007 and by 2010 nineteen events were in place. But now the growth is exponential; new locations spring up weekly, with 153 new events added in 2013.

Parkrun also grew from its initial events in the UK to overseas, with ex-pats setting up an event first in Denmark, then Ireland, now USA, Australia, New Zealand, Afghanistan (at Camp Bastion), South Africa and Poland. Four of the top five highest supported events take place in Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, each regularly attracting 1000 runners weekly.

Newcastle parkrun is often in the top five highest supported UK events with between 450 and 500 parkrunners every week. London's Bushy Park still leads the way with 1000+.

In total 62,699 runners took part in 344 runs worldwide on Saturday 25th January 2014.

Sponsorship

In order to keep all parkruns free to the athletes, each territory operates its own national sponsorship arrangements. In the UK the sponsors are sports clothing manufacturer Adidas, medical insurance company PruHealth and sports clothing retailer Sweatshop founded over 40 years ago by enthusiastic parkrun supporter Chris Brasher, Olympic Gold Medalist, co-creator of the London Marathon and pace maker to Sir Roger Bannister in the first sub 4 minute mile.

The format

All runners must make an initial once in a lifetime registration on the parkrun website. This allocates the athlete with a unique personal barcode. There is no need to notify anyone beforehand when they wish to take part in a parkrun. They simply turn up at any parkrun event, anywhere in the world, with their printed barcode, and join in.

Each parkrun event is run entirely by volunteers who give their time freely to set up each event, time the runners, process the results and clear away afterwards. To assist the volunteers, parkrun HQ provides the volunteers with computer equipment, timing devices, barcode readers, signs and the web hosting of the results. Regular attendees are asked to volunteer as a steward once or twice every calendar year.

“parkrun” makes extensive use of electronic timing and barcode technology to generate the results of each event. As runners cross the finish line their time is recorded electronically.



Finish times and athletes' finishing position are uploaded to a server which automatically sends an email to each runner with their result and generates results tables and statistics on the parkrun website by around 3pm. Runners can then compare their results with friends, relations, runners of the same age, previous runs and personal bests.

All parkrun events use Age Grading to help athletes compare results. Age Grading takes the finishing time and compares it with the world record time for that person's sex and age group to produce a percentage score. The higher the score, the better the performance. This score then allows comparison of the personal performance against other people's performances on that parkrun course and other courses worldwide, even though they might be a different age and a different sex.

Clubs

There are four different 'clubs' to which a runner registered with parkrun can aspire, designed to encourage participation. The '10 club' for runners aged 19 or below who have completed 10 or more runs, the '50 club', '100 club' and '250 club' for anyone who has completed that number of runs.

When a runner reaches a 'club' milestone they are awarded an Adidas T-shirt and waterproof jacket with a number on the back to represent the club they are in. The T-shirts are colour coded: 10 (White); 50 (Red); 100 (Black); and 250 (Gold & Black). There are currently worldwide only 100 runners in the '250 club'.

Junior parkrun

Junior parkrun is a spin-off series of 2km runs for children aged between 4 and 14, once per month on a Sunday morning. There are currently eight Junior parkrun events.

The Attraction

Regular attendees of parkrun will tell you that it is addictive. Why?

At 5km long the distance is easily manageable for most people, without leaving the runner tired for days afterwards.

You get to go running with hundreds of likeminded people, rather than running alone.

It's a friendly community based event. You soon make new friends and bump into neighbours.

Most urban running clubs take part, giving members a competitive event, every single week.

You get to recognise fellow participants who run about the same pace as you, and most cannot help but get drawn into the competitive element of racing against them every week.

You get drawn into trying to beat your Personal Best which is highlighted on the results website each week. Everyone who has ever taken part in parkrun asks 'what is your PB?' Parkrun publicises the running clubs by noting all runner's clubs against their name on the results page.

Several of us NATO members have used it to publicise our orienteering club. Northern Navigators do the same.

So, what are you waiting for? Register today, and run this Saturday. I will be amazed if you do not find it an exhilarating experience.

Willard Wright



Mitford Bike-O - 15th June 2014

NATO is running its ninth Bike-O event on 15th June 2014. This event will be suitable for all abilities and is registered with the British Mountain Bike Orienteering. More information can be found at www.bmbo.org.uk.

The event will be based just north of Heighley Gate Garden Centre, (GR NZ 176896) and will be sign-posted from A697. Parking will be on the roadside. Please ensure that no litter is left. Registration will open at 11:00 and, once registered, you can report to the Start. Last start will be at 12:00.

The event will be a 2 hour score event on minor roads (some unfenced) and B roads and with some off-road options. A sturdy bike is essential and narrow tyres are not recommended. Bikes may be checked for roadworthiness at the Start. Assistance will be available at the event for anyone unsure of the rules or procedures.

This event will be suitable for all competent cyclists aged 15 or over. Younger children can still take part if accompanied by an adult (aged 18 or over). The event will use mini kites and punches and an example will be displayed at the start. All entrants **MUST** wear a helmet and are strongly recommended to carry a basic first aid kit, a basic repair kit and a whistle. Entrants should be suitably dressed for the weather conditions.

Entry fees will be £6 for an adult Day Rider (18 or over) less £1 for full adult BMBO members. Youth members £3 (aged under 18 on 31 December 2014). Insurance cover is included. A First Aider and a basic first aid kit will be at Start/Finish.

You may enter as a solo competitor or as a pair. Please email or telephone the organiser by 8 May to reserve a map. Entry forms can be sent out by email or can be collected from Registration on the day. All entrants will be required to sign that they have read and understood the safety rules as displayed at Registration.

Entrants will receive a full colour A4 size map (1:40,000) on waterproof paper based on the Landranger map series and will be pre-printed with all control sites, the description list showing points values, penalties and emergency numbers. Points for each site will vary depending on the difficulty (climb, road condition etc.) and distance to travel. Points will be deducted for exceeding 2 hours. Teams must stay together and both the riders in a pair must visit the control sites.

Important - footpaths must not be used even if carrying your bike.

Planners: Richard & Joanne Field

Organiser: Richard Field 33 Kestrel Drive, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 8JS

Telephone: 01670 855975 Email: richard.field33@gmail.com

Emergency numbers: 07890 358832 and 07976 743885

Volunteers needed to help at the British Orienteering Champs May 31st and June 1st.

NATO and our fellow North East Clubs are organising the British Championships this year in Thrunton and Callaly (near Whittingham) for the Individual and over the Cragg Estate (near Ridsdale by the A68).

Both are high quality areas and you are encouraged to enter. We do need a good number of volunteers, though, to man the starts on each day and there are some other meatier roles such as safety officer, equipment officer and prize-giving coordinator.

Volunteers will be able to receive a discount on their entry fee for age-group courses and, if you don't enter before this Sunday and get the cheaper rate - don't worry since the discount goes up after that to compensate. Early entry will be appreciated so please let me know as soon as you can that you'll be able to help. (coordinator@boc2014.org.uk). By return I'll send you the discount code.

If you'd like a particular task let me know too, otherwise I'll pass your name on to the Start Team Leader.

Non-running volunteers will be given a food voucher to use with one of the traders on the day.

Alasdair Wilson Craw,

Coordinator BOC2014



The poster for the British Orienteering Championships 2014 features a large, stylized title 'BRITISH ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS' in red and white. Below the title, the dates '31ST MAY & 1ST JUNE 2014' are displayed. A central text block invites participants to an exciting weekend in Northumberland, with entries opening in January 2014. The poster is decorated with images of orienteers in action, including a woman in a red and blue 'UK Linne' jersey and a man in a purple shirt. Logos for 'www.boc2014.org.uk', 'NE', and 'British Orienteering' are visible at the bottom.

**BRITISH
ORIENTEERING
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

31ST MAY & 1ST JUNE 2014

British Orienteering and the North East Orienteering Association invite you to an exciting weekend of orienteering in the heart of Northumberland. Both areas are within 45 minutes of Newcastle and entries open in January 2014.

www.boc2014.org.uk  

Return to NATO Part 2

...and so Zoë and I started attending Club Night regularly. The weather got warmer and we were often running around in shorts (is this legal in Orienteering?!). We enjoyed Adventure races, those blinkin' jigsaws (pieces of a map of the football pitch) and even hunting (seemingly) all round Prudhoe for a 'fox' one night.

Our first real event was at Ray Demesne, a lovely area with good weather on the day, but a bit of a (mis)adventure for us. We set off to the start, but Zoë had the wrong shoes on so back to the car. Then off to the start again, but, to our horror, we had put the dibber down in the car, so back again. Nearing the start, we saw the string course. I have never done one and thought it would be fun for Zoë, so we did it but it was huge! Finally reaching the start, we found that for our chosen course (yellow), we should have picked up a map at registration, so we ended up doing Orange but abandoned it halfway through as it was too difficult for a complete beginner.

Our next outing was Pit O. We did yellow, but the littleun had the handbrake on, shoelace problems. The whole lot *and* people on zimmer frames were overtaking us. To crown it all, the finish staff didn't collect our control card which was puzzling but I assumed this must be the new way of things in the strange red-pen-less, electronically - timed world I had now entered since my last era 15 years ago. Needless to say, we didn't appear on the results list!

The club relays went better. I was lucky enough to be teamed up with Aoife and Alasdair whom I hadn't met and assumed to be just an occasional attender. However, he went like a rocket and we found ourselves 2nd out of 7 teams.

Later, I enjoyed the club coaching day at Blyth beach and we became regulars at the summer series.

Not long after, we found ourselves going to almost everything NATO and the return was complete!

Tim Jenkins

Many thanks to Tim for sharing his varying initial experiences. Here is an overview of what Club Nighters can expect in the coming weeks

Despite fears over the future due to increased charges at the school the Club night continues to run every Wednesday evening at Prudhoe Community High School. There is a mix of ages and abilities as shown in a recent tempo run where individuals were paced against themselves and the SI timing over a course of very varied terrain. We continue to have a mix of indoor and outdoor events.

This week Fred has recently given us insight into how a map is constructed starting with a blank piece of paper - a subject which came up after a map relay where teams were trying to copy a local O map onto a piece of paper at the opposite end of the hall.

We are looking forward to April now and the light nights when we will be able to get out into the fields, woods and streets surrounding the school. Patrick has been busy adding a few more bits to the map and there are some interesting items on the programme - Ogres; George & the Dragon; Interval O; Relays.

Do come along – you will be made very welcome.

News for our organisers and planners

It is great that more club members are having a go at organising events. From time to time Alasdair Wilson Craw, and Richard Field before that, have circulated an Organisers Newsletter highlighting hints and tips and some things that must be done either before or after an event. The Club aims to keep learning, but also not to have to reinvent the wheel, so there are some documents and records that need to be filed for future access, when an area is revisited, for example. We are thus aiming to make it easier for new volunteers to make a success of all aspects of event organisation. At our last committee meeting, it was agreed that experienced club members be nominated as mentors for such volunteers. Alasdair is already available as a mentor for any rookie planner, so please ask for help, reassurance, or confirmation if you need it.

Document Filing

There are a couple of documents that we must file after the event. These are the Risk Assessment, which will have been prepared beforehand by the organiser, and the Register of Participants, including non competing people who help out on the day, or are shadowing a junior. This is put together by our registration and finish teams and is a safeguard in case our event insurance is claimed against.

Both need to be forwarded to Patrick Smyth at patrick.smyth@btisocali.co.uk to be stored securely on-line.

For organisers, an Event Report form also needs to be completed - in most cases this is routine but occasionally there will be incidents to report or suggestions for improving our procedures. This form should be sent to Alasdair (Competitions WG) and copied to Patrick.

Archiving maps and event courses

The Club is also bringing together planning and map records with details about each area we use such as landowners, any out of bounds areas, seasonal restrictions and car parking and public transport options. There are a couple of wrinkles to sort out, but Adrian and Alasdair are working to make it easy to access past planners' work using cloud storage. Please get in touch for a link to the archive if you are planning on an existing area.

Emergency Procedures

Orienteering is a remarkably accident-free sport, despite the sometimes rough terrain we run through. However, as organisers, we mustn't forget to think about worst case scenarios at each event. Part of this is at the risk assessment stage, where we find out nearest emergency services, check mobile phone reception and mitigate any serious risks, such as deep ponds and steep crags.

The other part is planning on the day. British Orienteering have guidance documents on their website, but a key point is to identify a number of people on the day who could be called on to help search for overdue competitors or recover someone from the forest that another person finds.

Alasdair Wilson Craw