



DEVON ORIENTEER



No 149

May 2012.



Pre Race Preparation in the Devon Tent on Day 3 of the JK.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

I'm looking forward to the Tamar Triple during the Jubilee weekend – enter quickly for the best deal! The Exeter University campus, continuing to expand, provides an excellent Sprint-O venue for the South West championships. Likewise Smallhanger near Plymouth, with the challenge of Wheal Florence as a sting in the tail – this will be our last chance to run (or walk) over this unique area.

The relay season is almost upon us, and I encourage you to read Tessa Stone's comments on our relay teams. For my own part, I am organising the event at Bicton College in early July, where we are looking to provide courses (and maybe prizes too) for school and family teams of three. I am reminded of a situation thirty years ago, when I organised an event in Sheffield with prizes for school and family teams. With a week to go, we had about 1,500 pre-entries (a much bigger and more populated catchment area than Devon). Then I had a bombshell at the office – my employer requested me to depart for an urgent assignment in the US for three weeks! Thankfully everything seemed to go well and our sponsors, Midland Bank (now part of HSBC), went away happy.

As I reported in the last issue, I was delighted to award the Chairman's Trophy to Mike Hosford at our club dinner in February. Mike has given remarkable service to our Club, including a long and successful period as our newsletter editor. Towards the end of that period he distributed the newsletter electronically to members – no mean feat to take the necessary steps to achieve this as an M80. It is therefore deeply disappointing for me, and probably for many other members, to receive false emails – apparently from him – urgently requiring finance while on a foreign trip. I delete them immediately, as I hope you all do, and wish that the rogue who stole his address list would give up through a lack of response. That is the only practical way to act, and please don't bother Mike, as he can't do much about it.

Whether young or not so young, may you run in sunlit forests this summer, and we look forward to reading about your exploits in a future issue!

John Dyson

WELCOME

A big welcome to two new members:

Dorothy Lynn from Yelverton and Tom Bate from Exeter. We hope that you both will enjoy your orienteering and find the club welcoming.

DEVON CLUB WEBSITE

As part of the ongoing review of everything we do a focus group is being formed to look at what we need from the web site and its ideal format. The current site has been, and is, invaluable in obtaining up to date information about fixtures and is the first port of call for most people wanting information about Devon Orienteering.

It has been many years since we have looked at this and with the advent of new technology a lot more is now possible compared to when it was first designed. We want to ensure that if changes are recommended that the best aspects of the current site are retained whilst perhaps making a site which has a wider appeal to newcomers who are going to be the lifeblood of the club in the future.

If anyone has any suggestions as to the format or content of the site in the future can they please let either Steve Perrelle or the chairman, John Dyson, have details so that they can be considered when the focus group meets. The current club members are still of course the main users and your views will be appreciated.

Steve Perrelle

Steveperrelle@blueyonder.co.uk

A FEW ITEMS FROM YOUR CLUB CAPTAIN:

Having been to a few 'championships' and SW Coaching sessions over the last couple of years, I think I am finally getting to know and understand the 'beast' Orienteering a little better now!

Being club captain has a little more to it than I initially thought, perhaps I am making it that way, but never the less, I think we are going through a bit of a transition. There are going to be a number of statements, observations, questions and requests that I am going to put to you as members of the club – they include:

- The Club – 'ONE BIG CLUB'
- Membership
- Making it Local
- Helpers
- Organisers
- Relays

- Coaching
- Schools Orienteering
- Club T-Shirts

The Club – ‘ONE BIG CLUB’

Devon is geographically a ‘big’ club, but not so big in numbers. The distribution of members is in certain areas of the county and these areas are becoming more distinct now. I feel this will happen more as each area develops and needs to satisfy the requirements such as coaching and events of the people in those areas. I also still feel that there is a real advantage in having the One Big Club feel and that we should develop this more going forward by having more ‘fun events’ that emphasise the social elements/benefits as well as the competitive i.e. coaching days, novelty events or even fun events between the separate areas.

I would like you all to think how we can create this ONE BIG CLUB and come up with at least one idea that could make this happen – please fill in the form at the bottom with your idea.

Membership

This is changing – there is no longer the ‘family’ option, just Senior and Junior membership of BOF. The SWOA is at the moment thinking about the options they have for the future – we too will have to think about this.

At the last committee meeting I asked about Mountain Bike Orienteering and doing joint events. I mention this only as I was told that they have a different Governing Body and that membership is compulsory and free to all who take part – this has got me thinking...

Recently we have had two events that have attracted newcomers to the sport, but they do not become members so do not get sent any more info – they just rely on advertising and perhaps looking on a website...is this good enough? If membership was free they would be on our membership list and receive the newsletter and perhaps get more involved and feel part of the orienteering community.

We wouldn’t obviously receive the revenue from membership but would they join this year, next year, if at all. At the Core Copse event I was told “these people only come if there is an event locally” – well these people will never join either! So, is it not better to increase our numbers for free and have a larger ‘data base’ of names from which to draw volunteers/helpers and try encourage them to be part of the club?

Finally, this philosophy of free membership would also help the juniors. At the moment we have to create an association with a school to make juniors eligible to run for the club. Free membership would alleviate this problem.....your thoughts are welcome!

Making it Local

Now this is a topic close to my heart! I and others are putting in lots of effort to encourage others into the sport at a local level, offering coaching at local community sessions or to schools. Having events for these ‘newcomers’ to take part in is essential. They will not be ready to travel across the county or country to take part in an event once a month. If our sport is to compete with others does it need to be more regular and more local? It took me 3 years to venture to an event at Virtuous Lady for example! Another year on and I go to Scotland! How important are local events to you?

Helpers

Most members are very good about volunteering for jobs at events, but there is a great deal that goes on behind the scenes and there is scope for more of you to get involved. The areas that especially need some help are:

- Mapping – volunteering to help with this or be an apprentice to one of our qualified mappers. We would like to have a new mapping programme running soon but do not have the ‘man power’ to complete it.
- Finding suitable orienteering areas for mapping
- Publicity – we desperately need someone or a number of people to take on this role for the club, or for a region or both. The jobs have been vacant for sometime and each region would definitely benefit from someone advertising and promoting what is going on.
- Website – we have volunteers to update this but if you have any views on what should be included please contact Rob Parkinson (rjparkinson@tiscali.co.uk).
- Organisers -If we are going to have more events going on either small, informal, novelty or big-we need people to organise them. If you are willing to take on this role please give us details of what you would like to help out with.

Relays

The summer relay season is upon us! This is a series of events across the SW. The list can be found following this SWOA link <http://www.sworienteeringassociation.co.uk/relay.php>. The first one will be 10th June & organised by SARUM. The second is the Wessex Hardy Relay on 16th June. Senior Teams of 4, Junior Teams of 3 and Vet Teams of 3 are needed. The details are below. It would be good to have a number of relay teams in this summer's series. If you would like to take part please let me know and we can put some teams together!

Senior

Team of 4 to run:

Course A **Green** of approximately 3.9 km
Course B **Light Green** of approximately 2.9 km
Course C **Orange** of approximately 2.4 km

- **Course A must be run twice (by different team members)**
- **Courses B and C four times, i.e. by every team member.**

Junior

Team of 3 (total BOF ages less than 48 with no team member more than 18) to run:

Course A: **Orange** of approximately 2.4 km.
Course B: **Yellow** of approximately 2.0 km.
Course C: **White** of approximately 1.2 km.

- **Each course must be run twice.**
- **No team member can run a course more than once.**
- **Every member must run at least one course.**

Vets (M/W 60+)

Team of 3 to run:

Course A: **Light Green** of approximately 2.9 km.
Course B: **Orange** of approximately 2.4 km.
Course C: **Yellow** of approximately 2.0 km.

- **Each course must be run twice.**
- **No team member can run a course more than once.**
- **Every member must run at least one course.**

The Devon event is to be held at Bicton (East Devon) on the 8th July 2012.

The Devon relay event is also going to be open to schools/families to enter teams, so extra courses will be available to cater for this. John Dyson has good experience in this direction, so.....get some young teams together from your schools and come and have some fun!.....watch this space.

If anyone has any ideas or wants to get involved, please let John know asap.

We had 7 relay teams at the JK recently, which was great fun, even if we didn't bring home any medals!.

Coaching

Coaching sessions are happening not too far from you. Come and get involved by joining in or helping – the more the merrier! It is good for new comers to meet others and you can give them valuable confidence, help and friendship!

Want to do more – lets us Know!

Schools Orienteering

We are gradually getting more children interested in the sport. One way of keeping them coming is by having more fun events and a schools league and/or leagues.... A Plymouth and Torbay one for example, and a East Devon and Exeter. Is there a way of combining this into our list of events?

Is there anyone out there who would like to take this role on in either of the areas?

Your views are welcome.

Orienteering T –Shirts

I have been approached by a number of people to have a lighter weight Club Top. Many people find the current one too warm to run in. I have got some information from HALO Management, who made the SW junior tops.....an Extra Light weight Waffle top would be £37.50 Comments please

I have covered quite a large number of topics. We as a club have to decide how we are to develop and having my views may prompt you to make some comments and shape the future of your club.

Final note.....

Well done to everyone who managed to get to the sprint and middle distance championships and the JK. There was some very good Orienteering at both events and fun had by all!

Hopefully someone would have written a few words for you to get the flavour of each. Ellie and I travelled to both events by train which was more relaxing but means you need to organise transport the other end.....say no more!!!!

See you soon

Tess Stone

CLUB COMMENTS FORM

Form to fill in with your thoughts!:

Copy it and email it back to me(plum.pebble@gmail.com) or fill in and send in the post to: 1 Streathayne Cottages, Colyton EX24 6SH) Tessa Stone

Name: _____

1. One big Club Comment:

2. Membership free? Your thoughts..

3. How important are Local Events to you?

4. I would like to help/get involved in the following areas:...

a)Relay ... I would like to be in a (age category).....relay team

b)Coaching... I would like to know more/get involved, I live in.....area of Devon

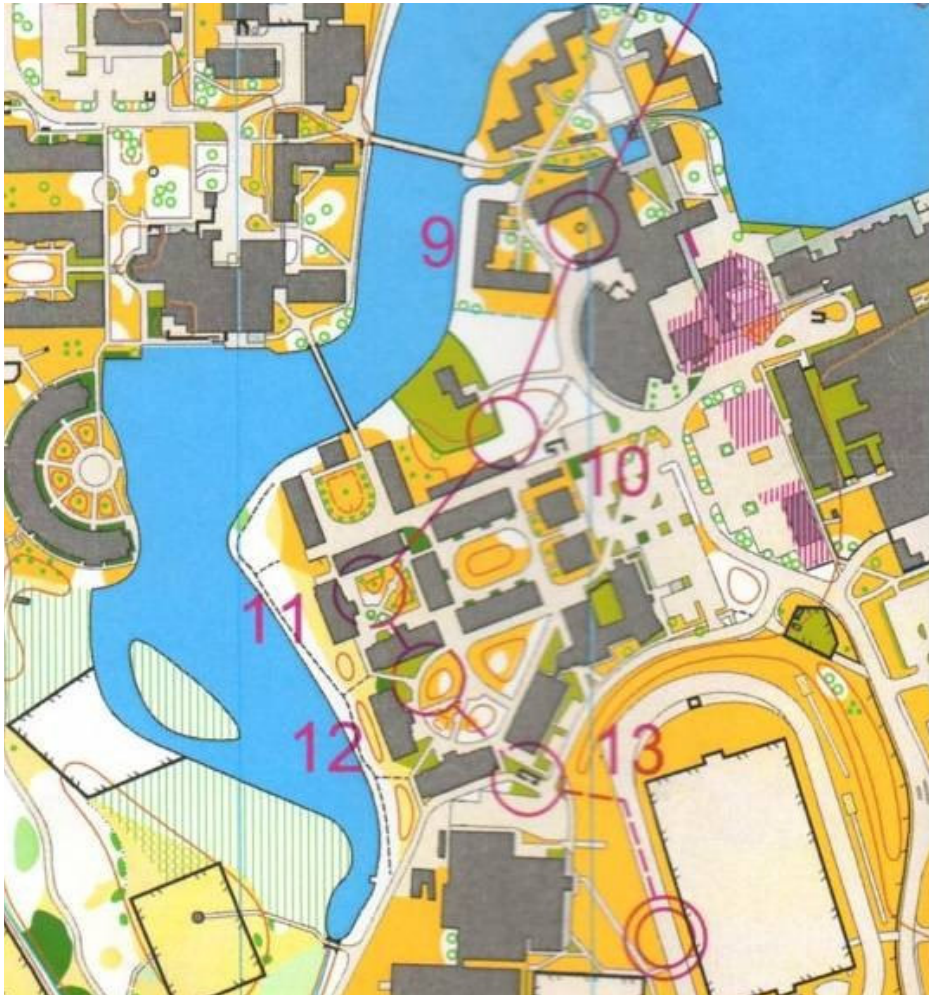
c)I would like to get involved/have experience with a schools league

5. I am interested in a light weight orienteering top/have the following comments.....

BRITISH SPRINT AND MIDDLE DISTANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

These events were held in and close to the city of York on the weekend of 24th and 25th March. Eight adventurous club members from Devon made the long trip north in cool but sunny weather:- Rob and Jamie Parkinson, Tessa and Ellie Stone, Christian (M18) and Grey (M16) Grierson, and Jill Green and myself. It was particularly pleasing to see the new club members from the Grierson family embracing the sport at national level.

The sprint and middle distance formats are relatively new to the orienteering scene, but with entry numbers of 900 competitors for the sprint and 1040 for the middle distance, they have acquired a significant following, with many familiar big names. As DEVON/KERNO are running these formats on the first two days of the Tamar Triple event in early June, I was keen to see how the big boys organised things.

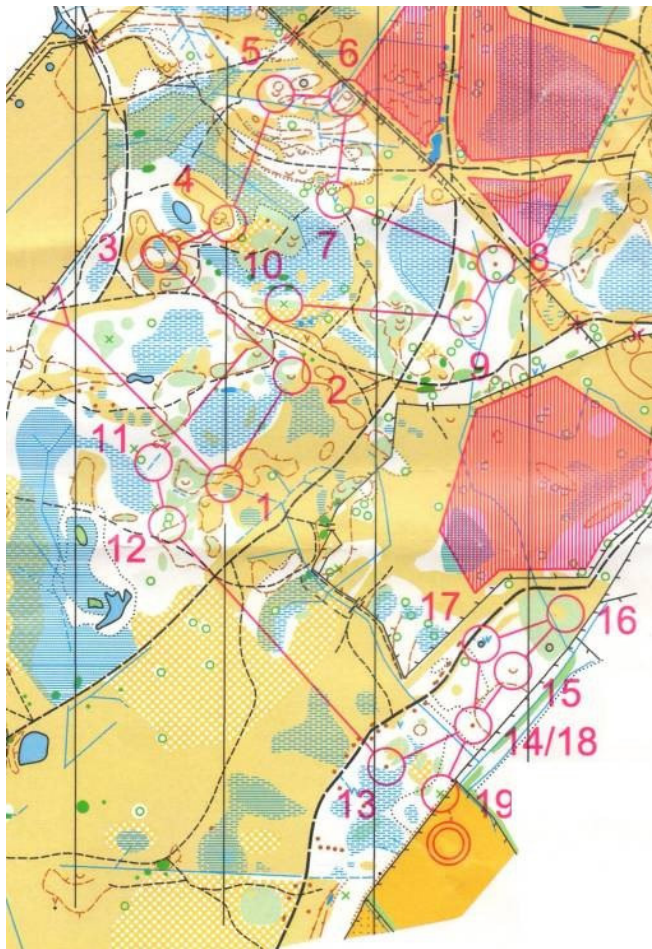


Part of the Sprint event map.

The sprint event took place on the campus of York University, the heats in the morning followed by the A and B finals in the afternoon. The challenge is to get into the A final in your class, where obviously numbers are

limited. I quite like sprints. The technical difficulty is basically orange standard. So you don't often get lost. Route choice was mainly about deciding in a split second whether to go round one side of a building or another, or might there be a way under? But there weren't many underpasses at this venue. I expect there is more to it than that, which the experts understand.

Below: Part of the Middle Distance Map



The middle distance race was on a very flat bit of ground with fairly vague vegetation boundaries. You found yourself wishing for some contours if only to have something to hang on to. Notice the flurry of short legs in the wood near the end – a characteristic of middle races. From the DEVON perspective, plaudits go to Rob Parkinson, 2nd on M55 in the middle race, AND, our new rising star Tessa Stone, 2nd on W45 in the middle race. Well done Rob and Tessa



Rob Parkinson and Tessa Stone collect their Medals
photo Alan Simpson

Alan Simpson

JK 2012 – A BYSTANDERS VIEW

Travelling to the JK's for the first time with a group of teenagers was great fun. We drove up from Devon over 10 hours on the Thursday so that everyone could be well rested for the first runs in the morning. It seemed to be the norm over the five days that the assembly point and start were some distance from each other. Not knowing the form I just followed the tent and Devon orienteering banner to the Finish so that we could see the run-ins and cheer anyone we knew on.

The first day of sprints at Livingston was great viewing and although I had little knowledge of who I should be looking out for apart from our own team, it didn't seem to matter. Livingston University as an urban environment appeared quite a maze to me as a spectator but all the runners seemed to find their way through. The weather was not on our side but the atmosphere was friendly and although highly competitive, everybody was well supported and cheered through the finish.

The second day dawned with more rain and cold, and I decided another layer was needed to stand and watch for several hours. Dunalastair was a totally different event and location to Livingston. Really rough terrain, steep hills, tricky courses and a lot more technical for the runners. Everyone was very nervous, not helped by the 2.8km hike to the start or the over-thinking that seemed to be going on. From a bystander's point of view it was amazing to see the headlong running down the hill to the finish just in front of us. You could see runners in all directions with seemingly all different trails and then they would all converge on the finish at the same time. Our team had an up and down day in more ways than one. Some were injured and retired, others got lost and some had their best runs ever. There was a lot of talk about headless chickens that evening as the day was rehashed!

The third day at Craig a Barns was billed to be the hardest yet but the weather was smiling on us and everyone seemed to have learnt from the day before and were just out to have fun. Standing close to the last checkpoint I seriously doubted whether I could walk down the wooded hill in front of me, let alone sprint as the runners seemed to be doing. Even the youngest orienteers seemed to take it in their strides and even relish the thrill of diving head first down the hill. It was great viewing. The Devon team were carrying a series of injuries by this time but still all set out for a good day, the course proved to be the highlight of the trip. Everyone enjoyed the dramatic scenery and tough terrain and were well satisfied with their running performance.

The fourth day at Newtyle Hill was a total contrast to day 3, in fact to all the other days. It started out very similar, an hour's drive, scramble up a hillside, set up the tent, check out which checkpoints can be seen, find the Assembly point and Start. Then the races started with the Mini Relay and what a sight that was with 30-40 of the youngest runners all setting off at the same time and hopefully in the right direction. The crowd of spectators, who as on previous days consisted mainly of runners with just the odd exception like myself, were screaming and shouting at the top of their voices and with their hearts in their mouths as the runners disappeared into the distance. Only for a few minutes though, or so it seemed, as they all reappeared in succession from the hillside on our left at high speed for the first changeover. Heartstopping moments as they scanned the crowd behind the barrier for their second leg runner, who then was responsible for keeping up their lead or even trying to catch up time. By the third leg runner the field was strung out and other relays had also started so it was difficult to work out who was punching in, punching out or just cheering people on. The Devon runners were totally relaxed for today, this was for fun or so it seemed. The competition was all smiles and friendly and no-one seemed to mind mispunches or slow times, although it was still fierce if good legs were put in. I found the whole day riveting to watch. Every few minutes someone would arrive at the Finish to be cheered down the final uphill straight by their team mates. It seemed just a short time since we had arrived before we were dismantling the tent again for the final time and comparing time sheets, courses and general comments on the day.

The whole event was a great experience and I just wish it were an Olympic sport! I had never realised the age range involved in orienteering or the friendly spirit the whole sport is conducted in. Everyone seemed to be having a great time

in spite of the rain and even snow at one point! In spite of no placings or medals the whole group agreed it had been a JK to remember and I will certainly try and go back next year.

Kathy Dean

BOFSTED

Did you turn to page 22 of your Orienteering Focus magazine? Did you look for your club in BOFSTED's latest League Table? Was your club 'outstanding' or 'in need of special measures' or just merely 'satisfactory'? No that 'satisfactory' means satisfactory any more. Now it means 'could do a lot better'. Are you in a rubbish club such as CUOC or OUOC? The members of these clubs fritter their time away going to lectures, tutorials and sitting exams instead of getting down to it and organising a few events.

The League Table reveals that virtually half of all clubs are 'below average'. What can be done about this? I expect the chairmen of such outstanding clubs such as DVO and MDOC will take under their wings such failing clubs as RAFO, who have their heads in the clouds and no idea of reality or WIGHTO whose insular attitude puts them on the edge of conventional orienteering.

One of the finer points of the League Table scoring system is that it assigns the same value to putting on a Level A event as organising an evening's coaching activity. How subtle this is! However, if we ignore all the activities we find that the slightly below average club DEVON put on 19 events. This compares to WCH (6th) who put on 14 events and SN (7th) who put on 13 events.

In fact BOFSTED's League Table is a population density map of Britain in tabular form.

At the top of the list we have DVO whose catchment is small and overpopulated and contains a lot of interesting terrain i.e. the Peak District. We then have a list of cities, starting with Manchester at the top, mostly in the North and the Midlands, gradually descending to the veritable deserts of TAY, POW and ERYRI.

Orienteering is a competitive sport but it is by its nature a solitary vice. All team activities are entirely contrived and scoring is by complex aggregation of individual results. There is no co-operation between members of a team as there is in football, cricket, hockey etc. This leads to weird events such as the Compass Sport Cup and Trophy which is so contrived as to make it virtually impossible to work out the winner without complicated computer software.

However accepting that inter-club competition may be socially useful when applied to orienteering events, is there any point in applying competition to a club's organisation and administration skills?

This League Table is on a par with the schools' league tables which tell a story but only a small bit of it. There is an awful lot left out.

Do the members of DVO feel superior and lord it over the rest? Do the members of BARRO feel downhearted? Should they be? Judging from their website, probably not – they seem to be quite active although small.

I would hope most orienteers would ignore this League Table and treat it with the contempt it deserves.

This page was a complete waste of space and could have been replaced with a nice interesting O map from a competition, to look at instead.

Roger Green

RESULTS OF MAJOR EVENTS.

Congratulations to Tessa Stone and Rob Parkinson. At the British Sprint and Middle Distance Championships held in Yorkshire they managed to gain Silver Medals in the Middle Distance event in their respective age groups.

In the Sprint event, Rob was in the B final and managed to win it, whilst Tessa achieved a 3rd in the B final.

At the British Championships held in the Lake district a handful of Devon Competitors braved the long drive and the bussing out to the event. Tom Lillicrap achieved a Silver Medal on the M65L course.

2011 GREAT GLEN WAY

In some cases, the journeys to and from a walk have provided memories at least as significant as those from the walk itself. In 2011 we decided that journeying to the north of Scotland to undertake the Great Glen Way offered opportunities to undertake two great Scottish rail journeys which should not be missed. Accordingly, far from acting as parentheses around a period of walking, the travel became entwined with the walking and we enjoyed a trip to Skye as a prelude to the main walk.

On Tuesday we set off bright and early from Rochdale station, eventually catching a Glasgow-bound connection from Wigan around 8.30. I shared most of this leg of the journey exchanging stories with a walker

from Wolverhampton who had walked John O'Groats to Land's End a couple of years back, and who was travelling to Scotland to bag Munroes. After negotiating our way to Glasgow Queen Street we settled down on the Mallaig train which was soon winding its way along the north bank of the Clyde, up Gareloch and then on to Loch Long before crossing over the pass to Loch Lomond. The hills were shrouded in cloud and intermittent showers further limited our enjoyment of the stunning scenery. At Ardlui, near the head of Loch Lomond, we waited for the down train to pass, before heading north on the single track line which was now broadly following the West Highland Way and the A82. At Crianlarich the train split with the first two coaches setting off for Lower Tyndrum and Oban shortly before our train headed for Upper Tyndrum, Bridge of Orchy and then swung east out onto the inhospitable wet moorlands of Rannoch Moor. The separate branch line to Oban wasn't originally part of the Glasgow-Fort William-Mallaig line at all, it had its own route from Glasgow via Callander, opened in 1880 and operated by the rival Caledonian Railway. This passed under the Glasgow-Fort William line just north of Crianlarich, and you can just make out the old track-bed today from the train to Fort William. The line from Glasgow via Callander was closed during the Beeching cuts in the 1960s, and trains between Glasgow and Oban diverted to share the line to Crianlarich with the Fort William trains. Rannoch station, just before the summit level seemed less exposed than Corrour which marked the start of the long descent into the Spean Valley and Fort William.

After a brief break at Fort William, the train continued its journey northwards, passing through the suburbs of Banavie (where we crossed the Caledonian canal at the foot of Neptune's staircase) and Corpach before heading alongside Loch Eil and Dubh Lighe. As we crossed the head of Loch Shiel, the train stopped briefly on the famed Glenfinnan viaduct, a concrete construction completed in 1901 and now featured on Scottish banknotes. After passing alongside the inland Loch Eilt, the final stage of the journey took us along the rugged coastline, through small villages including Arisaig, which has the most westerly railway station on Great Britain, before terminating in the early evening at a damp Mallaig station. Our digs at Seaview had an excellent view of the ferry terminal and the strip of water we planned to cross to reach Skye. Our evening excursion into Mallaig was limited to some games of pool and an excellent evening meal, due to the showery weather.

Monday dawned with blue skies and higher cloud levels and the crossing to Skye was calm and uneventful. We walked off the ferry and into Armadale, which seemed to be dominated by craft shops, potteries and galleries. Even within the first few minutes the signs of European investment were plain to see. The road east had a footpath for some miles and the signs told us that it was being upgraded in phases with European money. All the houses were freshly painted with new fencing and there were no signs of the poverty which had been evident on our earlier visits twenty plus years ago.

The weather was showery and it was during one of these showers that we took refuge in a rather plush country hotel to enjoy a mid-day coffee. Once the rain had ceased, walking was generally quite pleasant with the Cuillin Hills providing a dramatic back-drop to the north, whilst to the south, the hills of the Knoydart peninsular could be seen across the Sound of Sleat. A single track road headed south to Kylerhea, where a remote ferry crossing could be made to what was once the mainland terminus of the Road to the Isles. Eventually we swung north away from the coast, to climb onto a moorland plateau. Here we were able to cross onto the metalled strip of the old single track road, now devoid of traffic, and a reminder of how difficult it must have been to construct a road across the watery moor.

The descent into Broadford took us down to the main road across the island and then west, away from tomorrow's destination, the Skye road bridge, which had not been constructed when I was last in Skye.

The Dunollie Hotel, where we had booked accommodation at reduced rates, was a surprisingly large hotel with fine views across Broadford harbour, where a ferry was anchored that evening, and over to the isle of Pabay. We ascertained the train times from Kyle of Lochalsh and confirmed that a 9.00am departure would provide us with sufficient time to cover the 8 mile and make the connection. By morning the ferry was gone, but the bay was bathed in sunshine and was millpond-calm.

Despite setting off in glorious sunshine, within 20 minutes a sudden shower forced us to don our waterproofs, fortunately only for a brief spell. Brian had set off with a stomach upset and had to find a convenient bush with a plentiful supply of dock leaves. The walk to the Skye Bridge was blighted by the heavy traffic and was not an experience to be willingly repeated, but the crossing itself offered many spectacular views. There are in fact two bridges as the road crosses to a small island, Eilean Ban, before linking to the mainland. The bridge from Skye to Eilean Ban is a high rainbow-like arch, allowing access to sea-going vessels which we witnessed as a coastguard vessel passed beneath us, whilst the bridge from Eilean Ban to the mainland is low flat and unspectacular. The final stretch into Kyle of Lochalsh gave us plenty of opportunity to admire the Skye bridge and village port of Kyleakin, now largely by-passed by traffic arriving in Skye. We made our way through Kyle, picking up supplies on the way, before arriving at Kyle of Lochalsh station, where we changed our footwear and waited for our train to Inverness.

The rail journey followed the coast for many miles via the sea lochs of Loch Kisshorn and Loch Carron before following the River Carron and the A890 north-eastwards passing the inland lochs of Dughail and Sgamhain. A little further on the watershed was crossed in the company of the A890, before the track dropped down to Loch Gowan and shortly afterwards entered the valley of the River Bran, which was followed as far as Loch Luichart. By now we were entering the east coast strip of development and the desolate moorland and forestry was replaced with agriculture and more frequent signs of habitation. Nearing Inverness we crossed the Caledonian canal close to where it ended at the Beaully Firth and finally we disembarked in Inverness, a pleasant thriving city which had the feel of a university town and has also benefitted from European investment. We made our way to tourist information, booked accommodation in Inverness then headed to a snooker hall. Our accommodation proved difficult to locate and we passed it two or three times before realising that it was a bed and breakfast. Here the landlady, dressed in punk fashion, was most welcoming and recommended a local pub for our evening meal.

Next day dawned bright and breezy and after returning to the centre of Inverness to purchase provisions, we crossed the River Ness and then headed south-west through parkland before crossing the Caledonian canal and climbing out of Inverness through quiet suburbs. Our route took us west to an old derelict hospital, where the first serious climb of the route was encountered. After two days of flat road walking it was great to be working hard on the hills as we wended our way through broad-leaf forest. Once the way levelled out and began following the shoulder of the hillside, the rain arrived. Whilst this was unwelcome we were pleased to have completed the main climb in clear weather and also for the protection afforded by the forest. After 2 or 3 miles, as we emerged from the forest, the way was blocked by a large van and we were greeted by a female ranger who offered us tea and plied us with questions about our views on the Great Glen Way. The rain had stopped and we dried out as we chatted. From here the walk followed the Great Glen cycle way and was well surfaced and gently graded for a mile or more before it finally arrived at the minor road at Blackford. With open moorland on either side we crossed the valley, fortunate that the rain had abated. As we climbed away from the valley floor, the views to the north became more expansive and for the first time we could see the peaks to the north-west freshly covered in snow which had fallen overnight. After a short while the way followed a path down to Woodend Farm which offered camping facilities. After winding through the woods for a while signs offering tea, coffee and accommodation tempted us into following a path through reforested moorland to arrive at an eco-camp complete with Inuit dogs, yurts and an unkempt but polite host who brought us a massive pot of tea in a silver teapot. Here we exchanged pleasantries with Frenchman who was expecting to complete the walk into Inverness that afternoon.

A mile further on and we crossed a minor road and co-incidentally began to retrace my path on Lands End to John O'Groats 8 years previously. The path followed was a well-worn wide forest track over a switchback of hills, before turning off onto a steeper climb just before Achpopuli. I regretted that we were not taking the short cut I had taken years before as my blisters had begun to hurt and the extra two miles was surely going to cause problems later. After a short but stiff climb we reached the highest point on the Great Glen Way before dropping towards Loch Ness, which became visible whenever there was a gap in the trees. Losing over 1000 feet in height on rough forest tracks was no great pleasure, especially to my feet, but we finally emerged onto Urquhart Bay and followed the road along the valley of the River Enrick into Drumnadrochit, home to the "Nessie" industry. Our accommodation was in a converted church or kirk and was excellent. By the time we had showered and changed the rain had set in so we cadged a lift back into the centre of Drum, where we enjoyed an excellent meal at the pub/restaurant at the centre of the village, and indulged ourselves a little in sampling some of the myriad of whiskies on offer.

After breakfast we walked through the centre of Drumnadrochit before embarking on a steady climb out on tracks followed by a long stretch of quiet country roads. When this ended at a car park at Grottaig, there began a rough hillside track, which was arguably the hardest part of walk. Eventually this emerged onto a wide forest track down to Allt Saigh, followed by a big climb and detour up Glen Moriston. The way then descended into Invermoriston via a steep metalled road. By the time we had bought some supplies at the local shop it was 3.00 and the rain had set in. Even the 2 deer that had emerged from the forest onto the grassy clearing behind the shop were looking bedraggled. In deference to my feet, which were blistered we decided to stop for the day and found a pleasant b & b a few yards along the road to Drumnadrochit. Later that evening a pair of very muddy cyclists arrived, complaining about the incessant rain which had followed them all the way from Fort William.

Next morning at breakfast, during a brief spell of sunshine, we watched a woodpecker feeding in the garden of our accommodation, whilst highland cattle grazed in the field beyond. We had heard accounts of a detour adding 2 miles to the route so we were eager to leave before the weather inevitably took a downward spiral. As it turned out the detour that was in place took the way along the route described in our walking guide, because a more recent short cut had been blocked by trees felled during winter storms. In the event, with a little

scrambling, we were able to negotiate the blocked short cut and after a short sharp climb emerge onto the main path higher up the hillside. Whilst we were lucky to be able to complete the climb before the rain arrived, we then experienced a heavy shower from which we took shelter in the woods before resuming our walk. The gradients were easier than the previous day but the weather generally poor and we arrived at Fort Augustus shortly before midday.

Regrettably, our time at Fort Augustus was marred by frequent showers and the need to complete 20 miles after the curtailment of the previous day's walking, so after a short refreshment break we left Fort Augustus unexplored. Once past the activity surrounding the flight of locks taking boats up from Loch Ness to the next canalised section, the wide empty towpath stretched away to the south-west with little shelter from the elements. On our right, behind a fringe of trees, the River Oich, fortified by numerous streams cascading down the mountainside, was making rapid progress to Loch Ness. Our progress was marked by the passing of an occasional bike or walker and Kytra lock, but mostly by the changes in the weather as squalls swept in from the south-west. When we arrived at Cullochry lock, which gave access to Loch Oich, we crossed the canal and made our way to the south side of the loch. Here the way passed alongside the route of the abandoned Fort Augustus- Spean Bridge railway. The canopy of trees afforded us more shelter from the rain, but puddles on the track slowed our progress as it was difficult to assess their depth and the firmness of the underlying terrain. Also there were stretches where tree roots came through the ground surface and needed extra care. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the frequent superb views across the loch, the vigorous streams and waterfalls running off the hillside and the examples of railway architecture made this an entertaining interlude, before we reached the environs of North Laggan and the end of loch. Here there was a country park with a shop, but little else. We crossed the A82 Inverness road and proceeded along the cycle trail through a tree lined corridor with the canal visible occasionally on our right. Approaching Loch Lochy a line of boats lay at their moorings with more activity around a particular boat, which, it transpired, was a floating restaurant-cum-pub. This seemed like too good an opportunity to miss and soon we were ensconced in warm dry surroundings with pints in front of us, whilst our feet slowly marinated in our wet footwear.

A couple, having completed day 2 of their walk from Fort William to Inverness, conversed with us for a while before setting off for their accommodation. It seemed that they had not walked together before and the differences in preferences for accommodation, walking speeds and eating were already causing rifts. Next we talked to a couple from Blyth who were taking a boat from the east coast to west via the canal with the intention of circumnavigating Great Britain. The conditions on board were fairly primitive so the pub-boat was a welcome change for them.

We prevailed upon the landlord to provide us with phone numbers for local accommodation and once we had booked somewhere to stay for the night we arranged to return later in the evening for a meal. The meal of pie and peas was a little expensive, but this was more than compensated for by the ambience of our surroundings. Once again we were seated with canal travellers, this time on a hire craft heading towards Fort William, who were enjoying a paella. It seemed likely that their plans would be thwarted by the high winds forecast for the following day, as it was not recommended to progress onto the open loch in high winds.

As we passed the pub-boat the following morning the wind was already gusting at gale force and there seemed little prospect of the flotilla of moored boats being allowed through the lock into the turbulent waters of Loch Lochy. The Great Glen Way headed through the forest on the north-west side of the loch. Underfoot the walking was easy, but heading directly into the wind ensured that it was quite a physical challenge. At one point a couple of bikes passed us heading towards Fort William. As soon as they started to climb, with the wind in their faces, they struggled and for a while it looked as if we would overtake them, until the climb ended and they were able to make better headway. After about 8 miles, on the outskirts of Clunes, we dropped into the rangers' hut and were served tea and biscuits by the same girl we had met on the first day of our walk on the Great Glen Way. The hut offered a welcome break from the buffeting wind and turned out to be our final place of refreshment until Fort William. Whilst we were there the weather worsened and the hut filled up with 2 or 3 groups heading to Inverness, although none of them had travelled far that morning. With a short lull in the rain, we resumed and after a brief road section, we headed into the trees again with the wind at an even more violent level. Sounds like gunshot would signal the moment when boughs and branches parted company from their host tree before crashing to the forest floor and I had to keep alert to the wind ripping my cap from my head and sending it 30 yards before I reacted. At one point we headed down close to the water where we half expected to see surfers riding the wind-blown waves to the shoreline. Later we found a fairy grotto of lights, gnomes and decorations hung from the trees, clearly designed as a tourist attraction but by whom we asked?

Eventually we passed the pepperpot lighthouse at Gairloch and soon we were back on the towpath facing a six mile haul into the wind by the canalside. This length was completed more or less in solitary isolation as, with our hoods protecting us from the elements, the sound of the wind made conversation impossible without face to face contact. Truth to tell there was little to be said, just an on-going battle to make progress into the teeth of

the gale, avoid the worst of the puddles, keep our hoods from blowing off and negotiate the occasional tree which had fallen across the tow-path. Arriving at Neptune's Staircase, Banavie should have been a joyous moment to be savoured, but whilst the views were still spectacular, the windswept environs were deserted and offered no shelter from the weather. We pressed on along the canal skirting the suburb of Caor, before turning off along the coast of Loch Linnhe, skipping a short stretch of the Great Glen Way which went to the sea lock and back. The suburbs of Fort William, through which we completed our walk, had taken the brunt of the storm and foliage, stripped from trees and hedges, was everywhere with the occasional tree lying across the pavement. Fort William station was crowded and, to our concern, we soon found that all trains had been cancelled that evening due to checks being required on all the lines. Furthermore it appeared that the main road to Inverness was blocked by fallen trees. After buying some food and drink we ordered a taxi to take us to a local street with numerous b & bs, where we were soon fixed up with accommodation for the night. Our rucksacks, whilst soaked on the outside, had performed well and our clothes, protected by a double layer of bin-liners were dry if a little cold. Unfortunately, as we were carrying minimum clothes for our walk, we were both down to our last set of dry (relatively) clean clothes. Not wishing to risk getting these clothes wet, we decided to get a pizza delivered and ate it watching the rain falling on Fort William and Loch Linnhe from the warmth of our b and b. The following morning the rain had ceased for our walk down to the station and the train services had been restored so we were soon heading back up the Great Glen, up the Spean valley and climbing onto Rannoch Moor on our way back to Glasgow and Wigan.

Overall the planning and execution of the walk had worked out well and although the weather had restricted the degree to which we had been able to enjoy our surroundings it had also left us with enduring memories of our visit. At least the high winds had kept the midges at bay for the closing days of our walk, but we had been denied the pleasure sitting outside during those long summer evenings enjoyed by the north of Scotland, whilst Fort William and Fort Augustus were left tantalisingly unexplored.

Graham Dugdale

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10TH MAY 2012

Present: John Dyson, Steve Perelle, Roger Green, Alan Simpson, Andy Reynolds, Wilf Taylor, Nicholas Maxwell, Graham Dugdale, Nick Hockey, Erik Peckett.

Apologies: Tess Stone.

Mapping: After the Tamar Triple a mapping group will meet to look at possible new areas and a Mapping Training Course. Using either South Brent College and club/own laptops, or Torquay GS – Steve P. to check. Nicholas Maxwell, Wilf Taylor are looking into possible new areas and new updates of Woodbury Common and Mutters Moor are being considered.

Fixtures: Tamar Triple Day 2. The Smallhanger Waste area is being surveyed archeologically and this has limited access to some areas. Entries for the event are low. Most officials for events are in place, but Five Tors on 2nd December still needs officials. Nicholas Maxwell is looking into the possibility of making the event on Haldon a Level C event and also the event at Ashclyst.

Long-O – QO had asked if we were interested in putting on a pair of events. Current view is that safety issues prevent. Suggested we look at "Easy Eye" (?) GPS tracker as used for MMs and Ten Tors

Equipment: Roger Green has managed to find new tunnel tent poles for the ones damaged. Alan Simpson has permission to buy 20 more Dibbers. New batteries will be required for the SI boxes as they show 50% power after about 5 years.

Website: Steve Perelle has written an article to see if he can get interested parties to set up a working party.

Publicity: The club needs a Publicity Officer.

Coaching: East Devon – Tess continuing with weekly sessions – venues listed on BOF website under "Activities"

Central/South - Wilf & Steve have weekly Haldon sessions also on BOF website under "Activities", venues also include Holne Moor and Hembury Woods near Ashburton.

Finances: SWOA levies to be decided at an EGM. Proposal for Club membership fee needs to be agreed before AGM.

Any Other Business: Andy Reynolds. put forward a member's suggestion for club clothing to be reviewed. Steve Perelle will talk to Jeff Butt re. SW Junior Squad source. If any proposals materialise, Nicholas Maxwell to air at AGM

AGM: 2012 to be held on 9/9/12 at 2pm after Club Championships at Virtuous Lady. This will be a 1 hour Score Event at 11am, lunch at 1pm. Nicholas Maxwell to book suitable village hall. A notice of AGM is to be published in the Devon Orienteer Newsletter.

The next Committee Meeting will be held on 12th July at Chudleigh Town Hall.

DEVON FIXTURES:

- June** 2nd **Tamar Triple Day 1 and SW Sprint Championships**
Exeter University, Exeter. SX917942
Organiser: Andrew Reynolds
- 3rd **Tamar Triple Day 2 and SW Middle Championships**
Smallhanger Waste, Plympton. SX563593
Organiser: Nicholas Maxwell
- 4th **Tamar Triple Day 3**
Cookworthy Forest, Holsworthy. SS4130013
Organiser: Roger Hargreaves.

Entries for the **Tamar Triple** are via Fabian4. Please see website for details: www.tamartriple.org.uk

- 17th Devon League 5 Haldon Forest, Exeter. SX884847
Registration: 10.00 – 12.30. Well behaved dogs allowed
Organiser: Carol Pearce. 01395 443813.
- July** 8th Devon Relays Bickton College, Exmouth. SY077860
Organiser: John Dyson
- September** 9th Club Championships. Virtuous Lady SX497694
AGM

KERNO FIXTURES

- June** 16th Summer Series 1 Looe Street Race SX252537
Starts 18.00 – 19.00
- 23rd Summer Series 2 Pencarrow Head, Polruan SX 149514
- July** 7th Summer Series 3 Trelissick. Signed from SE836397
- 14th Summer Series 4 Hayle Towans
- August 4th Summer Series 5 Tehidy Woods
- Start Times for Summer Series (Unless otherwise stated) 16.30 – 18.30

QUANTOCK FIXTURES

- June** 30th Club Championships Ham Hill nr. Yeovil 1 hour Score.
Mass Start 11.00 registration 10 – 10.45

EDITORIAL

A very big thank you to all those people who have sent in articles for the Devon Orienteer. Please keep them coming. I would rather have voluntary articles than press ganged ones. I am still looking for a Junior Member to set up a Junior Corner, so that their views and ideas can be aired. See you around at events!

Next Devon Orienteer will be produced in late July. Copy should be with me for 11th July.

Susan Hateley

CAPTION COMPETITION



This photograph was taken at the JK. Use your imagination to come up with an appropriate caption and send it to me, Susan Hateley.

By email to susan@susanhateley.wanadoo.co.uk

Or post it to: 35, Daneshay, Northam, Bideford. EX 39 1DG

I look forward to your suggestions!