

## Club Newsletter November 2010



Registration and download were kept busy all morning at the Swinley West event.

BKO held its first major event of the season on 10<sup>th</sup> October at Swinley West and we were fortunate to have glorious weather for the day which attracted a huge attendance. The venue is regularly used by BKO and there is another opportunity to run there at the Saturday event on 13<sup>th</sup> November. Details of the Saturday series and a report on our recent event can be found inside.

## Orienteering from London to Slovenia



**Keith Ellis, Publicity Officer for BKO**

The season is now well and truly underway with plenty of events in the next few months to attend without travelling too far. I've supplemented my early season events with some running races when there is no orienteering nearby and certainly feel this is helping with my fitness level, I'll report on my experience in this newsletter.

Increasing participation in orienteering on regular basis is a key objective for British Orienteering with the plan to establish regular evening activities next year. To discuss this and other matters, the top team from British Orienteering have been on a roadshow to meet club members and BKO had the chance to put forward our questions on 13<sup>th</sup> October, David Jukes reports on this.

We also have some interesting event reports from Andrew Graham on a trip to Slovenia, Jilian Ullersperger on the radio orienteering world champs in Croatia and John Owens on the London City Sprint event plus a special "Know your club members" item featuring our chairman Katy Stubbs.

Until next time, enjoy your orienteering.

## Swinley West SCOA league event was a "sell out"

Our first major event of the season was held on 10<sup>th</sup> October at Swinley West near Bracknell and attracted the biggest attendance in years. The good weather and lack of competing events helped ensure that this was a "sell out". In fact it was more than this because maps for some courses were soon exhausted and a shuttle had to be organised between the download area and start to bring used maps collected from finishers. It's not ideal having to do this and so at the last committee meeting it was decided that the club would purchase a printer with battery to enable additional maps to be printed on the day if needed.

Over four hundred people participated in the event and we attracted at least one new member at the enquiries desk. It was also good to see a couple of school minibuses at the bringing young people to our event.

Ken Ricketts was the organiser, Neil Frankum was the planner and Andy McGregor was controller, well done to them for arranging the event and to the thirty or so BKO helpers who worked hard on the day to keep things running smoothly.

Unfortunately there were few big performances from BKO members, perhaps because everyone was exhausted from running the day. The top performances on each course were:

Brown	Peter McManners	52nd
Blue	Ian Cooper	24th
Green	Nigel Jefferies	16th
Light Green	Marc Whybourn	13th
Orange	David Livingstone	8th
Yellow	Olivia O'Hara+1	16th
White	Amy Croll	4 <sup>th</sup>

## Slovenia – Summer 2010

Andrew Graham

I rarely make New Year's resolutions but this year was different. I decided that I should take this orienteering lark a bit more seriously and try to run a bit farther afield to experience different terrain. I recalled Neil Frankum telling me how running in trackless forest in Scandinavia had really helped him move forward so wondered if the same might work for me.

I studied the listing of foreign events in CompassSport and tried to marry up events, gaps in my diary and cheap flight destinations. I came up with a three-day event in July called Xtremor (sounds promising) in Slovenia, not far inland from Trieste, one of Ryanair's destinations.



The local youth hostel was fully booked by the time I tried to get in but there were others, so I ended up about an hour's drive from the event location in Postojna. This turned out to be a great location for getting around the rest of the country sightseeing when not orienteering.

After a day's idling about in the extremely hot but very attractive Ljubljana, the first day of running arrived and I threaded my tiny hired Fiat 500 through the lumpy landscape towards the assembly field. I knew that the entry was around 100 but was a bit taken aback to find the field pretty much empty apart from cars. I quickly realised that this was because everyone was sheltering under whatever shade they could find and as soon as I left the air-conditioned safety of the car I hurried to join them. So it was in this 36-degree heat that I had my first experience of orienteering in the Karst landscape of KrajnaVas



Karst landscape

Karst is: “a distinctive topography in which the landscape is largely shaped by the dissolving action of water on carbonate bedrock (usually limestone, dolomite, or marble). This geological process, occurring over many thousands of years, results in unusual surface and subsurface features ranging from sinkholes, vertical shafts, disappearing streams, and springs, to complex underground drainage systems and caves.”

**Day 1:** Our competition area really majored on the sinkholes in dense deciduous woodland with the occasional grassy clearing and virtually no paths. Shove in loads of tumbled-down stonewalls, scatter rocks large and small over most of the area you have the something for which I was totally unprepared.

So much so that it took me 27 minutes to find the first control. Within minutes of leaving the start I lost contact with the map (though in retrospect I think I may have been kidding myself I had been in contact with it for more than a minute anyway) and simply could not relocate amongst the numerous identical looking depressions. Whether going back to the start (if I had been able to find it) would have made any difference I don't know, but I ended up having to faff about on a track along the edge of the map trying to find something, anything, that I could recognise on the map before I really got going. At that stage I didn't even have heat exhaustion to blame.

There were a couple of other legs which took far too long but at least I got around the course without mishap though completely drenched and dehydrated. I was grateful not to have twisted my ankle on the rocks or had an argument with one of the spiny-stemmed acacias in the wood. (3.8km: 109:06 Winning time (M55) 58.45. Last out of 6)

**Day 2:** Different start point; different part of the same area with essentially the same terrain; entirely different weather. Serious thunderstorm; intense rain; huge thunderclaps etc. Mercifully this meant the heat was not the problem. Although I made a few goofs and it was slow going, I felt I was getting more of a feel for the very detailed map and terrain, learning much about maintaining contact with the map (rather than winging it as I seem to most of the time at home) and really enjoying it. It made me feel slightly less incompetent when another competitor asked me if I knew where she was and I was confidently able to indicate that she was at least half the map away from her nearest control let alone the one she was looking for! (3.5km: 74:36 Winning time (M55): 47:39. 7<sup>th</sup> of 8)

**Day 3:** Quite a trek in to the start on another sunny but less oppressive day. A wonderful day to be in the woods and a much better run, feeling more confident that I had some inkling of what I was doing and keeping in contact with the map much more closely. I was pleased with this run and wanted more! (4.0km: 67:22 Winning time (M55) 51:05. 5<sup>th</sup> of 6)

So on the positive side I think I was clearly improving as the days passed. But I am afraid as the sole GB M55 I rather let the side down against the Norwegians, Danes and a Swiss though in other sections the Brits did well. Others were going on to the OO Cup and WM in Switzerland – I was very envious.

I think I learned a great deal and I cannot understate how much I enjoyed it. Just fabulously challenging and fun. I never did work out how to skirt around a large wooded depression across which you couldn't see so as to stay on the same bearing from one side to the other. Nor did I get to grips with the numerous fragments of collapsed wall, which all looked the same and did little to help me keep in touch with the map. But I loved visiting a control in a small cave and found the ever-changing woodland – so much more varied than what we are used to at home – fantastic.

In discussion afterwards some thought that walking, and maintaining really close contact with the map, might have been just as quick as running. Possibly, but not as much fun.

The rest of my week was spent sightseeing – massive caves, wonderful lakes, a castle built into the side of a cliff, quiet country villages and picturesque gorges. All in terrific weather. (N.B. The drivers on the motorways are nuts) Slovenia is a very attractive country and that combined with the orienteering made for an extremely enjoyable holiday. Now where shall I go next year?



## Know your club members

**Katy Stubbs**



**Age?** 54

### **Clubs?**

BKO since 1985, before that HALO and Leeds University. Also SPOOK (ex Sheffield University as I was a hon member of SHUOC whilst at Uni when Dave was at Sheffield).

**Hometown?** Stockton on Tees

**Achievements?** 2nd in W21L at British Champs 1986 at Achilty.

**When did you start orienteering?** 1972 with a local youth club, continued with Dave's school then University.

**Other interests?** Walking, reading.

**Employment?** I used to work in pharmaceuticals in the lab then in Clinical Research. Now I get a small amount of money from writing training courses for officials in orienteering and a bit of mapping.

**What training do you do?** Very little!

**What is the best thing about orienteering?** Completing a course with no errors and beating those that are faster/fitter than me. Being out in a lovely wood when planning or controlling, just poking around and seeing what I can find.

**What is the worst thing about orienteering?** A small pit in the middle of thick undergrowth that only a genius with a full scale sighting compass can find by themselves, but when I find it I give it away to everyone that I have just out navigated (and the planners and controllers that think this is a fair control).

**Most memorable run?** Australian Championships in Tasmania, winning the short course even though I had to punch the map all the way round after having to be fished out of a neck-deep stream on the way to number 1 and losing my SI card.

**Biggest goof?** Going headless chicken looking for a pit in undergrowth at the British Relays in the mid 1980's after being set off in first place on third leg by Sarah Hague and Jane Robson in the Women's Open relay and hearing the commentator saying, "oh dear she's lost 4 places" at the commentary control.

**Orienteering ambition?** Getting fit enough to run competitively against W55L runners next year.

**Favourite TV/Film?** TV would have to be SciFi such as Torchwood, Stargate(s) and good US series like House and Bones. Film probably modern action, the reinvention

of James Bond in Casino Royale and fun films like Ocean's Eleven. Definitely nothing too deep – I watch to escape, not to be depressed.

**Favourite music?** 70's rock and anything with good guitar.

**Favourite foods?** I'm known for eating anything, but if I had to pick it would be Thai, from when we lived in Thailand in the early 1980's.

**Favourite drink?** Real ale, Australian reds and New Zealand sauvignon blancs.

**What have you done that others might not have/claim to fame?** We did the Annapurna circuit in Nepal in the mid 1980's. 210km in 3 weeks, climbing up to nearly 18,000 feet (note we were both a lot fitter in those days). It was magic seeing the Himalayas close up, especially the sunrises and sunsets. When in Thailand I got onto a private tour of parts of the Grand Palace in Bangkok that tourists don't get into, followed by a return trip back via an oil tanker. One of the weirder days I have ever had!

### **SLOW 3<sup>rd</sup> City of London Race – John Owens**

For the third year in a row I managed to persuade my family to have a weekend in London so that we could take part in the City of London Orienteering race, no mean feat considering it always clashes with Lauriann's birthday! This time we booked into a smart hotel on Knightsbridge courtesy of a spa break special deal (even worked out cheaper than a Travelodge) and early on the Saturday made our way to the registration in the intriguing and slightly spooky sports centre under the arches below Tower Bridge station. Sadly Matthew was struggling to recover from some corrective surgery to his ankle, so we had to leave him tucked in bed in the hotel room watching television, I can't understand why but he did not seem to mind.



Photo by Ollie O'Brien SLOW

The race itself was as well planned as usual and presented a variety of challenges and technically demanding hidden corners of London. I personally really enjoy the urban races as the speed of navigation is so important and there is so much to think about all the time that I tend not to notice the running so much. It was also good this time to get South of the river for a change in scenery – Lauriann always mentions the landmarks, however I tend not to notice anything except the junctions, alleyways, steps and gaps in the barriers that I am looking for.

As usual however with the London race I was determined to make things hard for myself, this time taking the wrong map and running as far as St Pauls Cathedral before I noticed, which will teach me to check the codes, still it was not as bad as my

first race when I was concentrating too far ahead entering the Barbican that I just followed the red line from 25-24-23-22-21 before realising and having to retrace my steps. I suppose this time it did mean that I was at least well warmed up having run for 20mins on the wrong course.

The start this year was next to an old part of the city wall by the Tower of London and the finish was at City Hall, both of which provided dramatic backdrops. One of the more intriguing route choices was whether to run over the crowded Millennium Bridge or the quieter Southwark Bridge; there was also a section past the very busy Borough Market and for some through Tower Bridge Station, perhaps there is a place for colour coding roads depending on how many people are likely to be out sightseeing, as they do for the Venice race?

A number of other BKO members took part in the race and their results were as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Posn</b>	<b>Time</b>
Men's Open (8.2Km)	Dan Straka	72	71.07
Men's Vets (6.8Lm)	John Owens	4	47.52
	Neil Frankum	53	60.16
	Nigel Hault	63	61.53
	Richard Spearman	96	68.39
Women's Vets (5.6Km)	Lenka Straka	45	57.40
	Katy Stubbs	67	67.48
	Lauriann Owens	70	72.38
	Catherine Springett	71	73.11
Men's Super Vets (5.5Km)	Bryce Gibson	89	55.12
	Alan Springett	94	57.04
Women's Super Vets (4.1Km)	Sally Collins	25	49.09
	Janet Gibson	26	49.52

I can thoroughly recommend the event and it makes for a great family day out, we will certainly compete again next year. Further details can be found on the event website at: <http://sloweb.org.uk/cityrace/>

## **Newsletter contributions**

**Keith Ellis**

Do please send me your contributions for future newsletters, the more different people we have contributing the more interesting our newsletter will be. Contributions could be a report on an event that you attended, views on an orienteering topic, a puzzle or a quiz with an orienteering theme or anything else that you feel would be of interest to fellow members.

We have had some interesting pieces submitted over the past few months and I thank everyone who has taken the time to contribute. All contributions would be welcome, including any photographs to accompany your piece.



The newsletter is issued every two months with the edition going to print at the end of every second month, the next printing being at the end of December for the January edition.

### **Your committee members:**

**Chairman:** Katy Stubbs      **Tel:** 0118-978-2875      [katystubbs@f2s.com](mailto:katystubbs@f2s.com)

**Secretary:** David Jukes      Tel: (0118-969-2514)      [David@jukesark.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:David@jukesark.fsnet.co.uk)



**Treasurer:** Peter Entwistle      Tel: 01628-635278      [peterentwistle@btinternet.com](mailto:peterentwistle@btinternet.com)

**Fixtures:** Liz Yeadon      Tel: 01672-563840      [liz.turbin@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:liz.turbin@tiscali.co.uk)

**Membership:** Alan Springett Tel: 07712-672712      [cat.spring@virgin.net](mailto:cat.spring@virgin.net)

**Publicity:** Keith Ellis      Tel: 0118 9771101      [keith.d.ellis@btinternet.com](mailto:keith.d.ellis@btinternet.com)

Neil Frankum      Tel: 0118-975-1528      [neil@frankum.co.uk](mailto:neil@frankum.co.uk)

Ken Ricketts      [kenricketts@waitrose.com](mailto:kenricketts@waitrose.com)

### **Highlights from the last committee meeting**

Key points arising at the last meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September were:

- Our membership has risen to 177.
- A membership survey is being circulated (see the article in this newsletter) to obtain your views on a number of key issues so please take the time to provide your feedback.
- Eighty people attended the first Saturday event of the season.

- Andrew Graham is working to complete the fixtures schedule for the season. We may hold our 8<sup>th</sup> May District event at Rushall Woods and if this is the case, it would replace the Saturday event initially planned for this weekend.
- It has been agreed that Sothern Navigators may hold an event on BKO territory at Martins Heron on 19<sup>th</sup> Jan with BKO members invited to participate at a special rate.
- Club finances are in good order with investments agreed for a printer for printing maps at events and club banner poles.
- Army coaches have been promised for evening coaching events in 2011.

## **BKO Membership Survey**

**Katy Stubbs**

This message is a repeat of an email sent to those on the BKO emailing list but repeated here for the benefit of other members:

The BKO Club Committee seeks to organise activities throughout the year which will appeal to all sections of membership and attract new members of all ages and levels of experience. Some aspects of our Club calendar are well established, such as our major annual regional event the Concorde Chase, our very popular Saturday morning series and our summer evening series. Other activities are more recent innovations, such as having a dinner associated with our AGM, the Summer Parks Challenge and the new Youth League.

In order to ensure that our efforts are directed at the right things the Committee is keen to receive feedback from the membership on what sort of events, both sporting and social that you want. The Committee also wishes to understand more clearly the level of experience within the Club and to learn which Club members are willing and able to undertake some of the many tasks, some requiring a level of skill and experience and others simply needing willing hands associated with organising orienteering events. We have therefore designed a brief and simple survey aimed at addressing both of these issues and would be really grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete it.

The survey is available for completion on-line - note that the survey will be open until 6th November 2010 - please complete it by then. Please use the the following link to access it: <http://www.bko.org.uk/content/berkshire-orienteers-members-survey-october-2010>

In order to avoid sending multiple copies of emails to a single family it is club policy generally to hold only one email address for each household or BOF Unit. However, we are keen for our survey to be completed by as wide a range of Club members as possible so, please, if there is more than one BKO member in your household do encourage each of them to access and complete a separate survey. Survey responses will be confidential with the full responses being available only to the me and the Club Membership Secretary, Alan Springett. A summary of responses will be included in a future Newsletter and will also be available at the 2011 AGM.

If you would prefer to complete a paper copy of the survey please email Alan Springett at [membership@bko.org.uk](mailto:membership@bko.org.uk). If you have views you wish to share, but do not wish to complete the survey (which does include some opportunities for free text responses) please email either Alan or me ([chairman@bko.org.uk](mailto:chairman@bko.org.uk)). Do please help us make BKO the Club that *you* want by participating in the survey yourself and by encouraging other to do likewise. Many thanks.

Best regards,

Katy Stubbs **Chairman, Berkshire Orienteers**

## **SCOA Junior Squad News**

**Dave Rogers**

Hope you have all had a great summer and are ready for more orienteering!

Firstly, we have set the dates for squad training and will let you know the areas, etc closer to the day. So, here are squad dates for you to put in your calendars:

- Saturday, 13th November 2010 - squad training
- Friday pm to Sunday, 26-28th November 2010, Hawkshead for W/M 16s only
- Saturday, 12th December 2010 - squad training
- Saturday, 22nd January 2011 - squad training
- Saturday, 26th February 2011 - squad training
- Saturday/Sunday, 19th/20th March 2011 - squad training day or weekend
- Saturday, 9th April 2011 - squad training
- Saturday, 7th May 2011 - squad training
- Saturday, 28th May 2011 - squad training
- Saturday/Sunday, 25th/26th June 2011 - Junior Interregional Championships, NWOA

Lastly, we have a new squad manager - Craig Blackford (BADO). Thanks for offering Craig!

I will be mentoring Craig over the next couple of months whilst he gets to grip with the role. I will still be helping with coaching the squad and will be around most training days.

We welcome all SCOA juniors of about Orange standard and above and aged 10 or so to 18 years to join us at the Saturday training days. We meet at 1015 hrs and finish about 1500 hrs. You need to bring your lunch, a drink, £1 to cover map and access costs, and your orienteering kit.

Please contact Craig Blackford [SCJS Squad Manager, Tel: 01256 704360, Mobile: 07771 662931, E-mail: [craig.blackford@btinternet.com](mailto:craig.blackford@btinternet.com) ] if you want to know more or will be coming along. You can also visit the squad's website at: [www.scjs.org.uk](http://www.scjs.org.uk)

## **Forthcoming events**

### **BKO Saturday events:**

13 <sup>th</sup> November	Swinley West
4 <sup>th</sup> December	Lily Hill Park
15 <sup>th</sup> January	Benyons Inclosure (near Mortimer)
12 <sup>th</sup> February	Bloom Wood (near Bourne End)
19 <sup>th</sup> March	Upper Star Posts
April	To be confirmed
7 <sup>th</sup> May	Rushall Wood (near Bradfield)

### **Other events:**

7 <sup>th</sup> Nov	SOC November Classic, Ironswell, New Forest (Regional)
14 <sup>th</sup>	MV SE Families and veterans championship, Sheepleas & Effingham (Regional event)
28 <sup>th</sup>	SN Regional event, Long Valley South
5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	SOC Regional / SCOA league, Bentley & Fritham
19 <sup>th</sup>	TVOC Regional / SCOA league, Wendover
1 <sup>st</sup> Jan	BKO New Year's Day score event, Reading University

## Running adventures

Keith Ellis

Over the summer, I like to keep running to stay in shape for the orienteering season and this year I had a goal to add extra incentive, a charity 10k run organised by my employer Centrica plc. The run was to be at Windsor race course in mid September so ideal timing and better still, my wife Jane (a BKO member who hasn't orienteered for a while) had started just to run and entered the 5k event.

During the summer and when there is no orienteering, I run a seven miles course at Swinley Forest and I use a cross trainer in the week so was reasonably fit but hadn't run a race for twenty years so wasn't trained for speed. With just a month's notice of the event, I didn't have much time for the speed work but did manage a few road runs alongside the off-road weekend runs.

On the day, I had competition because one of the managers in my team was also running but he is 18 years younger and a regular runner so I would have to be good to beat him. I thought that my best tactic would be to try to go off fast and get ahead which I did, covering the first mile in about 6.40 but this was too fast to sustain and we were neck and neck at the half way stage in 22.19. In the end I couldn't quite keep up and finished one place behind but was still quite pleased to complete the course in 44.59. My personal worst by far (my PB is 36.56) but then with twenty years older legs since my last run I suppose that I couldn't expect the same times. To console myself I found an age comparison website which gives comparable times for different ages at different distances, I found that I should be running 4 minutes slower over 10k compared with 20 years ago, that sounded better.

Jane was also pleased to have completed her first 5k event with part run and part walk and was so inspired that we entered the Dorney Lakes 5k and 10k the next weekend. I checked the course on the internet and thought I was in for a fast run since the course was dead flat. However on the day it was raining and there was a very strong wind so this hampered the speed attempt. Nonetheless I was reasonably happy with my 45.47 and Jane bettered her time by a minute.

Wishing to keep up the running I recalled a note from Nigel Houlton to BKO members advertising the Park Runs and Ken Ricketts had mentioned that he had been too. We looked up the website and found that there are many Park Run venues around the country with our nearest just down the road in Reading.

We signed up for the Park Runs online and were delighted to find that the events are free and held every week. At the time of writing we have been for our first four weeks. My first week was 22.34. A comparatively slow time compared with the 10k times but the course is on grass and has been wet so this must be slower than running on tarmac. Nonetheless I have continued to improve each week with times of 22.27, 21.49 and 21.40 in the next three runs. I discovered that to equal my 5k PB set twenty years ago (17.05 on tarmac) I need to run 18.50 for the age adjusted time, so some way to go still. It will be interesting to see how my orienteering and running improve as I continue to mix the types of events.

There is an interesting collection of runners at the park runs, ranging from eight year olds to expert looking athletes to first timers to people running with their dogs.



I recommend the Park Runs to anyone wanting a run out with a friendly atmosphere. There have been four BKO members attending over the past few weeks with Ken and Michael Ricketts, Jane and I attending. There was also a great opportunity to advertise our Swinley SCOA league event so Ken put flyers on the car windows.

For anyone interested in participating in the Park Run, visit:

<http://www.parkrun.org.uk/reading/Home.aspx>



BKO runners in action from top left clockwise:  
Jane Ellis improving her running

Keith Ellis (left) – the dark glasses are no disguise

Ken Ricketts edging ahead of son Michael

(Photos with kind permission of Reading Park Run)

## **British Orienteering Roadshow – 13 October 2010      David Jukes University of Reading**

The idea of an evening spent with the top officials of our sport may not be the most attractive thing for an Autumn evening. However the concept sounded interesting and, I thought, worth supporting. I also thought that the presence of a group of orienteers on the Whiteknights campus could provide an opportunity for the club to put on a small evening event prior to the Roadshow. The combination of the Roadshow and an event on the campus could be to the benefit of both – encouraging more people to come along.



Whitneknights campus, Reading University

Permission was obtained from the University and I planned three technical courses of different lengths using only the main built areas of the campus. To add to the fun, the courses consisted of a number of loops with all courses visiting one control several times. With support from club members (especially Katy, Eric and Denise) the informal event took place and was, I think, appreciated by the 22 competitors. A few of these had only come for the event as they had other commitments during the evening.

And so we moved on to the main ‘Roadshow’ - preceded by a selection of University sandwiches. This is the first time BO has organised a series of Roadshows in which a meeting is held in every region – 12 meetings spread out over a 5 week period. 29 people were in the audience representing several clubs although BKO had the largest attendance. The total was, to me, rather disappointing although I have no idea what BO had been hoping for.

Representing BO were the Chief Executive (Mike Hamilton), the Executive Officer (Laura Martin), Development Manager (Ed Nicholas) and the Participation Manager – South (Richard Barrett). Also present was our own Denise Harper who works as SCOA’s Regional Development Officer. Mike Hamilton introduced the session explaining that the idea for the Roadshow had first been suggested back in 2006 with the intention of enabling all BO members the opportunity to meet the officials ‘face-to-face’. He also added that the cost of the Roadshow was coming from a Sports England grant, not from member’s contributions!

Mike gave a good overview of the various initiatives which are taking place, mostly funded by money from government based bodies. As this money is increasingly being provided to support specific initiatives, BO has to respond and ensure that these activities progress successfully. Using the terms ‘Grow, Excel and Sustain’, he explained the relationship to BO’s concept of ‘More people, more places and more podiums’. Contributions then followed from Ed, Richard, Denise and Laura which illustrated the thinking. Unfortunately this seemed to go on rather long and, with Ed constantly indicating that each initiative was ‘really important’, I was left wondering whether there were just too many and that a lack of focus might lead to only limited success. It was certainly apparent why BKO was being encouraged to develop a weekly ‘club night’ but, with central funding available to pay for coaches, it should be possible to arrange an O-based activity each night. There are however two main issue for BKO linked to sustainability – what happens when the money runs out and will it take up too much volunteer time to the detriment of our core activity of putting on events? To help, there is a new ‘Activity Guide’ which is becoming available shortly with lots of ideas. There is even, apparently, a ‘box’ full of supporting materials to enable an activity to go ahead with no real preparation.

Eventually Mike moved on to other topics with a discussion of the ‘Competition Review’. Not to be confused with the work on the event structure, the Review is looking at the major competitions supported by BO – the various national championships and the JK for example. At some point, Mike indicated that consideration was being given to changing the format of the JK Easter weekend into something based on the Scottish 6-Day model. I was not clear what he meant by this so I will be interested to see a future discussion document when it appears. There was reference to a possible new ‘National League’ based on the result in the various top events linked to a series of 2-day events combining both a Saturday and a Sunday event. Some proposals will be issued in the near future. There was also reference to creating a more visible and nationally organised pathway for schools with club providing local school competitions but enabling progression to a regional competition and ultimately a national competition. So lots of ideas – but too many?

As the meeting slowly drew to a conclusion, a variety of other topics were discussed – some from the BO officials whilst others were based on questions from the audience. The proposals for a new event structure based on a 4 level system were outlined and were generally supported. There was a plea for more help for volunteers which was agreed to be a priority. Questions were asked (and generally answered) about income generation and possible sponsorship, about the content of the national magazine ‘Focus’ (‘write in with suggestions as to what you want it to contain’), map quality, measures of achievement of target and participation funding.

Finally Mike added a statement about access to Forestry Commission land for events. Apparently the national agreement has run out some time ago but has continued to be operated by most local Commission offices. With the need to generate more funds, the Commission is now going to impose a new agreement which will result in significantly higher costs. I don't know the exact figures but it sounded as though for most events, except very small ones, there would be a charge of about £3 per person compared to the current amount which is nearer 50p. As you can imagine, this unfortunately meant that the meeting ended (at 10.10 pm) on a rather sombre note.

So was it worth attending? Given the effort that BO had put into the evening, I am pleased that I went. I probably did come away with a better understanding of the way BO runs the sport in this country and how its policies are often dictated by funding sources rather than the wishes of ordinary members. As a member of the club committee, this was useful to appreciate and understand. I think an ordinary club member would have thought that most of the discussion was about things which did not affect them – at least of only limited relevance to their orienteering experience. I must end though by thanking the BO officials for putting on these Roadshows – no one can now say that they have not had an opportunity to interact with staff at the National Office.

## **Radio Orienteering, the 15<sup>th</sup> ARDF World Championships**

**Jillian Ullersperger**

In September I was lucky enough to be able to attend the 15<sup>th</sup> World Championships for ARDF (Amateur Radio Direction Finding – or Radio O as you may know it) as part of the UK Team for the RSGB, (Radio Society of GB).

The event is held every 2 years, the Championships were hosted by the Croatian national radio society and were based in the northern coastal resort of Opatija. They attracted just under 400 competitors from 33 countries. The competitions were held in the mountains, about one & half hour's drive north east of Opatija, where there is a national park.

This year the RSGB had its biggest ever team, 11 competitors. ARDF is not “big” in the UK, we have less than 20 regular competitors (hence it was no problem for me to get into the team, no trials required, just enthusiasm). The sport is very popular in Eastern Europe, where they do it at school as well as outside clubs, and even employ professional DF'ers in the army. As always those nations dominated the results. Never the less we had some impressive GB results with John Marriot (LEI) coming 6<sup>th</sup> in M60 individuals, the M40 team coming 9<sup>th</sup> out of 19, and the M60s 7<sup>th</sup> out of 14.

ARDF has similarities with ordinary orienteering; we use the same style maps, rely on navigation and good map sense, and have controls to hunt and start/finish to punch. The main difference is that we don't know where our controls are – they are not marked on the map – just the start and finish are marked, and up to 6 controls (beacons) will be hidden somewhere on the map.



The age groupings run for men; M21, 40, 50, 60 + 70 and for women W21, 35, 50 + 60. Course lengths are M21: 9-12Km, M40: 8-10Km, W21: 7-9KM, W35: 6-8Km as an idea of ranges.

There are 2 competitions, one on “2m” (beacons transmit at 144MHz, 2m wavelength) and one on “80m” (3.5MHz, 80m wavelengths). Different equipment is used for hunting each type, the 2m being large yagi style antenna (like a crude homemade TV aerial), the 80m a more compact short rod or loop style.

The timing system on ARDF events is different from that on standard O. Like a score O we have a set time limit, often 150 mins – but one second overtime and you are disqualified, even if you find all the controls. Therefore clock watching is essential; you must get back to punch finish before your allocated time is up.

The controls are tiny hidden radio transmitters, sending a Morse code signal for 1 minute in every 5. Each beacon has its own code, in addition there is a home beacon which must be found at finish, it transmits on a different frequency (this is also used as a safety feature - if you become so lost you can't relocate you can tune to home and follow the signal – a couple of hours later you may find it!). Location of beacons is marked on the ground with a standard O flag and an SI punch unit.

The competitor uses his receiver to listen to the Morse signals via headphones, and then has to use information such as the signal strength and direction, and the changes in those sounds and direction bearings from one map location to the next as he moves about, to try and work out where those beacons may be hidden. Once he's an idea what areas they are in he needs to decide what order to take them in to try and get home in shortest time, find a good route and not lose his place on the map whilst he does it (carrying map, compass, receiver, spare battery, screwdriver, spare headphones, pens to record and plot the bearings.....). A skill I've yet to master.

The Championships ran over 5 days. We started with a welcome ceremony on day 1, and a lot of Croatian folk songs and speeches, then followed a practice day to tune in and get used to the Croatian beacons.

The first real competition was on the Day3 – we set off at 5.30 in the dark via a 12 coach convoy, with police escort up to the mountains. It turned out to be a lovely sunny day, great countryside. The slightly worrying thing was the warning at start – “out of bounds area has dangerous dogs, do not enter”. Then “beware of brown bears” (stand still, look big, and blow your whistle was the advice), and wild boar (he said “they're nasty, climb a tree”, not having climbed a tree for many years this was not encouraging).

It was tough terrain and mapping, but not impossible, the paths didn't seem to be there, and many new logging trails complicated it. I was on the 80m event this day, and managed to find all my beacons and get home with about 10 minutes to spare – not brilliant, but not last, and I was quite happy.

Day4 was a rest day with organised trips over to the coastal towns on the western edge of the Istrian peninsula, and some local foods and wine to try. We travelled with USA, Australian and Canadian teams, good as we could all speak English.



Second Competition was day 5 – what a contrast – torrential rain all the previous night, and all day long. It was like being in a shower fully clothed. We learned afterwards that some local areas had to be evacuated on the Saturday due to flooding. This made for a very difficult event.

Receivers had to be wrapped in plastic for waterproofing, my watch packed up on the start line despite being waterproof - still doesn't work. Several people of all nations suffered equipment failures and one beacon went hay-wire due to the wet. Many maps disintegrated into tissue paper. The A3 waterproof maps provided were produced on a glossy paper but once the water got to the edges they began to fall apart. It was also impossible to write on these in the wet (you need to plot bearings onto the map in ARDF) which was an additional problem. At least we all had the same problem so it was fair.



Unfortunately very wet ground can do unexpected things to radio signals, especially the 2m band, and for everyone trying to hunt in this rain was extremely hard. Mountains and hills bounce signals even when dry – but in the wet on 2m even leaves on trees start to reflect signals. The results from the day show how few people managed to complete the course, not by giving up, just ran out of time to try and make sense of the signals. In the M40 Class only 21 out of 57 managed to complete the 2m course (normally nearly all would). Andy, one of our team did very well and came 11<sup>th</sup> on 2m finding all the beacons –we want to know how he did it!

I had a disastrous run, on 2m, and only found 2 of my 5 beacons, got hopelessly lost and wasted much time looking for one beacon (it was later found to be faulty), then I began to worry about bears and boars as I climbed around these rocky caves – came face to face with a 12 inch long jet black and yellow lizard, which I had to climb over – all I could remember was a dim memory of “brightly coloured animals are usually

poisonous” – I got out of there pretty quickly! At this point I decided to head for home and try and pick up the distant beacon near there on the way, forget the rest. However when I eventually managed to climb down to the open yellow areas, expecting to be able to run, it turned out to be thigh high reed like grass, which in that rain was like wading through treacle. I made it over to the road in the end and came in home that way – as did many others. I have never been so glad to see a finish funnel, nor have I ever been so wet at an event! Much to my surprise, I was not last.

The event closed that evening with an award ceremony and gala dinner, and some 20 plus renditions of Ukraine’s national anthem as they took all the golds. After the trials of the day’s run everyone was in good spirits and I think we all had a great time and good experience over the whole event.

If anyone fancies a try at ARDF we have some spare equipment, you don’t need any radio knowledge, no bears or lizards in England either! We have a few members close to the BKO area and you’d be welcome to have a go.

## Whiteknights Spot the Control Competition

DavidJukes



The recent Roadshow event at Whiteknights had 18 controls scattered around the main built areas of the campus. All 18 were visited by the Long course which had several loops around the campus visiting one control 3 times and two other controls twice. When I was putting out the controls, I took photographs of each one and, based on this, as a bit of fun I have devised a ‘Spot the Control’ competition.

The competition has been set up on the BKO web site where you will find full instructions. This can be found at: <http://www.bko.org.uk/content/whiteknights-spot-control-competition> You will also need to access the BKO Routegadget site to see a copy of the course map – details on how to do this are on the web site.

Please submit your answers, consisting of a list of the photos (A-P) with the control numbers next to them, to [Secretary@bko.org.uk](mailto:Secretary@bko.org.uk) by **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010**. A winner will be drawn at random from all those identifying all the correct controls. In the event of no one being correct with all controls, those with the greatest number will be eligible. The winner will receive a small prize as a memento of the competition. Good luck!