

Editorial

Welcome to the December edition of The Platform. I am writing this a few days after our AGM. Must say what a pleasant surprise it was to actually have some decent debate on a couple of matters. Long may it continue.

Details of the various officers elected are set out else where in this edition, together with a pen picture of our new development office, Gary Davies.

We also have a few words from Havard Prosser on the now infamous 2008 OMM and from Alan 'snakebite' Stone on an eventful visit to Llangynidr.

As a club it is pleasing to see that we continuing to make progress on a number of fronts and in particular we are putting on more quality local events. As always, we can only continue to do this if you, the members, volunteer to help.

Finally can I make a plea for anyone with orienteering related photos to let me have them. This magazine would improve a lot with a few more pictures.

Nigel Ferrand nigel.ferrand@virgin.net

News

Congratulations to.....

... Angela Heeley (ne Tyrrell), who was married in October.



Winter Street League and socials

The first two events in our winter street league have proved to be very popular. There are still four events left and it is not too late to be competitive league as it is best four results to count. Why not try the Roath event in January. This will be slightly different as it will not be a score. Instead you will have the choice of 2 courses, a long (10 km ish) or a short (5km ish) All races will be a mass start at 7.00 p.m. A flyer for the league and details of all events are available to download from the website.

Xmas Score Event

Graham Trough has kindly volunteered to organise our annual Christmas score event on 27 December at the Wenallt. Full details will be available soon from our website. It is normally a very popular event.

Winter Street league 2008/9

Date	Type of Event	Location	Planner
13-Jan	10k and 5k course	Roath	Nigel Ferrand
11-Feb	One hour score	Newport	Pete Ribbans
10-Mar	One hour score	Canton	James Clemence
07-Apr	One hour score	Penarth	Frank Ince

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A few reflections on the year

Time for a few personal reflections on the year just gone and the year to come.

Best event - the British Championships at Culbin. Great terrain, courses, maps and weather. Shame I got lost in the green.

Lasting memory - Lauren and the other 1st year Sheffield University girls jumping up and down with excitement when they realised they had won a relay medal at the British.

Most enjoyable races

The chasing sprint in Sheffield in November. Great maps and courses and it proved again, that head to head racing, even at the back of the field, can be great fun.

Day one at Croeso on Merthyr Common. Managed not to get lost and spiked most of the controls. Weird feeling.

The Saunders Mountain Marathon. Felt I earned the Tee shirt with that one.

Biggest challenges for 2009 – to continue to increase our club membership, and to manage to find enough helpers/planners/organisers for our events. It would also be good to start to do a few regular training events for our novices, perhaps based around our permanent courses. Anyone volunteering?

Most anticipated races in 2009

The middle distance race on Clydach Terrace that's being talked about as part of the Harvester Weekend.

The Dolomites 5 days will be something different, particularly if the sun shines



Joel & I finishing this year's Saunders Mountain Marathon, notice the smiles despite 48 hours of hail, rain, wind, sleet and thunder, also didn't take enough pudding to eat.

I would have preferred to have put someone else's photo here but no one sent me one.

Your committee – the key posts

Your committee elected at the recent AGM

Chairman – Pete Ribbans

Secretary – Frank Ince

Treasurer – Nigel Ferrand

Fixtures secretary – Nick Dallimore

Club Captain – John Mills

Mapping secretary – Pete Colbert

Development officer – Gary Davies

Equipment – Kate Balmond

Schools liaison – Ian Kennett

Membership – Adrian Moir

Club banner – your views are needed

Clare Dallimore has kindly designed some alternative SWOC sail banners. We would like to know which one you prefer before we purchase. Let us know by 31 December 2008 by sending me an email saying 'one' or 'two'. nigel.ferrand@virgin.net No more not being able to find the club tent at the JK.



one



two

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SWOC awards for 2008

The winners of the SWOC awards for 2008 are:

Top senior – **Jill Manning**

Top junior – **Lauren Ferrand**

Most improved orienteer – **Bethan Stone**

Services to the Club – **Pete Colbert** for his contribution to the Club's maps

Your new committee member – Gary Davies



Gary is a Chartered Civil Engineer by profession and his sporting history was predominantly rugby until he damaged his knee a few years ago. He then took up road running and mountain biking before stumbling into the world of endurance racing. He joined SWOC in 2007 and competes in local events with the target of improving his navigation skills for outdoor competitions such as adventure racing, mountain marathons and the Polar Challenge. In 2007 he competed in multidisciplinary adventure races up to 36 hours long (continuous) and the OMM which attracted a lot of media attention. Gary is also a member of the MDC fell running club.

Gary would like to assist SWOC in attracting younger people to orienteering and the club.

Video treat

In this video you can see someone running round this year's sprint course at the World Orienteering Championships. <http://www.youtube.com/user/jankoc>

Thanks - from Alan Mackenzie

I would like to thank, through the Platform, those SWOC members that sent their best wishes with the get well card.

If you want to include details of my day, for those who perhaps didn't know what had happened, you can do so.

I was cycling from Blaenafon to Cwmcarn for the St David's Hospice Foundation. Down the old railway line from Blaenafon to Pontypool, then around by Tesco's and some pavement riding to get onto the canal towards Newport. By the M4 you turn right to get onto the Cwmcarn stretch up 14 locks. Near the end of the canal at Cwmcarn, for some reason I came off my bike at @15 mph, went down on my left side my helmet and hip, hitting the tarmac towpath knocking myself unconscious and falling into the canal, face down. My riding mate heard the noise and a lady shouted someone's fallen in the canal. Two other cyclists came along, it took 3 people to drag me out, the canal was about 3 ft lower than the towpath. The water is stagnant at this point, absolutely filthy, but I didn't swallow any water. I came around quite soon, and was helped to the nearest road access. St John's ambulance came down from the finish at Cwmcarn, a paramedic arrived and an ambulance about an hour later. My daughter had arrived by then and came with me in the ambulance to the Gwent. Carol went straight to the Gwent. I had a brain scan (yes it's confirmed I have one) a pelvic and chest x rays, ecg and blood tests, and a neck x ray the next morning. Everything seems to be OK, my head was real fuzzy for a week, and the bruise is starting to disappear, although the swelling on my left hip is still there. My helmet broke at the back, but no damage to the bike.

The lesson to be learnt, for some, is to always wear a good quality helmet when riding a bike. No doubt I would have had serious head injuries if I hadn't.

Thanks again for your best wishes
Alan Mac

Reflections on a snake bite

by Alan "Snakebite" Stone

I was running across Llangynidr mountain in May on the East-West relay and bounding between the tussocky grass (as one does up there) when I felt a sharp pain in my left ankle, as if I had landed on something sharp. I yelled out thinking that something had stung me. I didn't think much more of it and carried on running the rest of that leg of the relay. It was only on sitting down in the car half an hour later that I was aware my ankle was hurting and thought I ought to look at it. The inner aspect of the ankle was already swollen and I noticed one obvious puncture mark and another more superficial mark 1.5cm away. Whatever it was had managed to do this through a thick woolly sock.

I was thinking perhaps a bee, a wasp or even a hornet had got me but was aware that more slippery animals lurked in grasslands. Over the next two hours as I was sitting in the van at Storey Arms waiting for my next leg on the relay the ankle really started to swell, became obviously bruised and the marks became more livid. The gradual realisation dawned on me that this was no bee sting. I was aware that Adders favoured grassy heathland and that it was Britain's only venomous species. I was starting to feel sick and had abdominal cramps. I initially blamed those on the beer I'd had the night before. Then without warning, despite the dire weather outside, I had to get up, get out the van and have a pee. Others commented that I'd gone pale as a sheet. A large bruise developed in my groin within 40minutes of the bite. No one offered to suck the venom out!

It became obvious that my participation in the relay had come to an end and Derek kindly offered to drive me home. By later that evening the ankle was twice its normal size and I couldn't walk with the pain. I had to borrow some crutches to go to bed. Despite being urged by all around me to pay a visit to casualty I couldn't see the point as I knew there was no specific treatment apart from the treatment of complications. I did confirm this with a telephone call to the Poisons Information Service, but who still ended the call with the advice to visit casualty!

I did some reading around and am now a bit of an expert on Adder bites. A colleague at work remembers being taken on biology field trips as a teenager to look at the Adder nests on Llangynidr mountain so I do know they are there. *Vipera berus* is a member of the viper family. Snake bites are rare in the UK. The poisons information service receives about 100 enquiries a year about them. There have been about a dozen recorded fatalities in the UK since the 1880's, the last in 1976 in a 10 year old girl.

Snake venom is an interesting cocktail of proteins causing damage to the heart and muscles, interruption of the nervous system, digestion of proteins and disturbances of blood clotting. There are also proteins that make you pee. This is so that the snake can follow its prey more easily between the moment of biting and the moment of death. The effects you get depend on the species and the amount of venom injected.

So what's the worst thing about being bitten by the UK's only venomous species? The pain? The swelling? The Fear of imminent death? No – the ribbing afterwards and being forced to drink a pint of "Snakebite" (half lager and half cider) in the pub on my return to fitness.

Alan "Snakebite" Stone



Male Adder

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OMM 2008

report by Havard Prosser

"Floods strand hundreds of runners" ran the BBC headline on Saturday 25th October after heavy wind and gale force winds flooded Borrowdale and cut off the Event Centre for OMM.

Perhaps the sign of things to come occurred on Thursday when there was heavy rain.. The update on the OMM website stated "Today has been very tense, continuing all preparations and analysing cross checking several weather reports....As at 6pm the Keswick-Borrowdale road was closed north of Rosthwaite but is expected to be passable by tomorrow morning. The several other roads which were blocking our progress are already passable."

So Claire and I kept an eagle eye on the website during Friday to ensure we were up-to-date about the situation. Friday was mainly dry and sunny as we made our way to Kendal for the night. The weather forecast was dismal for the Saturday but with improvement expected on the Sunday. So on Saturday morning, we drove through the Lake District to the Event Centre at Seathwaite Farm in dry but windy conditions. The parking was fairly slow with cars going into water-logged field. Claire parked her car on the road-side and we sorted our kit and registered. Soon after 9.30, it started raining almost horizontally with the strong wind, and we sheltered in the large barn being used for Registration.

At 10.30, we set off on the Medium Score course from the Start which was on a small exposed hill in the middle of the valley. For the first kilometre we had to run up the valley because of out-of-bounds areas. Progress was slow as we kept heads lowered and inspected the ground. We reached our first control near Raven Crag and then headed for Honister Pass, along with many other teams. Visibility was reasonable but the streams of water off the hills were overflowing. We went up the path to Dale Head before heading north to two controls. We then planned to go to the north of Dale Head which we hoped would be more sheltered. But there was no way we could find to cross a stream and travel westwards. So reluctantly we headed back to Honister Pass into the wind and rain. Our plan was to get to some controls on the side of the Pass, before reaching the overnight camp site at Buttermere. Our progress was slow as we were sandblasted with driving rain across the open hillside.

We reached the Slate Quarry buildings at Honister Pass at about 1.30, and we were told that the event had been cancelled. We were a tad surprised and thought that it was a wind-up. However the presence of a large number of competitors sheltering in the cafe, plus an exposure case reinforced the message. So we headed back to the Event Centre with the intention of driving home.....how optimistic. The road down Honister Pass was flooded and when we reached the small road to Seathwaite we soon discovered that the road was flooded to 2-3 feet, and Claire's car was in the middle of this. Despairingly, we retrieved our wet bags from the car, and waded up the road to the Event Centre to hand in our dibber. Although we had a tent etc, the prospect of camping in driving rain with all our bags did not appeal. So we did a recce of the farm buildings and found a camping washroom next to the main barn. There was a spare room with space to sleep. We spent the afternoon with two other teams, being able to cook and eat in relative comfort. Routine checks showed that it was still raining at 10.00pm, but the intensity decreased overnight.

After a dry night, we rose at 7.00 and walked down the road to see the floods had gone down. We met up with Nick and Caroline Dallimore who emerged from a campervan. Getting to the car, we had visions that the car would be a write-off, and we would be stranded. Already there were other cars being towed because they refused to start. But getting to the car, we found that the water had drained out and we were extremely lucky to find that it started immediately. Without more ado, we set off for home along flooded roads, with many teams still making their way to the Event Centre.

We were disappointed that the event was called off, but subsequent news about the flooded conditions at the overnight camp site showed the need for stopping. It was clear that the event organisers have little control during the day, once the event starts. Future events may need compulsory controls at road crossing points to monitor competitors, particularly for score events. Another weakness was that there was no authoritative response from an OMM organiser to present the true picture as the event proceeded. As a result, the media were able to have a field day in speculating about the impacts of the event, without any official response.

Claire and Havard Prosser – Team 15

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Selection of events, both local and far

Date	Club	Event	Location	Comment
20-Dec	BOK	WNL	Monmouth	Local night score
27-Dec	SWOC	XMAS event	Wenallt	always very popular
28-Dec	SN	Regional	Aldershot	
01-Jan	NGOC	New year score	Parkend	Annual NGOC new year score event
10-Jan	BOK	Local	Blaise Castle	
11-Jan	NGOC	District Event	Cranham	Always well organised
13-Jan	SWOC	Street race	Roath	The third of our winter street series
17-Jan	NGOC	WNL	Symonds Yat	Local night score
25-Jan	SWOC	Local	Cwm Dare	still need a planner
31-Jan	NGOC	Local League Event	Sallowvallets	Good area
31-Jan	BOK	WNL	Westonbirt	Local night score
01-Feb	BOK	District Event	Westonbirt	
07-Feb	NGOC	WNL	Painswick, Gloucs	Local night score
08-Feb	DEE	Regional	Delamere Forest	Near Chester
11-Feb	SWOC	Street score	Newport	The fourth of our winter street series
14-Feb	SWOC	Welsh Champs	Wentwood	Our most important event of the year
15-Feb	SWOC	Welsh Short	Parc Penallta	A short race on a new map near Ystrad Mynach
21-Feb	BOK	Local	Purdown	Just of the M32
21-Feb	JOK	Chasing Spint	Watford	Annual event and FCC race
22-Feb	HH	National Event	Beaconsfield	Large National Event and FCC race
28-Feb	SOC	British Champs	New Forest	Big event
01-Mar	SOC	British relays	New Forest	Big event
10-Mar	SWOC	Street score	Llandaff	Provisional date
15-Mar	SWOC	Local	Pothkerry Park	
07-Apr	SWOC	Street score	Penarth	Provisional date

Links to all clubs can found here - <http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/findaclub.php>

Links to fixtures can be found here <http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/event/findevent.php>

The above list does not include the Street Score league, details of which can be found on page 1

This site is also useful for all registered events. <http://www.oobrien.com/map/?p=cf23>