

# Wessex Extra

January 2014

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!



**No snow for Julie in Slovenia, but lots of walking.**



**First Wessex Top to go global...and making friends with a polar bear.**

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***This is the 200th Wessex Extra!***

**Take your Wessex Top somewhere interesting this year, take a photo and send it to the Editor with a short article!!**



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## **CHAIRMAN'S PONDERINGS**

I had hoped to write a few words here about going cross-country skiing and snow-show walking in Slovenia over Christmas. But there was no snow! Well, there was some 'old' snow up on the higher levels but there was none on the cross-country ski trails. In fact, we had 48 hours of persistent rain from Christmas Eve to Boxing Day afternoon. But I fell in love with the area (we stayed at Lake Bohinj) and I am definitely planning to go back there – in fact, I've just found a 3-day event there in June, based near Ljubljana. Tempting!

After the recent SOC event in the New Forest, I've been thinking about what makes for a 'good' course and, conversely, a 'bad' course. The reason is that I feel that I had one of the latter (Green) for two, interrelated reasons. Firstly, there were only 10 controls on a 4.9k course - where I would normally expect at least 13 or 14, giving competitors plenty of opportunities for using their navigational skills. And secondly, there were two very long legs, accounting for nearly 50% of the total length. Now, I understand the reason for long legs, but not when there is really no route choice - both legs were basically a long trudge across the heathered and boggy open. I felt that it was, in a way, "lazy" planning. Or is it just me?! Anyway, I'd be interested to hear what you think.

Wessex have now formed a Junior Squad (see page 20), so we welcome them to the Club.

**Julie Astin**

***P.S. SOA (Scottish Orienteering Association) are asking for volunteers to help at the forthcoming World Championships. Contact them if you are able to help. (Ed)***

***CLUB TOPS: Anyone interested in buying a club top or a club running vest (for the Coast Path Relay?) should e-mail [gavin.clegg@parkstone.poole.sch.uk](mailto:gavin.clegg@parkstone.poole.sch.uk) before the end of February***

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## **SOUTHERN NIGHT CHAMPIONSHIPS**

As this event was in our area, at Gore Heath near Wareham, I thought I'd have a crack at it, back in December. The evening was perfect for night orienteering - not too cold, no wind and clear skies, if my memory serves me correctly.

As anyone who has done an event at Gore Heath knows, it is not an easy area to orienteer on in daylight, let alone at night! And so it proved on the 3rd leg of my Short Green course.

In daylight it would have been a case of taking a rough bearing to hit a N/S linear open area in the woods, follow this northwards, alongside an earth bank, to cross a large E/W path and then pace further along the open area until the thicket control is arrived at, close to the open area, on the left.

But at night the linear open area, and even the embankment, weren't at all easy to pick out, and although I paced from what I thought was the large E/W path, the features basically weren't making much sense. When I'd run/stumbled the required number of paces, I looked around expecting/hoping/praying to see my control. Nothing. I didn't even appear to be in an open area anymore. I then started to doubt that I'd actually been following the right feature and was just about to retrace my steps and relocate, when my head torch caught the reflective tab on the control. Phew! I was on the wrong side of where I was expecting to approach it, but I didn't care - I was just incredibly relieved to see it at all.

The rest of the course was relatively uneventful but when I downloaded and saw my time (62.52 for a 3.4k course) I was sure I would be beaten. I'd taken 10 minutes on leg 3. But, as it transpired, my main rival that night (in fact, my only rival!) Lynn Branford, had even more of a nightmare on that same control (over 30 minutes I recall) so I ended up becoming the W60 Southern Champion!! So the lesson I learnt that night? Always believe that someone else can make a worse mistake than you, and never give up!

**Julie Astin**

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## **Brighton City Race, Saturday 14th December 2013**

Up early and off to Angelique's for breakfast with Andrew Beldowski who was over here from France and visiting us.

Now off to Parkstone Grammar School to collect the mini bus and various orienteers from Poole and Wimborne, we were away. There were further "pick-ups" en-route. Now all are aboard and off we go. Look out Brighton here we come! A happy band of travellers. It sounds like a "gaggle of geese" in the back, but happy geese!.

Just reading through the 'final details' - what to wear for the streets of Brighton - appropriate clothing please 'Hi viz' jacket or top. I guess 6 inch heels not suitable then. Maybe a 'Gucci' handbag but in fluorescent pink? Maybe not!

First stop for the call of nature and sustenance; tea, coffee and chocolate – driver only allows 15 minutes! Off we go again. Thankfully the roads are not too busy considering how close the event is to Christmas this year. Weather ok, just a bit dull and grey and overcast.

We arrived at 1.20pm. Bus parked by the sea front - very windy but bracing and not too chilly. Off we go to the shops. The city is very busy as usual; the small shops are good to shop in if you want something a little different. Most of them offer some 'unique' ideas for presents and unusual merchandise.

Brighton offers everything to keep visitors happy and the natives are very friendly. There is a real buzz in the town. We arrived at the small urban school being used as assembly, as we did last year, and the ladies were already setting up the refreshments etc.

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An array of various 'Lycra' outfits started to appear. Head torches and dibbers on fingers were ready to go. The event 'Marshalls' led all the competitors down towards the start which was on the sea front. The wind almost stopped the competitors as they turned a corner. This should be fun!

After they had all started I made my way back to the school and had a coffee and chatted to Sue, Bridget, and Clare who were manning the refreshments and Peter who was on the computers.

After awhile the orienteers start to come in. Apparently one control was missing - possibly gracing someone's mantelpiece by now. Most people were back soon after myself.

Big discussion about butterflies! No not the flying type. Apparently an orienteering manoeuvre! Perhaps they should have been given suitable equipment like a net?

As the school room fills up the "striptease routine" begins. Orienteers are not shy, they strip off anywhere! Any persons of a delicate disposition - please avert your eyes! An aroma of various body odours permeates the area; thankfully this is quickly followed by various body sprays! Lovely!

Apart from one of the team having a seat malfunction on the journey home, he was right at the back when the seat became dislodged, thankfully the doors were well locked and no one was lost. Another happy trip home with many medal winners on the bus. Thanks again to the school and their hospitality and to South Downs Orienteers.

**Lady Lycra**

## NEW PERMANENT COURSE AT SLADES FARM IS LAUNCHED!!

On Saturday 30th November, we launched the new Permanent Course at Slades Farm, near Bournemouth University. All those who attended had a great time, the weather was good as well! The Permanent Course is open to everyone so do have a go. See our Website for details.



Jason Falconer, who produced the Permanent Course. Well done Jason!!

Nicola and Arthur Brooke starting their course.



Runners results.

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## **TORRINGTON CHRISTMAS CAPER – SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER 2013**

I had wanted an away weekend just before Christmas and with no O in the vicinity had been persuaded that a 9.5m cross-country race would be fun. Lying wide awake in our B&B at 3.00am on the Sunday morning listening to the hail and howling wind beating on the roof made me think I had better revise my definition of fun. Fortunately things had died down a bit by first light and it could best be described as cool and squally.

Assembly was at Torrington rugby club set high on a ridge on the outskirts of the town. So two certainties: a downhill start and an uphill finish. I had been advised by Helen Dyke, who did this race annually, to wear studs as there was plenty of mud. She hadn't said there were plenty of country lanes as well so had the wrong shoes on (typical runner getting the excuses in already!)

Start was along a single track country lane and I didn't want to race hard as I hadn't done any training for a couple of weeks (second excuse!) so I positioned myself about a quarter of the way down the 250 competitors. Helen was much nearer the front. Hooter sounded and we were off steadily down the road, then down some more, then steeper down, having to hold yourself back, then at the bottom turned off onto a leaf strewn footpath – that's a bit better. Only for half a k though then across the river Torridge (by bridge) and a little way up the A386 before turning off on a green lane, which got progressively wetter and muddier – much more like it. But again only for half a k. Steep climb on a good path through Pollard Hill Wood than a level track before an asphalt track up the valley through Penleave Wood. This seemed to drag on a bit and towards the top realised I was running out of puff. Reaching the B3227 in 30 minutes we turned round and ran down the other side

of the valley on a very muddy and sticky forest track. I would have enjoyed this section normally but was suffering a bit now. Tried to remember that pain is only weakness leaving the body, but it didn't help much. By this time, with too much road running, my insoles had tried to leave the party by partially slipping out of both shoes and were rubbing up my Achilles (third excuse). And then it started to rain.

Eventually back over the Torridge on the Tarka trail rail bridge, then looped around to be beside the river and heading back. Next couple of miles would be flat but was getting concerned about the final climb to the finish. Was moving more slowly now and was overtaken, but could see a guy about 75 mtrs in front who kept looking behind – always a sign that someone is tiring, which gave me some hope of making up a place. A mile from home and the climb begins, very severe, so much so that its quicker to walk and definitely making inroads into the 75mtrs. More like 20mtrs now, over a gate into the fields for the final  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. But a final sting as the field goes very steeply down into a small valley before coming up out the same on the other side. Cows have used the field and created a very rough surface with some contouring trails which we were having to negotiate at right angles at speed. Lose my footing and career down the final 20 mtrs in a most ungainly fashion but manage somehow to stay upright. Certainly gave me an adrenalin boost, which was quickly dissipated by the climb out of the valley.

Now only 10 metres behind the bloke in front, can almost touch him as he clammers over the final gate. Do I really want this? Have to make the effort I suppose as Valerie will be at the finish with a camera and manage to just get in front of him, beating him by a second. A small victory to take home. 9.5 miles in 70m 31s. 42<sup>nd</sup> overall and 6<sup>th</sup> over 50. Not brilliant but a run out to get rid of the cobwebs. Plus a time to aim for next year perhaps. Helen did well coming 23<sup>rd</sup> overall and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lady, only beaten by Jo Meek who has



a 2.46 PB for the Marathon and was second lady in this year's MDS! (Marathon Des Sables for the uninitiated). Goody bag for all, so don't have to worry about buying the Christmas pudding!



*Reading, as I do, some of the fell running and athletics magazines, you sometimes get reports of idiot athletes doing things like running up 50 peaks during the year when reaching the age of 50 or running 50 races throughout the year or perhaps visiting 50 'tops' during some mammoth week in the hills.*

*This year has been, for one reason or another, quite busy for me competition wise. Without aspiring to such heights as the aforementioned achievements, I wondered how many races I had been part of during my 58<sup>th</sup> year. As it's my rules I have included races I have organised and where I have run in races like the Furrow Hoppers Relay (three separate courses) have counted that as three races. So 58 at 58 perhaps? Nope, twice that: 116 between 1 January and 31 December 2013.*

*Not sure if I need a certificate for that or just certifying!*

***Hmm!! Need to think about that!!! Ed***

*(List is available with the Editor if you want to see it. )*

**Gavin Clegg**

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## **BOXING DAY CANTER**

Given the weather we experienced over most of the Christmas/New Year period, everybody was pleased that Boxing Day dawned bright, dry and the area with a heavy frost on the ground. I have often done quite well at this event partly because its normal location at Moors Valley means there is a lot of path running, of which I am good, but mainly because each control normally has a number of other people going in or out so they are quite easy to find, which I am often not very good at !

Over the last year I have increasingly noticed that I could no longer read the map as clearly as I used to. Father Christmas was obviously also aware of my decreasing faculties as he kindly left a pair of orienteering glasses under our Christmas tree and this was my first chance to try them out.

There was really only one way to go at the mass start so I headed off trying to plan the best route. This was made more difficult because there was no quick way to relate the number of the control to its points value; you had to look up each one in from the key on the map. So if anybody from Wimborne is reading this, next Christmas can we please have a numbering system that makes this easier (otherwise a great event as usual).

I finally realised that many of the high scoring controls are at the bottom end of the park and so I decided to head off in that direction to get them and hopefully return in time. Early on I have Gavin and Dale just in front who kindly lead me into the first few controls and I soon come across the bonus Fairy control to get my extra 50 points. I then headed for two controls (146 and 141) that were only about 200m apart but the ground between them was so difficult that it took almost 3 min to cover it. From there it was mainly path running with short detours to pick up extra controls to get down to a group of the three most distant, and highest scoring, controls.

On approaching the first of these I see Gavin turn off the path what I thought was too early and Sarah Rollins from BAOC who was between us, obviously thought so too as she carried on further down. I decided to

more or less follow Sarah, which turned out to be the correct move as we quickly reached the control while Gavin was still foundering in ditches and thick undergrowth about 100m away. It is not often I make a better route choice than Gavin. At the very bottom of the map I was passed by Jack Benham of Sarum just before we came out onto a path and I had expected him to just run away from me. Perhaps he was taking it easy but I more or less managed to match his pace on the paths though he got away on the next patch of rough ground.

I scooped up the three most distant controls and a few more vaguely on my way back, before realising that I really needed to head for the finish if I was going to make it in time. To avoid extra delays on any more rough areas, I plotted a route via some remaining controls that were all on or very close to paths.

Fortunately my chosen route took me by the other two 50 point bonus controls of Father Christmas and the Decorated tree. With four minutes to go I had a choice; I could either go back along the paths to the finish and make it easily or go cross country and pick up one last control. My early experience of the rough ground made me cautious of the latter approach but many other people were also heading that way so I decided to follow. Getting to the control was not too bad but getting from there to the finish was more difficult as a number of runners all tried to move along the same route of least resistance. At one point I had Ian Sayer in front of me who was not moving as fast as I would have liked. My past experience as a cross country runner then came to the fore as with a nifty bit of elbow work I forced my way past; sorry Ian !

In the end I made it to the finish with over a minute to spare and was pleased to have come 7th, and top WSX runner, out of the 219 entries. As for the glasses, I had some teething problems with them, but I will definitely use them in the future as it is really much easier to navigate when you can see the map clearly.



***Roger's purpose-built shoe tree. Could it be patented, do you think?***

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## FORTHCOMING ORIENTEERING EVENTS

[www.wessex-oc.org](http://www.wessex-oc.org)

### JANUARY 2014

- Sun 26 **BERKSHIRE ORIENTEERS, SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS**, Star Posts, Bracknell. [www.bko.org.uk](http://www.bko.org.uk)
- Wed 29 **ARMY EVENT**, Bordon Heath.
- Thur 30 **SOUTHAMPTON ORIENTEERS**, Wessex Night League, Marchwood.

### FEBRUARY 2014

- Sat 1 **WIMBORNE** Dorset Schools & Informal, Rockford Common. No night event.
- Sun 2 **QUANTOCKS GALOPPEN**, Castle Neroche/Staple Common.
- Also: **GUILDFORD ORIENTEERS**, OO Trophy, Blackheath, nr. Guildford.
- Mon 3 **WIM/WSX CLUB EVENING & NIGHT LEAGUE**, Wimborne Town Hall. Starts 6.30p.m.
- Wed 5 **ARMY EVENT**, Pyestock.
- Sat 8 **SARUM EVENT**, Dorset Schools & Night event, Stonedown Woods, Salisbury.
- Sun 9 **THAMES VALLEY O.C. CHILTERN CHALLENGE**, Nettlebed, Henley on Thames.
- Wed 12 **ARMY EVENT**, Chawton Park & Bushy Leaze Wood.
- Sat 15 **WESSEX EVENT, Day/Night event**, Upton Country Park.
- Sun 16 **COMPASS SPORT TROPHY HEAT**, Ashurst & Matley Heath, New Forest.
- Wed 19 **ARMY EVENT**, Everleigh (South West Junior Squad and individual championships.) event open to civilians.
- Sat 22 **BRITISH NIGHT CHAMPIONSHIPS**, Crowborough.
- Also: **WIMBORNE ORIENTEERS**, Dorset Schools & Informal, Port Regis School, Shaftesbury.
- Sun 23 **NORTH GLOUCESTER ORIENTEERS**, Galoppen. Venue to be confirmed.
- Wed 26 **ARMY EVENT**. Hawley Heath.

### MARCH 2014

- Sun 2 **WELSH ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS**, Llanelli.  
[www.sboc.org.uk/](http://www.sboc.org.uk/)
- Also: **SOUTHAMPTON EVENT**, Level C.
- Mon 3 **WSX/WIM CLUB NIGHT AND NIGHT LEAGUE**, Brownsea Island.
- Wed 5 **ARMY EVENT**. Barossa.
- Sat 8 **SOUTHAMPTON** Wessex Night League, Southampton.
- Sun 9 **SARUM SAUNTER**, Salisbury.
- Wed 12 **ARMY EVENT**, Long Valley South.

Sun 16            **WIMBORNE ORIENTEERS**, Regional event, Ringwood Forest N.  
 Wed 19            **ARMY EVENT**, Frith and Windmill Hill.  
 Wed 26            **ARMY EVENT**, Harewood Forest (to be confirmed)  
 Sun 30            **QUANTOCKS ORIENTEERS**, Colour coded event, Priors Park  
**APRIL 2014**  
 Wed 2            **ARMY EVENT**, details to be confirmed.  
 Sun 6            **WESSEX GALOPPEN**. Rushmore.  
 Mon 7            **WIM/WSX CLUB EVENING**, Poundbury, Dorchester (details to be confirmed)  
 Wed 9            **ARMY EVENT**, Hankley South.  
 Sun 13            **MIKE NELSON BOKTROT**, Wye Valley Forests.  
 Fri 18-21        **J.K. WEEKEND**, Swansea, Wales.            Details on [www.thejk.org.uk](http://www.thejk.org.uk)  
 Wed 30            **ARMY EVENT**, Collingbourne Wood.

**Details of all future events can be found on the British Orienteering website: [www.britishorienteering.org.uk](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk)**

**Other useful local websites:**

**Wimborne Orienteers:** [www.wimborne-orienteers.org.uk](http://www.wimborne-orienteers.org.uk)  
**Southampton Orienteers:** [www.Southampton-orienteers.org.uk](http://www.Southampton-orienteers.org.uk)  
**Sarum Orienteers:** [www.sarumo.org.uk](http://www.sarumo.org.uk)  
**North Gloucester Orienteers:** [www.ngocweb.com](http://www.ngocweb.com)  
**Bristol Orienteers:** [www.bristolorienteering.org.uk](http://www.bristolorienteering.org.uk)

**FOR UP TO DATE DETAILS OF THE WEDNESDAY ARMY EVENTS, GO TO THEIR WEBSITE: [www.baoc.info](http://www.baoc.info)**

**\*\* We try to put on a local event for newcomers and improvers most months during the year. For further details, please see our website: [www.wessex-oc.org](http://www.wessex-oc.org)**

**\*\*Coaching will be available at all our events, including informals, for all abilities.**

The forthcoming events list is compiled from British Orienteering and other clubs' websites. For further details of events, log on to the **BRITISH ORIENTEERING** website or the relevant Club's website. **Please check before setting out, as some events have been known to change at short notice.** If you would like to share transport, contact a committee member who will put you in touch with someone who can help, or send a message through the Wessex Yahoo Group.

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# THE 5 KEY SKILLS OF ORIENTEERING

by Diana Todd, Western and Hills Orienteering Club, Sydney Australia  
(with permission)

When you can use these five techniques skillfully, you will be able to find any control on any orienteering map in the world. On some legs you may use only one technique, but for most legs you will need to combine several, or maybe all five, techniques.

Before we get to the 5 key skills, here's an insight into using compass bearings: Accuracy deteriorates as distance increases. Our compasses aren't surveyors' tools - any bearing you measure on the map will likely be off by one or two degrees. As you follow the bearing, you are likely to unconsciously veer off another degree or two. Sometimes these errors will offset each other and you'll end up exactly on target. But at other times they will compound each other. Over a 100 m leg, a 10o error will put you nearly 15 m off course.

But over a longer distance, the same error would put you much more off course. So use your compass wisely as you apply the 5 Key Skills: use it to orient your map, and use it to aim yourself in a general direction, but when you use it to try to pick a precise line to a specific point, keep the distance as short as possible.

## The 5 Key Skills

**1.** Pick out a **CATCHING FEATURE** that will let you know if you've gone too far. When planning your route, look on the map a short distance beyond the control you are heading for, and pick out a big, distinct feature that you can't fail to recognize. If you arrive at this catching feature, you will know you have overshot the control, and can turn around and go back. It will "catch" you and keep you from wandering too far past your control.

**2.** Follow a **HANDRAIL**. Even if it were pitch dark, you would be able to easily negotiate a winding staircase if you just put your hand on the handrail and followed where it led. Handrails in orienteering are features that are you can follow just as easily. paths and roads are the most obvious, but you can follow fences, streams, ditches, the edges of fields, and other long, narrow features just as easily. Following a "handrail" takes much less concentration than following a compass bearing. Also, since the handrail is illustrated on the map and a compass bearing isn't, following the

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handrail makes it much easier to keep track of exactly where you are.

**3.** When following a compass bearing to get to a distinct point near or on a handrail, try **AIMING OFF**. If you pick a compass bearing that aims directly at the precise point you are heading for, if you err even slightly you won't know if the feature you want will be on your left or your right as you approach it. By deliberately aiming to one side of the feature, you can confidently predict which side it will appear on. This technique works best when the feature is on or very near a handrail - for example a boulder near a stream. If you aim right at the boulder, but don't see it when you hit the stream, you won't know whether to go upstream or downstream to look for it.

However, if you deliberately aim a little upstream of the boulder, if you don't see it when you hit the stream you will know to turn downstream to look for it.

**4.** If the control isn't on or near a handrail or other large, distinct, easily identifiable feature, choose an **ATTACK POINT** that you are confident that you can identify and take a compass bearing from there. Some controls, especially on advanced courses, are placed in the middle of large areas of featureless terrain, with no paths, streams, re-entrants, or other distinct feature to help you keep track of where you are. An example would be a depression in the middle of a plantation forest, or a boulder on a smooth, even hillside. You have no choice but to follow a compass bearing to find it. But remember that when following a compass bearing, 1) the bearing is only good if you really are where you think you are when you start following the bearing, and 2) your accuracy in following the bearing decreases as the distance you travel increases. So pick the closest feature that you are sure you can find, and go in from there. Note: using an attack point is also useful in less challenging situations, where you don't have to use a compass. In many cases you may be able to use some other directional scheme, like "straight downhill from the path intersection" or "up the left re-entrant from the re-entrant junction" or "clockwise around the marshy area from where the stream comes in".

**5.** Use **COLLECTING FEATURES** to keep track of where you are. The most successful orienteers know exactly where they are at all times. They do this by constantly identifying features as they pass them, and locating them on the map (or "collecting" the features). Here are two types of situations where using collecting features is particularly helpful:

1. The *“I’ll just head west until I hit the path and then turn right”* situation. This can be a good strategy, but if the path has grown indistinct, or is covered with leaves, or is hidden under a fallen tree, you could walk right over it without noticing. Or you might inadvertently veer southwest instead of west, and hit a different path. By identifying the terrain and features as you go (*“There should be a reentrant coming up on my right, and then there’ll be a marshy area off to my left”*), you will know when you are coming close to the path, or when you are starting to drift off your line.

2. The *“I have no choice but to follow a compass bearing a long way”* situation. Break the long leg up into several shorter sections between identifiable features, even if it means following a zig-zag course. It often is faster to go a slightly longer, zig-zag distance, following several different compass bearings short distances from one distinct feature to another with great accuracy, rather than to go the shorter straight route on a single bearing with your accuracy deteriorating the closer you get to the control.

**It’s always useful to have a reminder!! And below is another reminder of forthcoming championships.  
(Ed)**

- \*- British Orienteering Championships: 31 May – 1 June. North East. [www.boc2014.org.uk](http://www.boc2014.org.uk)
- British Sprint Championships: 6 September. Keele University. [www.britishsprintchamps.org.uk](http://www.britishsprintchamps.org.uk)
- British Middle Championships: 7 September. Rugeley. [www.britishmiddlechamps.org.uk](http://www.britishmiddlechamps.org.uk)
- UK Orienteering League: UKOL will continue in 2014 using the same format of 19 competitions. The full programme is available at [www.ukorienteeringleague.org.uk](http://www.ukorienteeringleague.org.uk)



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## **HOLTON LEE 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2013**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> November, I went on a score night event at Holton Lee. It was harder than a normal course as you had to do as many odd controls as you could first and then as many even controls. Because it was harder, in the dark and the controls weren't on paths, I did it with my mum.

When we got to the start, Roger gave us the map but we couldn't look at it until we had punched. To get to our first control, we ran to the finish and then to a gate in the field. Then we went through and saw two trees in the distance. At first I ran to the wrong one! After punching the right one, Mum and I had a long debate about our next control (during which Arthur and Daddy caught us up) but I decided to go for the slightly easier route as I was worried we would run out of time.

To get to our second control, we ran along the fence until we got to a gate. Then we ran up a big track. The control was in between two gorse bushes. We carried on along the fence until we got to the path again. As we came into the woods, we saw a stag and some other deer looking at us as we ran towards them. The path took us up a big hill. We had to run down the other side because the control was at the foot of a cliff. We took a bearing across the field to find the next control. We ended up too far to the left but we found it because I saw a headtorch running away from it!

We ran along the edge of the field to get to the next control. We saw there was a railway bridge but we couldn't get up it. We had to go along to a gate that was tied in place with a piece of string. (Here we were overtaken by Rob Hick.) We went under the gate and followed a little path, left along another little path and the control was on a fence.

We retraced our steps and then ran along the path across the field to the next control. We then took another bearing. Our next control was marked as a little black circle and we didn't know what it was. I thought it was an electricity pole and when I got there, I was right!

We couldn't decide which side of the fence our next control was on. We decided to follow the path through the wood but when we got to the end we were wrong. So we went under the fence and ran to the corner of the field. On the way back, we knew where to go back in as I'd seen a giant mushroom. We had time for just one more control but on the way there we couldn't work out which fence was which. We then found an elephant track where other people had bashed through. We ran up a little hill and the control was there. We ran back to the hill and back to the finish.

I was quite tired but we had scored 200 points. Sadly Daddy and Arthur had 270.....

**Agnes Brooke (and Nicola Brooke)**

## **BOXING DAY CANTER PHOTOGRAPHS**



***AND THEY'RE OFF!!***





Sarah Houlder dashing to the Finish!



Lovely to see Andrew Beldowski, looking good!



Graham and Roy finishing.



Richard Dunford



Chris & Vicky Lee and their son J.J.



Nicola Brooke



Ian Sayer

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## **RELAUNCH OF WESSEX JUNIOR SQUAD**

Now that we have a few more youngsters in the Club, we felt it was an ideal time to re-launch a Junior Squad. This will be known as: The WOJ Squad (Wessex Orienteers Juniors).

We have mapped out SIX events for regular training (the first one was on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January at Wimborne's Hurn Forest event), and the other five events are listed below. At each of the events there will be three or four Club Coaches, a WOJ Squad tent and specific training activities geared to the ability of each individual.

We hope that, if you have any members of your family who are eligible for joining the Junior Squad we have already contacted you, but if not please get in touch with me.

Similarly, if you know of other juniors (not necessarily Club members) who would like to be involved, please let me know. If any newcomers are attending a school in Dorset, they can enter the Dorset Schools League.

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February – Upton Country Park – **(Wessex)**  
Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March - Ringwood Forest North **(Wimborne)**  
Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April – Wessex event at Rushmore **(Wessex)**  
Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May – Sarum event (to be confirmed) **(Salisbury)**  
Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June – Hardy Relays (Holton Lee) **(Wessex)**

**Kay Sayer**

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## **BOXING DAY CANTER**

Following the continuous downpours on the previous few days the rest of the family decided to retire to the beach so I braved the terrors of Moors Valley by myself. A beautiful Winter morning with mist rising from the sodden ground made the trip worthwhile which was obviously also the opinion of the large gathering in the start pen swapping Christmas greetings and introducing family visitors to their O friends. I was tapped on the shoulder and was surprised to see Andrew Beldowski over from France who is looking in good shape despite his recent problems, in fact I think that he ended up higher in the finish list than I did..

There was only one meaningful exit from the start pen with an enormous surge of people rushing away in the same direction before splitting apart later.

I find score events to be quite a challenge, it is very difficult to avoid running off after the departing crowd who all appear to have instant strategic plans arranged within seconds. The control list printed on the map allows easy identification of the high scoring controls but doesn't identify quickly where they are located, there is often a high value control placed fairly close to the start but spotting this quickly is not easy.

My initial route choice wasn't too bad since I soon found the Christmas tree and Santa Claus. I worked my way South reaching the area of control 144 ( 20 points) which was a point feature set in a rough piece of forest covered in knee deep water ditches and waist high grass/brambles. Ended up wasting 10 minutes thrashing around this and getting disoriented. Eventually decided that I would not find the control and reverted to emergency exit to a large path which involved much cursing and falling into ditches. Then the inevitable happens , you realise time is passing and there is a considerable run

to the finish meaning control collection possibilities are limited. Couldn't resist a diversion to the fairy however which cost me a 10 point penalty but left me 40 net points better off.

I always feel that I run much further on these “fun” events than the usual competitions, however it did give a few Brownie Points for healthy living when returning to the family and a good appetite for the left over Turkey. PS I had not realised that I was wearing a hat and a sweatband until I returned to the car suffering from an overheated head.

**Alan Hooper**



## WESSEX COMMITTEE

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## REGULAR CLUB EVENINGS/TRAINING

**Training Evenings** take place on a weekly basis. Every Tuesday at Bournemouth University, Talbot Campus, 5.45pm for 6.00pm start. There are changing and shower facilities plus a bar for refreshments.

**Joint Club Evenings** with Wimborne Orienteers are on the first Monday of every month. The venues for these evenings change each month. See the website for more details or contact a Committee member.

**Wimborne** have a **training day** on the 2nd Saturday of every month at Moors Valley Country Park, from 1.30 to approximately 3.30 pm All members are welcome to attend.

If you are going on holiday/visiting friends/weekend away in another district and want to know what orienteering there is, log onto the website of British Orienteering, [www.britishorienteering.org.uk](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk) and follow the link to Events. Alternatively, if you do not have access to the internet, please contact one of the committee who will be pleased to help.

