

SOUTH MIDLANDS ORIENTEERING CLUB

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SMOC Signals

# Chairman's Chat .....

This chairman's chat is pretty well going to be a lot of thank yous. For a start there is the badge event; thanks here are due to almost everyone as that's what it takes for SMOC to run a badge event, all hands to the pump. There was an excellent turn out for the event and seeing competitors returning from the finish it looks like John's courses were pretty much the business - and it's no easy task planning in the jungle that is Salcey in early autumn. Special mention also to Keith for making sure it all happened and to Robert for making sure the map was bang up-to-date with every ditch in place - no mean feat given the preponderance of ditches (and the jungle that is Salcey in the Summer!).

Thank you is also due to Ric Brackenbury for planning our last Keyne-O at Furzton. For old hands planning a small event like Keyne-O may be no great challenge but Ric is anything but an old hand. Apart from running at most Keyne-Os since they started last year I think I'm right in saying Ric's only other O experience is one District and one Regional event, so planning any sort of event is to be applauded. And even better he actually volunteered before I had a chance to ask him. He had a busy day too as, unusually, we suffered some annoying vandalism to some controls and rather than having a well earned rest during the event he was rushing about fixing things. Fortunately the vandalism had little effect on people's enjoyment of some interesting courses.

If there is anyone else out there able or willing to plan Keyne-O type event there are still plenty with no definite planner and, as Ric ably demonstrated, these are ideal events to start on - plenty of advice will be available too.

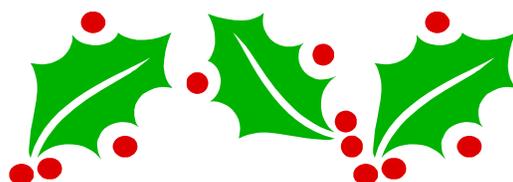
May you always run in sunlit forests,

Steve



In this edition of *SMOC Signals* we are pleased to welcome the following new members:

*Rachel Edwards from Milton Keynes,  
Jean Sampson from Cranfield,  
the Pineda-Sampson family from Spain  
and Elin Falk from Sweden currently studying at  
Cranfield University.*



### **SMOC IN THE RANKINGS** **The position at 26th November**

<b>class</b>	<b>position</b>		<b>points</b>	<b>events</b>
M21S	205	Jason Falconer	821	1
M35L	62	Jason Falconer	2667	3
M40L	170	Roger Williams	956	1
M40S	133	Paul Rushmer	1092	1
M45L	53	Richard Pownall	6829	6
M45L	79	Roger Williams	6295	6
M45L	184	Dorien James	2811	2
M50L	61	Mike Jones	6639	6
M50L	99	Andrew Welsh	6057	6
M50L	104	Keith Downing	5965	6
M50L	199	Haydn Leaker	3011	4
M50S	12	Steve Hardy	7219	6
M50S	89	Richard Harris	4421	4
M55S	58	John Shaw	5173	6
M60S	42	Robert Dove	5279	6
M60S	76	Terry Penny	1977	3
W35S	15	Karen Vines	6545	6
W45S	25	Helen Nisbet	6158	6
W50L	118	Ann Harris	2385	3
W50L	95	Ann Harris	1022	1
W55S	13	Rosie Shaw	6763	6

# LYME DISEASE IS HERE -- BE VIGILANT!

Many orienteers are aware that they may get bitten by ticks from time to time. This minor annoyance is generally forgotten once the tick is removed. Over recent years, we may also have become aware that ticks may carry a bacterial infection, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which shows itself in humans as Lyme disease. However, most of us, including me, have an "it won't happen to me" approach to this risk, even though some ticks in Thetford forest are known to carry the infection.

Well, it has happened to me. Five weeks after several tick bites in Scotland, I found an unimportant looking raised, speckled reddish patch on the side of my knee, no bigger than a little finger nail: no itching or other symptoms. Two weeks later, it was no longer raised and had spread but faded. By week three, i.e. 8 weeks after being bitten, the faded area was surrounded by an angry red ring, growing each day until it was about 5 inches across. This has been diagnosed as '*erythra migrans*', the tell-tale, enlarging, inflamed ring associated with Lyme disease. As I write, I am part way through a 30 day course of antibiotic, Doxycycline

The bacteria in question are smart, and expert at evading detection and antibiotic treatment. The longer they are in the human body, the more entrenched in the body's cells they become and the harder they are to eradicate. Since being diagnosed, I have been reading about Lyme disease, both the early stage and the chronic illness. It makes for an alarming bed-time read.

The later symptoms of the infection may be diverse, fluctuating and inconclusive, e.g. headaches, joint pains, fatigue, swollen glands, sensitivity to light or sound, palpitations, stiff neck and more. The really bad news is that more than 60% of infected patients do not develop the diagnostic enlarging rash. So it may be months or even years before vague symptoms are linked to possible Lyme disease infection. By then it may be much more difficult to eradicate.

So my message is - watch out, not only for the expanding rash, but for unexpected symptoms in any part of the body, even as long as a month or more after a tick bite, and be sure to ask your doctor about Lyme disease. If you are lucky (relatively!) and develop the early rash, take it to the doctor as soon as possible. I did not get to a doctor as soon as I should have (too many holidays!), but hopefully a month's worth of antibiotic will clear out the infection. With hindsight, I should have paid more attention to the earlier stages of the rash, but as yet I do not have any further symptoms. Watch this space.

Sue Vine, NOR

## Post script:

1. Deter ticks by spraying socks and trousers, rather than skin, with a DEET-containing insect repellent.
2. Remove ticks carefully from skin with tweezers, as soon as possible and without any preliminary treatment.

Those of you who don't often look at the orienteering web site will find that the British Orienteering Federation site has today been completely redesigned.

I've not explored it yet, but it looks very different and should become easier to navigate around, Keith.

You can find it at

<http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk>

**wishing you all a very  
Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year**



## **Organising a Regional Event (or even a Badge Event for older readers)**

In February some three years before the event, the first step is to submit a proposal to the East Anglian fixtures conference to get approval for the date and area to be used. The date must not clash with any other event in the region, nor with any known dates in other regions. It is easy enough for EA clubs to negotiate dates amongst themselves, but every other region is going through the same process at the same time, so the regional fixtures secretary must then go to the national fixtures conference to resolve the clashes up and down the country. After some horse-trading of dates, the white puff of smoke appears and the level 3 dates are fixed. In the case of level 1 and 2 events, Nationals, the JK and British Championships, this process happens at least one year earlier, as was the case when SMOC bid for the Sprint Championships held in 2006. After the principle dates in the calendar are fixed, clubs start to think about local events, which are added to the calendar the following year, whilst the lowest level events such as Keyne-O can be slotted in at the very last stage, avoiding all the other clashes which take priority.

Once the dates have been confirmed, time passes more leisurely, but over the coming months the forest must be booked with the forestry commission or other land owners. They are helpful, but have to accommodate other users, which include shooting tenants, wild-life, other events and even their own known forestry activities. About a year before the event the permission to hold the event is issued, but before this time the preparation of the map has started. If it is a new map, the survey work will have started when the proposal was first submitted, but if it is an existing map, the revision begins at least a year before the actual date of the event, so that the state of the vegetation at the time of the event can be assessed. Clear runnable forest such as in Holcote and Reynold Wood in February can become impenetrable by June. The other essential elements are to confirm who will plan and organise the event.

Once these duties have been established, the planner works with the mapper to ensure that the likely areas of the forest are surveyed and features mapped, there is no need to spend a lot of time mapping areas where nobody is likely to go. Meanwhile, the organiser must draw up a budget for likely costs, because the entry fee must be published on the national fixtures list about 6 months before the event. There is a fixed levy to be paid to the British Orienteering Federation and the Region, plus fixed costs such as the Forestry Commission fee, toilet hire costs and not forgetting the printing of the map itself. Hire of the electronic kit from the region and all the small incidental costs slowly add up. The other official involved, the controller, will also have his costs as he comes from outside the club and has to travel to visit the area and check all that is going on. The planner works closely with the controller, although that is not always the case and the controller can sometimes be getting very worried when he can not find out what is going on – it is his job to ensure everything is at the right standard and that the problems are avoided. Given the large number of variables in our sport, this is an essential job.

Even though dates are published well in advance, orienteers are notorious for leaving their entries to the last minute. On-line entry is becoming standard for events these days, so the on-line entry provider must be established, the club's entry secretary set up with the essential information and basic course details published. This brings us to about 6 months before the event by which time the map is taking shape, the general shape of the courses has been established, the start, finish and car parking identified and any major problems or hazards taken into account. Finding space for several hundred cars near the likely start and finish isn't as easy as it might seem when you turn up on the day of the event. It is about this time that the date is circulated widely in the club to remind members to put it in their diaries, because without everybody's help on the day, all this preparation will be in vain.

As the date of the event gets closer, control sites must be marked with tape and agreed by the controller. If you think finding an orange and white marker is difficult, try to find just a strip of

coloured tape about 3 or 4 inches long. That's what the controller has to do, once the planner has marked the spot he thinks is the correct one. Sometimes it isn't, and it's better to find this out before the event rather than as occasionally happens when the competitors confirm that both the planner and controller have been using the wrong feature. Meanwhile the organiser is booking mobile toilets, checking access routes, hunting down club kit which has invariably been mislaid or not returned, buying consumables varying from toilet roles through to chocolates for the string course, then remembering that the string course needs mapping and planning! The entries secretary is by now receiving e-mails confirming entries, first a trickle, then a flood as the closing date nears. In earlier years this was through the postman bringing piles of standard entry forms, but now these are almost extinct. One big benefit from this change this year was that the postal strikes had almost no effect upon entries.

By now the courses are almost finalised, the map is ready and control sites confirmed. The proofs of the map and courses highlight any changes necessary and continual checks by the mappers, planner, controller and organiser hopefully spot all problems. Things can still go wrong even at this late stage and as ever they did. Initially the forestry commission had said there would be some thinning and brashing in the area, but in the weeks before the event, this became major clearance work, and in the final days the yellow course became unusable as the straight-forward paths vanished under the onslaught of the chain saw. A rapid re-plan and reprint of the map just 48 hours before the event rescued the situation, but not without a lot of frenzied last-minute effort.

Prior to this frantic effort, the final details and control descriptions had been agreed and published on the web for everybody to read, and start times resolved. This might seem relatively simple if you turn up and run, but when you realise you are sharing your course with 6 or 7 other classes and many entries have special requirements like wanting to start at the same time as their travelling companions, as early or late as possible, or at 11.15 precisely, you can then begin to understand the jigsaw puzzle confronting the entries secretary. Another added complexity came about because it was a championships and selection race so that people in the same class or from the same club had to start as far apart in time as possible. The times had to be loaded onto the event computer software as did all the course controls, distances and other information. SMOC helpers had to be encouraged to volunteer and be assigned jobs to do on the day of the event and all details checked.

Once all these tasks had been completed, there was just the simple matter of going to the forest the day before the event to put out the control markers, but not the electronic boxes as well as putting out road signs to direct people to the forest. Control boxes followed on the morning of the event, along with setting up the start, computers and associated tents, marking the route to the starts, opening the forest gates and making sure all the other jobs were in hand. At this point, everybody else in the club took over as they undertook their various jobs and it was down to the planner and controller to find out if their efforts had been appreciated, which fortunately did become clear as the morning wore on. As competitors finished their runs, club helpers were able to run themselves and slowly the last finishers dribbled in, but we had to be certain everybody was accounted for, including two who had forgotten to download, but eventually everybody was back, many helpers had left, but still there was work to be done. All the controls had to be collected, road signs brought in, tapes removed, gates locked and everything packed away, by which time it was almost dark. Runners had been in the forest for about an hour, most SMOC helpers had given about four hours of their time, but for the main helpers and officials, the day had been some 10 hours long. Still the results needed processing and posting on the web, but eventually the months and years of preparation were over and the event had happened. Thanks to everybody who played their part, you know what you did, but Robert Dove and Neil Carter did the surveying, Robert produced the final map, John Shaw did the planning, Helen Nisbet handled the entries, Richard Pownall processed the results and Peter Hornsby did the controlling.

*Keith Downing - Organiser*

## The Forest of Marston Vale needs your help

Dear Friend, supporter or partner

Help us plant 23,372 trees this winter

Just make a phone call

We recently applied to The People's Millions, a National Lottery fund, for £67,700 to enable us to plant over 23,000 trees at Shocott Spring community woodland between the communities of Shortstown and Cotton End.

We are delighted to have been shortlisted and now need your help in supporting us in the final public vote. A promotional film for our project will be shown on Wednesday 28th November on Anglia News (West) on ITV between 6:00pm and 6:30pm, alongside a film for another project we are competing against. Please help us by watching the show and phoning in your support. With your help we can create another new area of woodland for people and wildlife to enjoy for generations to come.

If you can't watch the Anglia News programme itself, you can still help us by calling a telephone number to vote for our project. The telephone number is not being released by the National Lottery until the 28th November, so you can either just wait for an email from us on the day giving you the

number to call to vote for us or check out our website [www.marstonvale.org](http://www.marstonvale.org)  
<<http://www.marstonvale.org>/ on the day which will also give the number to call.

Please pass this message on to anyone else who you think might be keen to support us, and help us make the future greener.

Many thanks for your help and support,

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Don't forget to check the website for  
fixtures, results, SMOC personnel,  
SMOC Signals deadlines  
or any other information you require  
<http://www.smoc.info>



### SMOC Signals deadlines

issue date	copy deadline
February 2008	20 January 2008
April 2008	23 March 2008
June 2008	25 May 2008
August 2008	20 July 2008
October 2008	21 September 2008
December 2008	16 November 2008