

SOUTH MIDLANDS ORIENTEERING CLUB

issue 126

AUGUST 2008



SMOC Signals

Chairman's Chat

This years Club Championship was held recently at Stewartby and was contested by a small but select field. This field included two of the clubs faster runners Richard Pownall and Mike Jones so it looked like I was there as an also ran and Karen Vines looked good for the ladies championship.

Keith had planned a remarkably technical course with 24 controls in 5k. Actually it was worse than that as the course started with 6 relatively easy controls and lots of track running using in the first 3k then 18 controls in 2k in the lumpy bumpy technical bit of Stewartby. Clever planning designed to tire you out before you reach the trick bit and really have to concentrate.

When Karen and I arrived Richard was already out running on the course so it looked like I was running for second at best. I started two minutes ahead of Karen at something of a plod having spent much of the previous week running across bits of Scotland so my legs weren't in fast mode. The first 6 controls were relatively straightforward though I was mildly concerned to spot Karen behind me on one of the long track runs.

Control 7 looked like the last easyish control; the first in the tricky bit - just follow a small path of the main track. However, it proved to be a case of 'What small path?' Richard claimed he found it and Keith was sure it was there but neither Karen, Mike nor myself found it which meant a delay looking for it and a significant diversion to reach it.

After 7 was 8 which proved particularly tricky. It looked simple enough: a long narrow reentrant just in the edge of the light green. While the contours and paths are well mapped at Stewartby the vegetation is more problematic with lots of little thorn bushes scattered about making 'the edge of the light green' a very vague attack feature. I spot a control and head down to it - 'Rats' it's BD not EB - time to head back to the path and attack again. At this point Karen appears having had similar trouble to me at 7 but I'd already used up my lead looking for 8. Fortunately she also headed off for BD while I tried again.

I then bothered to read the control description and discovered I was looking for a long narrow spur rather than a long narrow reentrant. I then made sure I knew exactly where I was starting from and took a careful bearing and walked the line; even then I had to hold my nerve as the bushes got a bit thick but I did manage to hit the control more or less spot on - just as Karen was approaching it from a different direction.

From here on in it was nip and tuck all the way. And it was more about navigation than running speed. One of us would get a small lead only to make a small error on the next control. It was noticeable that Karen would, more often than not, go a slightly longer but safer route while I'd generally go for the more direct route. With the controls so close the opportunities to get a lead were limited; if you made a small mistake then you'd usually spot the other one punching anyway!

At control 14 we met Richard; he'd already run but was back out to work out where he'd missed a control! Still a chance to win...

I did manage to get to the last couple of controls just ahead of Karen and sprint to the finish but it wasn't enough to get anything like 2 minutes back. So Karen was leader in the clubhouse...

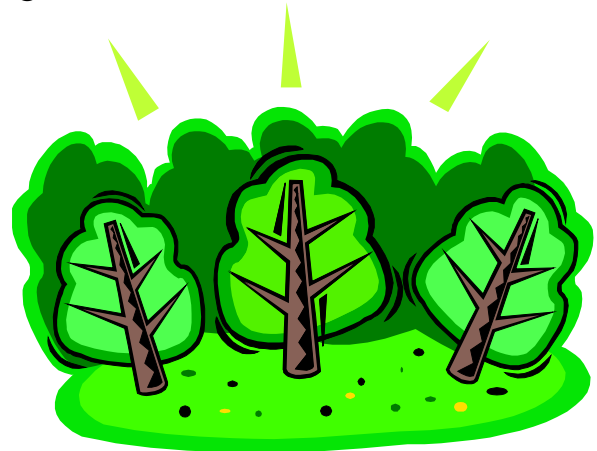
We now learnt that Mike Jones was out on the course, Mike is usually pretty fast but it looked like Karen had the ladies Championship sown up as the only other lady on the course, Rachel Edwards, had retired. However, as time passed it became clear that Mike had had an interesting run and Karen had the championship in the bag. It transpired that Mike had managed to run well off the map before even reaching the tricky bit!

Not exactly a hare and tortoise story but I think the lesson is clear that it's more important to be able to navigate accurately than run fast. It's also important to keep navigating rather than following if you get in a close race. If you don't then you are in real trouble if the other competitor gets away from you or gets lost and, if you are navigating, you might just be able to get away yourself. And it's always worth reading the control description so you are looking for the right thing.

Congratulations to Karen for taking the overall championship, a first for a lady, and to Keith for setting a challenging course in such a small area.

May you always run in sunlit forests,

Steve



SMOC Annual Dinner and Presentation Friday 12 September (also featuring the AGM)

It's time for our annual civilised get-together again - your yearly chance to see what other club members look like when they are not frozen stiff and standing ankle-deep in mud.

We are making a return to the old Red Lion in Great Brickhill, who fed us well last year, and I'm sure will do so again. As well as enjoying a nice dinner we'll be presenting a few prizes earned during the year.

So put Friday September 12th in your diary. And, as soon as convenient, please return your food orders from the menu selection provided at the end of this Signals. You can do so by post or by email, or even by 'phone if you prefer. I'm happy to take sincere promises to pay on the night.

See you then,

Richard.

SMOC AGM

Beside the usual brief reports from the Chairman and the Treasurer, it will be necessary to approve the club's revised constitution.

Rather than publish it in SMOC Signals for anybody outside the club to read before it is approved, copies will be circulated on the club's e-mail group. If you aren't on the distribution for any reason, please let me know and I'll make sure you get a copy.

I hope we see you at the dinner. If you've not been before, it is an ideal occasion to meet club members informally,

Keith Downing
SMOC Secretary
01234 270018 or keith@keith-o.demon.co.uk

EVENT HELPERS

Many of you are becoming regulars at the Keyne-O events and perhaps have noticed how minimal they are in terms of helpers on the day. The club does stage a small number of events each year which are larger in terms of the organisation and the number of competitors. As a result as many club members are needed to help on the day, although as long as there are enough volunteers helps can run as well. Even if you've never helped before, everybody is welcome, indeed without enough volunteers the club could not survive. It doesn't matter if you think you will not know what to do, many of the jobs require no prior specialist knowledge and you will be given instructions about what to do. It is always a golden opportunity to find out more about the sport and meet a wide range of people of all abilities.

Please put the following dates in your diaries.

5 October 2008

15 February 2009

Please let me know if you can help on either occasion, but be warned that if I haven't heard from you, I shall be in touch to ask you nearer the day. I hope you can be there on both dates.

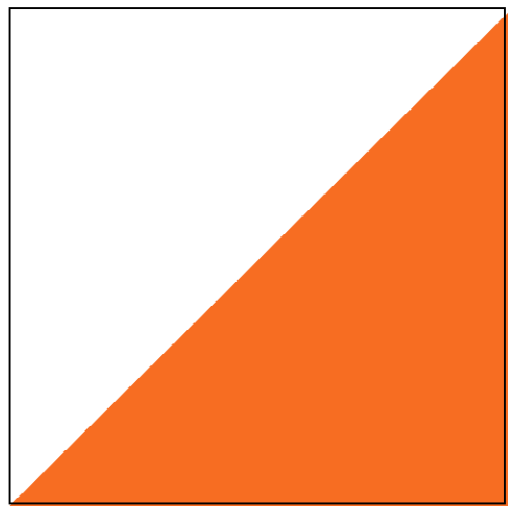
Keith Downing

GREENSAND RIDGE RELAY SATURDAY 28 JUNE 2008

I think it's fair to say that a great time was had by one and all and SMOC would like to thank everyone who took part and made it such a great event that continues to be so popular. Oh yes, I believe some people even did some prior organisation and others turned up on the day just to marshal and help people have a good time. There's just no accounting for some people is there?

We are pleased to welcome
Joe Gilbert
to SMOC

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
October 2008	21 September 2008
December 2008	16 November 2008

The SMOC Annual Dinner and Presentation Evening
 Saturday 12th September 2008 - 7.30pm for 8.00pm
 The Old Red Lion, Great Brickhill (SP 904 302) - Tel 01525 261715

Three Course Dinner plus Coffee for £17.50. Places can be reserved by sending this form with your menu selections and a cheque for the amount payable to SMOC to:

Richard Pownall	Tel: 01296 720189
9a Church End	email: rpownall@f2s.com
Drayton Parslow	
Milton Keynes	
MK17 0JJ	

Send it soon while you remember, but by September 5th **at the very latest** please.
 Choose one item per person from each course below

Reservation from _____

Cheque enclosed for £_____

	No. Orders	_____
<u>Starters</u>		
Garlic Mushrooms.....		____
Home made Leek and Potato Soup.....		____
Smoked Salmon.....		____

<u>Main Course</u>		
Roast Beef.....		____
Pork Fillet Stuffed with Leeks and Bacon.....		____
Breast of Chicken in White Wine Sauce.....		____
Mushroom Stroganoff.....		____

<u>Dessert</u>		
Baileys Cheesecake.....		____
Apple Crumble.....		____
Cheese and Biscuits.....		____