



► **FOREWARD**
WINTER
NEWS 1



► **CLUB PROFILE-**
SUSAN LAMBE
INTERVIEW..... 2



► **COACHING CORNER-**
THE ROUTE CHOICE
PROBLEM..... 3



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NI Orienteering: COACHING *focus*

PROVIDING OUR COACHES AND ATHLETES WITH NEWS,
TIPS, REVIEWS AND MUCH MORE...

Winter NEWS

The highlight of the Winter months in NI Orienteering has to be the celebration of NWOC's 40th Anniversary. Over 50 orienteers (past and present) braved the cold winter weather to enjoy an unique Score event held in Roe Valley Country Park. Competitors used a double sided map with the first ever hand-drawn version of the map on one side and the most up-to-date map on the other side. Considering the limited set of symbols and the fact the original map was orientated North to South this proved to be a mind boggling exercise. However NI Champion Steven Linton came out on top closely follow by ex-NWOCer Peter O'Hara who was home visiting family for Christmas. The event was followed by soup and sandwiches and reminiscing over old photos and videos.


The New Year saw the launch of LVO's new Junior Development Squad. 14 juniors came to the first training day in Belvoir where they learnt about map symbols, control descriptions and how to use the map to find their way around a course. Afterwards they were joined by some older orienteers for a spot of Score O training. More on the LVO Junior Development Squad on the back page.

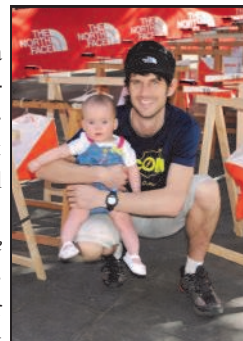
The first 'proper' races of the year took place in Fermanagh at the end of February with the country's best orienteers competing for glory in the NI Score and Night Champs. With impressive wins in the Score by FERMO's Robbie Bryson and LVO's Helen Baxter in the Over 45 class and by NWOC's Allan Bogle and LVO's Susan Lambe in the Open class. The Junior classes were won by Eoghan Knight (M14), Frazer Howe (M16) and Rachel Collins (W14). The Night Race's top honours went Allan Bogle (NWOC) and Susan Lambe (LVO). Thanks to FERMO for a great weekend of orienteering. Full results can be seen on the NI Orienteering website. 



What is the collective term for a group of past NWOC Chair Persons?

Coaching and Talent Development Officer's Report

As you may be able to tell from my last Coaching Focus Newsletter, which included articles from 40 years ago, I have been in a reflective mood recently. I have come to the opinion that the only way for orienteers in Northern Ireland to improve their performance is by going back to basics— getting the simple things RIGHT. When you break Orienteering down it seems quite simple— RUNNING and FINDING CONTROLS. When it comes to running we have no excuses whatsoever, NI is full of great places to train (forests, roads, tracks etc.) and great running clubs that would only be too glad to help out with your physical training. In fact many of you have been coming to my Running Days and are now involved in structured physical training. When it comes to the finding controls side of things, we can break this down into *selecting the best route choice*, *selecting the best attack point* and *the final approach into the control*. We have all, on many occasions (I hope), hit a control perfectly, everything worked out the way we planned! And it felt easy! So if you can do it a few times during a race why can't you do that for the whole race? Well, this could come down to several reasons, including exhaustion (even more reason the get the running sorted) or outside pressures such as *'it is nearly the end of the course and I still haven't made a mistake yet...whoops! Where am I?'*. Everyone has their own way of coping with these *outside pressures*— but it is essential that you put them into practice before the big races such as the JK. So at the next local event imagine you are at the JK and try to recreate a bit of that pressure but at the same time keep things simple and find the controls! 





Susan Lambe INTERVIEW



When/ how did you start orienteering?

Orienteering has been a big part of my life for almost as long as I can remember. My parents both orienteer. My little brother did too when he was younger, though he has since broken free and moved to Australia. The rest of us have been members of LVO for many many years. Childhood Saturdays always seemed to revolve around getting lost on blustery mountainsides. Thankfully I don't get lost quite as much any more, and when the sun comes out then there's nothing better!

What is your best ever orienteering memory?

I have a particular love of urban racing, and one of the most iconic competitions must be Venice. Scattering tourists in every direction while crossing the Rialto Bridge - pretty special! Closer to home, Northern Ireland has played host to some amazing orienteering over the past couple of years. JK 2011 was a very special

competition. Usually my JK trips involve early morning flights so it was kind of surreal to nip out of work on a half day's leave, drive ten minutes down the road, and step into a JK sprint arena on home turf. Last summer, our local Sprint specialists pulled together again to host a Training Weekend for the Irish Senior Squad, and in the autumn I was delighted to be part of the team who welcomed legendary elite orienteer Thierry Gueorgiou to the Mourne for a training session.

However in terms of best orienteering memory, well it's hard to beat a marriage proposal after a rather damp squib of a race in the Antrim Hills :)

In 2010 you were selected to run for Ireland in the World Champs. What made that year such a successful year? did you make any changes to your training etc.


2009/10 was a turning point for me. I was almost finished a seemingly never-ending series of exams, and it gave me the opportunity to put together a decent winter of training. It was still a surprise to win the selection race in 2010 as I had a lot more to achieve to become competitive. As it turned out, the next 24 months were to be characterised by a wide selec-

tion of injuries, and at this stage I am back rebuilding my strength. Thankfully with no exams to get in the way this time!

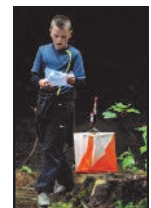
Where is your favourite place in NI to orienteer? and why?

I will never miss an opportunity to run on Tyrella. I think it's our best technical terrain, I still haven't figured out the wiggly brown lines on the map, hope to manage it some day. The next chance will be in March for the rescheduled Colour Series event, so here's hoping!

What are your orienteering plans for the future?

Big picture - to enjoy orienteering for as long as possible, and reach my full competitive potential in Sprint, preferably before my dodgy knees finally give out. We have a good wee bunch of runners in the Belfast area, so the training opportunities are there. The World Orienteering Championships are close to home in 2015, after an excursion to Venice in 2014, so let's see what I can achieve. 

SCHOOLS ORIENTEERING




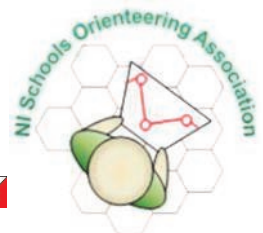
Schools' Orienteering in Northern Ireland is going from *strength to strength*. Well over 100 keen pupils took part in NISOA's 3rd League Event in Garvagh last week from 8 different schools; both primary and post primary. The schools that regularly take part in the League event were, of course, all in attendance (Cullycapple PS, Milburn PS, Riverdale PS, St. Brigid's College and The Royal School Dungannon). And they were joined by some new faces from St Pats & St Joes, Crossroads and Drumard. This is the first time the league has taken part in Garvagh in the North West and it

proved to be a popular venue amongst all the competitors. All the primary school pupils competed over a 2km white course around the forest tracks and it was Erin Toal and Philippa Hasson (St.Pats & St Joes) that came out on top of the girls. The boys primary winner was James Mullan (Pats & St Joes). All the Post Primary schools pupils ran a Yellow that was close to 3km long. The Year 8 winners were Shona Melarkey (St.Brigid's) and Stephen Black (Royal School Dungannon). Year 9 was won by Christine Boyle and Martin Breslin (both

from St. Brigid's)

Thankfully the weather was kind to us and all the pupils had big smiles on their faces when got back onto their buses to go back to school.

The next event is on the 17th April in Castlewellan. Volunteers helpers are always welcome. 



COACHING

CORNER

Route choice problem

A route choice involves two steps for the runner. **To recognise** what the alternative route choices are. **To decide** which of these alternatives is the best having considered the different reasons.

The different factors that influence the decision between the alternatives are:

Which route is the easiest to run (is the quickest to run)

Which route choice offers the simplest orienteering along the leg (which is easiest to take)

From which direction should the control be taken (so that finding the control is as easy as possible)

Which alternative will save the most energy (in terms of climb, undergrowth etc.)

A tactical choice; which alternative suits the runner personally, for example if the runner has recently made a mistake.

Kilometre timings in different undergrowth

Road -	3'46
Large path -	4'18
Small path -	5'11
Marsh -	5'30
Flat terrain -	6'35
Undulating terrain -	7'10
Hilly terrain -	8'00
Very hilly terrain -	9'00
Extremely hilly terrain -	12'20

These timings are appropriate for male seniors.

All of these factors need to be evaluated for the runners' own capacity. The same route will not necessarily be the best for two different individuals. One could be a fast runner and not as confident reading the map and therefore choose to take a longer but easier route on paths and tracks. Another runner could be more confident of their orienteering and a strong runner in the terrain and choose a route straight through the forest. Both can be the optimal route choice in accordance with the individual's ability.

The tool of thinking backwards

Finding the control is a critical element and often difficult as you need to know exactly where you are. It is therefore important to teach the runners the importance of thinking backwards when choosing a route, i.e. where is it easiest and quickest to find the control from? Many course planners like to try to trick runners into making certain route choices by having a simple, easy to run route directly out of the control that after a short while is much more difficult to follow. This is why it is so important to plan your whole route in order to find the control.




Which route provides the safest opportunity for finding the control?

The following is an example of tactical consideration of route choice:

The runner goes round with the route choice on tracks and paths in order to have the opportunity to read the up and coming legs.

The runner takes the energy saving route choice as it is a long distance course, tough terrain and hot climate.

The runner has lost their orienteering flow and therefore takes the easier, safer route in order to find their flow and regain self-confidence again.

The runner is chasing a pack in a relay and therefore chooses a route where he/she is likely to meet the pack as they come out of the control. 



Tactical route choice. Meeting runners on their way out of a control.

BLAST FROM THE PAST: taken from NIOA Newsletter September/ October 1977

Tips to help improve your orienteering methods:

Unlike any other sport the orienteer cannot be observed while performing. The only objective information spectators can use to judge the competitors performance is the time taken. Other than that the only other information one has regarding the competitors methods is what they say. So it is up to each competitor to use their post race impressions as a basis for future improvement.


The way to this is to mark on a clear copy of the map your route and at the same time write out an account of how you navigated—say where you used a compass, or did some map reading, or did you reach that point purely by chance—do this for each control. Write a brief summary on your general approach on the navigation in the event e.g. did you predominantly use the map or did you use a compass route, did you go by bee-line or path?

If you do persistently badly there is either – something wrong with your technique or you are very unfit. Therefore you must either consult a coach or read up on navigational techniques and find out how your methods differ from others.

Also if you had a bad run it is especially worthwhile using a red pen to write on your race analysis each mistake and what you should have done. Make a summary of what you must do next time and at the next event tell yourself times over what you must do today.

So good luck in your future events.

B Bullen (from the mad editor of WOA Newsletter)


EDITOR: Even though a lot of orienteers still use a good old fashioned red pen to draw their routes and write an analysis, this can all now be done on Route Gadget and similar online training tools. 

LVO Junior Development Squad

If You Go Down To The Woods Today.....

10 brave members of the junior squad took part in the training at Hillsborough Forest Park on Sat 9 Feb. The focus of the day was keeping the map set while on the move so we head in the right direction all the time. We practiced this using the features on the ground and relating those to the map. We also got some useful compass skills practice in. Of course it all started with a circuit training session on a hill!! To spice it up athletes had to complete a game of matching the features on a card to the map symbols while sprinting up and down the hill. Then we spilt into two groups (Alan's and Alison's) before taking off into the woods. Best of all the rain stayed away.


You can keep up-to-date with the squad on: <http://lvojuniororienteers.blogspot.co.uk/>

The development Squad's next session in on Saturday 23rd March in Tyrella. 

By Alan Elwood



LVO UP-DATE

Things in LVO have been quiet since Christmas and the end of the WENT. However there have been a series of Score training events organised by Greg McCann and the new Junior Squad is up and running. Locations for the WEE 2013 series have been decided and details will be going up on the website soon. Volunteer planners and organisers are needed and this is a great way to improve your own orienteering skills and to put something back into the club. Don't worry if you haven't planned before – training is provided. Look out for the workshops which will be advertised on the website. In the meantime if you want to volunteer let Helen or Greg know. 



ONE FOR YOUR DIARY...

MARCH

Sat 9th Mar	NICS 1	NWOC	Drum Manor
Sun 17th Mar	Running Day	NIOA	Portglenone
Sat 23rd Mar	NICS 2	LVO	Tyrella
Sun 24th Mar	O-Day	NIOA	Ballykelly

APRIL

Sat 6th Apr	Spring Cup 1	LVO	Castle Gardens, Antrim
Sat 20th Apr	Spring Cup 2	LVO	Slievenagore



NI Orienteering

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UNDER 1 MONTH TO GO...