

Next Issue
Feb. 11th

A Load of Old Quoc

DRONGO - THE ORIENTEERING CLUB FOR CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI



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www.drongo.org.uk

Editor's Column

One thing I love about orienteering is that it is both a physical and a mental challenge. You are almost never bored by idle thoughts (and as soon as you do let your thoughts wonder off, you start making mistakes).

Having said that, we spend a significant amount of time outside the forests, running intervals or cycling to work. If you need a mental exercise to pass the time during these dull moments, try this: think of an article that you would like to write for the newsletter and start outlining it in your head. Then, when you come home, quickly type it in and send it to me.

Almost all of my newsletter contributions started that way, even this editorial!

Finally, this is a special issue in that it is rated "baby clean". There are no references to private parts, intoxicating drinks, or bed-time activities. Being a carrier of the Y-chromosome, it has been hard to bite my tongue. So if you think it was a valuable exercise and if you want me to continue on this line, please let me know.

Eric Roller

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Varsity Match, of course. Also, Eric will be letting the cat out of the bag regarding his secret training recipe.

Cambridge City Race & DrongO Dinner

By *Mark Collis*

On Saturday 7th February next year, CUOC are organising the **Icenian as a city race** around the streets of Cambridge, rather than the usual trample through the brambles of Thetford Forest.

City races are really good fun, and it can be a lot harder both to pick and execute the best route than you might think. As it's something a bit different, I hope that more DrongOs than usual will make the effort to attend, and perhaps find yourselves in bits of Cambridge that you never knew existed.

DRONGO DINNER

In anticipation of an increased attendance, and as I haven't seen some of you for a while, I am intending to organise

some sort of dinner in Cambridge on the Saturday evening. Please could you let me know (by email to mark @ drongo.org.uk, and before the end of November) if you're interested in coming, so that I can work out whether it's just a matter of booking a table in a restaurant or whether there are enough of us to justify arranging a function room somewhere. I will follow up with further details in December.

[Ed. In traditional CUOC manner the event details are still a bit sketchy. However, the BOF entry database mentions Jesus Green (TL453592) as the event centre.]

IDENTIFY THIS DRONGO:

Hint: Despite his last name, he is most definitely not a ...



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The History of DrongO

The truth of the matter is, not even our club fathers can remember exactly when DrongO was founded. It is not a question of senility on their part, rather that there never really was a formal inauguration. What we do know, however, is that it happened in the early 1990's. Tim Wiegand tells us that it started some time between 1991 and 1993. By that time, JOK had been around for a few years, and the general feeling arose that it was a shame that there was no Cambridge equivalent.

The idea of an ex-CUOC club started in the heads of its first distinguished members: Paul Curzon, Colin Smith, and Tim Wiegand. Also involved were Jon Forster and Phil Slingsby who were still undergraduates at the time.

Paul Curzon had joined CUOC while he was doing his Ph.D. (1986-90) and even after that time, when he was a research assistant, he and his mates were "still all hanging around doing post-grad things, or being on the CUOC committee, pretending to still be students."

Following JOK's footsteps, the CUOC alumni club also had to have a funny name¹. That "DRONGO" was chosen, however, is mainly due to an inside joke within CUOC. At the time, there was an informal competition at the CUOC lunches, known as the "**Drongo of the week**" for the person who had done the most stupid thing. Paul recalls that "Jon [Foster] tended always to get it for e.g. locking himself out of his room with only a towel after having a post training shower."

That mini-tradition started with the "**Drongo hat**", which, as Jon Foster could tell us was "purchased after BUSF in 1987. The event was organised by OUOC at Beaudesert and we were sharing their accommodation in a village hall somewhere near Cannock Chase (they were always so much better organised than us). When we went back to collect our bags after the relay (we were heading straight off to the Lakes for a training week) there was a jumble sale in full swing. One of the items available was a rather fetching orange felt hat and someone, Phil I think, couldn't resist buying it. This became the Drongo hat, awarded during the forthcoming tour to the person committing the worst "drongage" of the day. The tradition survived into the summer term, with a

weekly award at the club lunch, but what happened to the hat after that, I have no idea. Would be fun to think someone still had it somewhere."

Colin Smith remembers that "the other word in vogue in the club at the same time was 'Hoover' mainly used in the context of eating, but led to a number of (irresponsible?) CUOC entries to events under the names of A. Hoover and Z. Annussi, much to the annoyance of some organising club officials."

With the club spirit based on these hilarious memories, the name "drongo" has always had entertaining and deeply funny qualities - at least to the people in the know. Looking at it from the outside was less encouraging: on one hand "drongo" is just the name of an Australian bird, but more significantly in Australian English, "drongo" is slang for loser or idiot. The origin of that term can be traced back to a racehorse named Drongo. It raced in the 1920s and was deemed unlucky never to have come better than second in thirty-seven starts — something we seem to greatly aspire to this club. There is also a Scottish ceildh of the same name, where the lonely person in the middle is the unlucky "drongo" who is not allowed to dance while inside the circle.

In selecting the club name, it may also have helped that "drongo" ends in "O", thus allowing to reverse-engineer orienteering-related phrases that "DRONGO" might stand for. A number of alternatives have been suggested over the years, but none have ever been officially adopted:

- Dead Researchers Or New Graduate Orienteers
- Directionless Researchers Or Newly Graduated Orienteers
- Debt Reclamation frOm Newly Graduated Orienteers

However, since only very few DrongOs are ever seen in forests, another alternative comes to mind:

- Don't Run Or Never Go Orienteering

While orienteering provides the official shell of our club, serious competitions have never stood at the heart of it. Instead, the focus has remained on (picking) fun and enjoyment.

See next page for info on the DrongO logo.

¹ JOK started as a "joke" and even got its name to resemble one.

Bits & Pieces from DrongOs

Many more washing machine recommendations have been received...

RICHARD BAXTER

Ricky and Kim Buckley got married in the Lake District on 6th September. Apparently you were in a minority as a non-orienteer at the wedding.

MARK COLLIS

... has "done a lot of urban races this year (including Stirling, York, Stockport, and most recently London) - so many in fact that [he's] currently in fourth place in the Nopesport Urban League despite being even slower now than most of you will remember me being!" He also admits that...

BLANKA SENGEROVÁ

... is in an even more impressive, and certainly more deserved, second place."

Ah, yes, she also lets us know that she is now engaged to Mark. It happened on their "walking holiday (Corrour to Dalwhinnie, via a number of Munros) in Scotland in May {see picture}. The plan is for the wedding to be in the Czech Republic in 2009."



Blanka, Mark, and a 1000k-carat stone engagement ring on top of Dumyat hill near Stirling.

Now that

kimandrighardswedding.com has gone off-line, we are eagerly awaiting the registration of blankaandmarkswedding.com.

Guinness Is Good For You!

EMMA POOLEY

We may congratulate Emma to her silver medal at the Olympic games in the cycling time trial. During her time in Cambridge, she was a runner and triathlete before taking up cycling as a main sport.

We may remember that she has been both junior treasurer and training officer for CUOC, but, alas, there is no mentioning of that on [her wikipedia page](#). Could someone please add that?

On a side note: thanks to Emma's silver and a gold medal from Tom James, Trinity Hall can lay claim to a better haul of Olympic medals than India, Sweden and South Africa - to name just a few.



Emma Pooley showing off those calves that Becky admired at the 2003 winter training camp.

THE DRONGO LOGO



The DrongO logo was a doodle that Paul Curzon drew at some point. The bird in the middle is the "drongo", an Australian bird by that name, except that Paul admits to having "had no idea what a drongo bird looked like (and didn't really care" either).

The logo found its way onto one of the Thetford forest maps (that Paul was doing on a drawing board with pen and ink!) as well as the first DrongO orienteering tops.

Looking closely at the logo, we can see another reference to the "Drongo of the week" competition: The orange Drongo hat is immortalised in the blob over the O of the logo.

ANGELA TYRRELL

... has been spotted at the Welsh 6-Days, where she was doing very well on W2IL. Rumour has it that she lives somewhere in the Southwest at the moment where she has been spotted orienteering at some Bristol informal events.

DAVID COTTINGHAM

We received an update from David who you may know as the father of [ODAT \(an orienteering database system\)](#) or as the web designer of the [CUOC web page](#). He is “in fact still in Cambridge, writing up his Ph.D. and working part-time as COO of a [local software consultancy](#). He also still keeps an eye on the CUOC email list, though he hasn’t actually done any proper orienteering for 4 years.” Instead, he has been playing and refereeing volleyball, “which means he’s spent many hours standing in freezing sport halls.”

He got married to Elke last June {Ed: Many DrongOs have been lost this way...}. However, he promises to “return to orienteering one day soon.”

DRONGO ON LINKEDIN

Sorry, not FaceBook.

Absolutely no value can be gained by joining this group.

Be my guest.

linkedin.com/groups?gid=851937

EMMA SMITH

... is spending 3 months in India with [Raleigh International](#). There is a blog where you can follow her progress:

raleighindia.blogspot.com

Wait, we already got her first [shamelessly shortened] update:

“Arrived after an 8 hour delay. Things have been very hectic [...] a lot of training and planning: training trek with staff; teaching camp craft, navigation and group management; building 15 eco-sanitation units; writing up, risk assessments; soft skills training and then the venturers arrive.....”

ROSEMARY DYER

Rosemary is living in Northern Ireland and working as a vet there, having moved from a practice in Southern Ireland early in the summer. Apparently she's taken up learning to fly as a new hobby.

VIV BARRACLOUGH

... sends us a photo of “her brood. The latest is Joseph, born Aug 2008. [Now she is] looking forward to getting back to some reasonable level of fitness and tackling a string course!”



Left to right: Luke, Joseph, Seth

TIM WIEGAND

... is also doing string courses with his kids. He promises to be “getting back to fitness after having been injured on and off over the last couple of years. [Indeed, he] got round a 10km brown in the CompassSport Cup final.” He also informs us that...

LUCY WIEGAND

“... is well and upping the number of Mountain Marathons, fell races and triathlons she does each year.”

HOW DO I SUBSCRIBE?

Simple, keep your email address up-to-date on the [DrongO members' list](#):

www.drongo.org.uk
(click on mailing list “information page”).

JENNY PEEL (NEÉ JAMES)

... is expecting a baby due in early November, i.e. by the time you read this, she may already be a happy mother.

DRONGOS OF SWEDEN

Here comes another useless website. You can find the newsletter there and the dlog. Not much else.

www.drongo.se

ANN & ERIC ROLLER

... have moved into their new house, further away from town, right next to some bits of moose-infested, mapped forests. They have no more excuses for not training, except maybe snow, darkness, wolves, *etc.*

NIGEL WHITEOAK

... reports from “the now legendary [OMM](#), setting off one minute before Lucy Wiegand (Tim was tucked up in a nice B&B somewhere). As forecast the weather was truly horrendous, although we had two hours of OK before the biblical storms rolled in. Chris managed to lose his map somewhere between the second and third control to the wind.

We were just headed to the finish, contemplating whether we really wanted to spend all afternoon and all night in a cramped tent in lashing rain when one of the officials told us that the event was cancelled and to head back to the event centre!

We completely lucked out and got a lift back and ‘camped’ for the night in the car listening to the story get more and more exaggerated by the BBC.

We'll be back next year, but plan some summer MMs first - probably the Saunders.”

SHOULD THERE BE **LESS** ORIENTEERING IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS?

by *Loz and Sarah Colyer*

Well, we think there should. OK, so LESS is a small UK based charity that stands for [Limpopo Education Support Services](#). It combines alternative teaching placements for University of Cumbria student teachers with providing teaching ideas and school resources for several schools in the Limpopo region in the rural north of South Africa.

This summer, 25 students and several staff were involved in various projects in the area, which included developing orienteering in 2 rural schools.



A very supportive head teacher was more than happy for us to teach a range of PE classes, produce an orienteering package for the school (colour maps, permanent markers around the grounds, a progression of lesson plans) and to run introductory sessions on map work for each class. We even managed to get one enthusiastic teacher

to help out and be persuaded to continue orienteering at the school.

Alma School, a rural all-black school for 5 – 12 year olds, felt very different. A former white school before the end of apartheid, it had tennis courts, football pitch and a small stadium, but these were rarely used due to the extreme lack of resources. One football was shared between 400 pupils, and two of the classes were taught in a shed and the garage. Again the head teacher was very grateful for our orienteering package and a week of PE sessions (orienteering, dance, after school football and netball clubs), especially on the day of the teachers' union strike.



Waterberg Academy, a mixed race school for 3 – 16 year olds, set up by parents in the area, seemed well-resourced already: an outdoor swimming pool, an IT suite full of computers, and a minibus for school trips. But the pool was closed for winter (blue skies and 25°C would not be called winter in the UK!), the computers badly needed networking for them to be used effectively, and the minibus rarely moved. The PE curriculum largely consists of rugby and cricket and, as we found out, no orienteering.

Orienteering as a sport in South Africa is on a much smaller scale than the UK and is limited to areas around the big cities. These pupils will probably never get the chance to take their navigation skills elsewhere but it was fantastic to see them run so much, map in hand, and enjoy doing it. "Anything that gets them out of the classroom" was what their teachers told us.



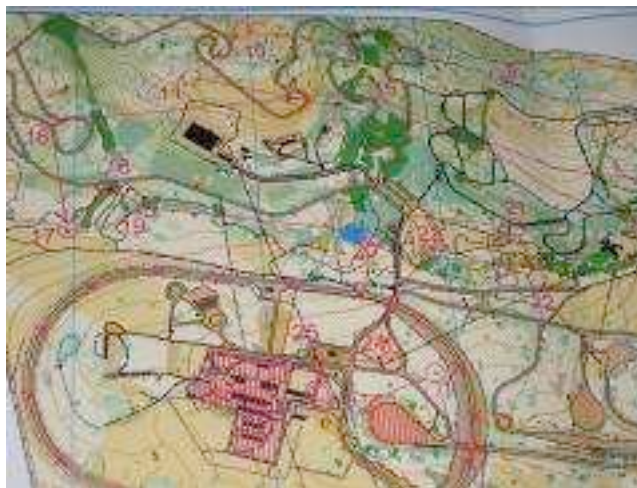
Find out more about LESS and how you can contribute to it by visiting www.limpopo-ed.com.

Loz continues...

Sarah and I were lucky enough however to compete at two orienteering events near Pretoria. The first was a colour coded event at Doornport, an area of bush with a mini-mountain' in the middle. I casually ignored Tania's advice about wearing goretex trousers and set off on a 2½ hour epic of a brown course through the blackjacks and thorns. Blackjacks are little spiky things that make South Africans laugh when thousands of them are attached to my leggings at the finish line, making me look like a hedgehog. Running alongside a herd of impala was pretty special, but we were also warned about a leopard. That makes you wonder if the 'elephant tracks' really were made by the competitors trampling the undergrowth before you, or...

The second event was the South African Long O Championships at Gerotek – an incredible area used for testing military vehicles. There was a huge oval track with banked corners for high speed tests, a metal ramp that got increasingly steep (presumably you drive up it until you fall off backwards), and off-road test tracks that I struggled to run on, let alone drive over. Fences on the map were often in reality a wall of tractor tyres used by vehicles to bounce off if they got it wrong.

My 16 km course was another battle with thorns, blackjacks, dehydration and energy levels that saw me finish in the top 7 (out of 9 starters), whereas Sarah won her class by half an hour and



was delighted to be awarded a bottle of South African red as the prize. Lounging around in the sun at the finish near the BBQ, waiting for the lucky dip prizes does make for a very relaxed day though.

Many thanks to Ian Bratt (who started orienteering in the Lakes, and formerly of Cambridge University, so possibly another addition to the Drongo newsletter list?), and Eugene for their help and advice before we flew out about orienteering in schools in South Africa, and to Tania and George for their help and loan of equipment. In fact everyone we met was very friendly with the two 'UK visitors', so thank you everyone!

DrongOs at WOC 2008

By *Blanka Sengerová*

This year's World Orienteering Championships (WOC) were taking place in the Czech Republic, where I come from. [...] Look out for Hungary next year!!

[The complete version of this article can be found in [JabberWAOOC](#), presumably in the imminent November issue. In an effort to reduce CO₂, we have only space for a picture of Mark.]



Mark Collis, cheerfully running away from some port-a-loos. Not having been selected to run in the British team, he competes in the crowded spectator races, representing DrongO!

DLOG²: RANTS FROM A GRUMPY OLD FELLOW

Today: E-punching.

When electronic punching was introduced to the U.K., a discussion arose as to what one should call that little gadget. Should it be a "card" (no, too thick), a "brick" (as in Sweden, but alas, no), a "chip" (sadly no) or a "dibber" (yuck!). A friend of mine had the best idea: it should be called a "wick", and punching should be called "dipping". Hence at every control, you "dip your wick" ;-).

E-punching has made orienteering more accurate and fair. You no longer had to worry about punching "outside the box". E-punching is good, but it could be a lot better.

Let's look at the "wicks". To this day, Emit still has the best technology. Very fast electronics, that is idiot-proof to set up and use. They even thought of a non-electronic backup system. But they completely screwed up the ergonomics. That thing simply doesn't fit in your hand.

SportIdent, was easier to use for the competitor, but the technology was slow and there still is no integrated backup.

As to the control units, Emit shot itself in the foot by coming up with a station that could only be used from one side – usually the wrong side.

While the SI units are uni-directional, they require stronger battery power and are therefore more likely to fail. I can understand that the hole in the unit must be small for the data transfer, but it is an obvious design fault that it does not have a larger funnel such that one could find the hole easier. You should be able to punch without having to look at the unit.

For the event organiser, the SI system is a complete set-up nightmare. With its badly written (German) software and a system that is too flexible for its own good, there are too many chances for making a mistake. It is a feast for Murphy's law.

In summary, both systems suffer from having been designed by engineers who know shit about ergonomics.

Let's make it better.

The "wick" should be wearable. I envision the form factor of a wrist watch. It should have a display that is large enough to show the time and the control definitions (which you upload at a start unit).

It should be fitted with a motion sensor. When no movement is detected during the competition then it starts beeping loudly.

If it has buttons, then no button should be able to re-set it or to stop it until you reach the finish unit.

You should be able to change the batteries, but only with a screw driver.

Punching should be contact-free (Emit has such a system). When you "dip", it should be your wick that beeps; its display should flash and it should vibrate like a mobile phone. Also, juniors and novices should be alarmed if they punched a wrong control or if they skipped one.

The control units should not be re-programmable (like Emit). All units should have an integrated manual pin punch and no competitor should be penalised for using it. Everybody, but in particular children and novices, should be allowed to participate without the need to hire an expensive piece of equipment.

YOU KNOW ARE OVER-DOING ORIENTEERING WHEN...

- you have mapped Thetford forest, planned and organised an event there and — let's be thorough — you have also been a controller there;
- you can drive from Cambridge to Thetford blind-folded;
- you plan to write an orienteering murder mystery;
- you have two pairs of o-shoes and a compass for each hemisphere;
- you break your compass once a year;
- you publish your heart-rate logs on the web;
- you have practised speed-punching;
- you have been disqualified for punching too quickly;
- you own all the books about orienteering;
- you know what a "fakawi" is;
- you searched for orienteering videos on YouTube.com;

YOU SHOULD REALLY SEEK HELP WHEN...

- you have uploaded an orienteering video to YouTube;
- you have O-cuff links;
- you wear a bra to hold up your heart rate monitor belt;
- you use a GPS to upload your route to RunOway;
- you have designed your own ranking system;
- you wear foot weights during training;
- you run without gaiters to save weight;
- you cut your hair and your toe nails to save weight;
- you blog about orienteering;
- you have read all of this;

² Dlog. noun. A log of an old Drongo member. Origin: a shortening of Drongo Log. Derivatives: Dlogger.

EVENT CALENDAR

In case you were looking for some exceptional orienteering events, especially in the company of other DrongOs, then you should consider one of the races below.

Let us know if you were also planning to attend or if your favourite race is missing from the list.

XXIX MOVENEZIA **14 NOVEMBER**
VENICE, ITALY

Technically a park-O, but in reality the best street-O on the planet. Imagine: a maze of alleys, little bridges and no cars.

Att: Mahr

ICENIAN TROPHY **7 FEBRUARY 2009**
CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge City Race on Jesus Green. Followed by a WAOC event on Croxton Heath (Thetford) on Feb 8.

Att: Collis

BRITISH CHAMPS **28 FEB-1 MARCH 2009**
NEW FOREST

Fast forests and pig spotting. What more do you need?

BUOC / BUSA **7-8 MARCH 2009**
OUOC: GUILDFORD/WOKING

Closed event, but interesting to know.

JK 2009 **10-13 APRIL 2009**
NORTHUMBRIAN HILLS, NEWCASTLE

Starting with the increasingly popular sprint on Friday at Newcastle Uni., WRE/FCC/UKC middle distance, WRE long, and relay in the usual format.

The DrongO relay team selections will be made based on day 2 pub-performances. Bribes are encouraged.

Att: Roller

10-MILA **18-19 APRIL 2009**
SKÅNE, SOUTHERN SWEDEN

Tiomila is no longer just in the vicinity of Stockholm. In fact, Skåne is almost as far away from Stockholm that you can get (within Southern Sweden, at least).

JUKOLA **13-14 JUNE 2009**
MIKKELI, SOUTH-EAST FINLAND

We only need seven people for a DrongO team...

SCOT-6-DAYS **2-8 AUGUST 2009**
TAYSIDE, SCOTLAND

Needs no introduction.

Att: Roller.

WORLD MASTERS 2009 **10-17 OCT 2009**
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Mark it in your calendar now.

COMPASSPORT CUP FINAL **18 OCT 2009**
RATBY, EAST MIDLANDS

Smack in the middle of England for easy access.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?

Loz Collyer (DrongO) or Sergey Brin (Google) ?



OL SUDOKU

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