



Club Day Sunday 5th April.

We may not be able to meet as a Club at the moment but it was lovely to see so many Club members wearing their Club tops whilst undertaking lock-down activities! Cycling, dancing, putting out the washing, making a fence, virtual yoga, drinking (& eating) and some actual orienteering (from home and at a safe distance of course!) Here are some photos:-



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Also on FB—public and members' page.

## Feature on WCOB British Champions over the years.

The Club has had much success at British Champs over the years with some individuals winning multiple titles. This week we feature two Mikes—Mike Billinghamurst and Mike Pearson. (More champs will be featured in coming weeks).

### Mike Billinghamurst -

Report on British Night Champs win at Hambleden (22nd February 2020)



I wouldn't normally enter a night championship. I'm not a confident night orienteer and don't enjoy it enough to buy the expensive head torch needed to be really competitive. However I was going to be in the area visiting family and as a 1st year M60 it's my chance of silverware before others move up from M55.

#1 Orange standard control to start with, perhaps a consequence of having the start by assembly. Chance to glance at the rest of the course and get a feel for the techniques needed. Looks rather vague in parts.

#3 Couldn't quite work out the thickets just before the control and spent what seemed like ages getting through them. Lost maybe 30 seconds.

#6 Looked easy. Just follow the earth bank, round the top of the green and drop into the control. First part of the plan went well but the GPS track shows I went through the green without noticing (might have been some thicker trees but certainly didn't deserve the distinct veg boundary symbol), then of course dropped too low and bounced off the track. 1 minute lost.

#7 to #12 Enjoyable running with no problems. Went through the dark green after the crossing point to #7 again without really noticing it (a few scattered rhododendrons perhaps). Careful compass and pacing for the short legs 10, 11 & 12 and relieved to lose no time here.

#13 My carefully thought out plan for this was "run SW until something fits or you hit the open area N of the control". That went ok, though it might have been better to go due west to the track near #11 then follow the track through the light green area. A little time lost but not much.

No problems after that. Surprised to find I was leading and later that I had won. Thanks to the organisers for an enjoyable event.

### Mike Pearson -

A life in Orienteering!



I didn't find orienteering until 1969 when I was 25, hooked by a black and white map of Pickering forest with the forest areas being drawn with tree symbols. The early years saw poor results, but joining Keswick AC just to get fitter for orienteering helped, although I was still way off the likes of Mike Murray (Surrey counties cross country champion) and Gareth Bryan Jones (Olympic steeplechaser) In those days I was usually pleased to come in the top half!

The first breakthrough was in 1976 when the WCOB team of Jo Sheriff, Mike Gilbert and myself won the British Senior Relay Championships in Wales (well O.K., the club then called Combine Harvesters would have beaten us if they hadn't been organising the thing!)

The eighties and early nineties were good for me locally, being club champ for several years on the trot, but despite winning the occasional National Event (in those days we didn't have middle distance or sprint champs) I couldn't quite make any podium nationally

It was my last year in M45 that things changed. I was delighted to be chosen to run for England in the Home Internationals where I met Carol McNeill, who asked me what training plan I used, to which I replied "what IS a training plan?" She suggested one, it changed everything.

I never missed a days training that winter before my first year M50, never got injured, used a 5 day alternate hard week/ easy week building up to a peak before backing off just before the British Champs - which were down south in Mike Murray's neck of the woods - Made it! - my first win and I beat him by 2 minutes, so chuffed, so pleased.

The next year I thought I'd try to win again in Newborough Forest (sand dunes) but Andrew Phillipson (NN) beat me into 2nd place by less than a minute, shucks.

The third year was in Scotland, great, suits me, not only won it again but smashed it, winning by over 4 minutes (Mike Murray wasn't there but he would have lost!). The thought went through my mind that less than a minute in 3 annual races prevented a hat trick, a bit disappointed but mustn't grumble!

The 4th and 5th year in my class has always been a challenge due to the likes of Pete Gorvett and Tony Thornley moving up so backed off until first year M55.

1999, first year M55, it was at Graythwaite, the lakes, so bring it on Mike Murray. Well I worked hard on the training again, but had an early start in the rain and he had a late start in the dry, not good news wearing specs, but I had a good run and waited at the run-in having calculated Mike Murray's finishing time, blow me it got closer and closer until he appeared right on time, fortunately for me ONLY 5 seconds behind me - phew! The 3rd win (I said to myself could this be the start of a hat trick?) That year was a great year, swept up almost everything, winning the JK by 8 mins, the Scottish Champs by 5 minutes and had a go at the World Masters Orienteering Championships in Denmark but didn't make the podium, although 4th wasn't bad and to beat Sig Berg into 5th place, an ex World Champion, was a huge feather in my cap.

I did win another British Champs in the next couple of years but memory eludes me, foot and mouth didn't help and I can't seem to find any details of results so no hat trick in those 5 years, although the total came to 4.

So on to first year M60, here we go again, the Championships were in the North East, a foul day when about half of the 20 portals got blown over! Mike Murray was there, my run wasn't great, expected to be beaten, results not posted until I got home, found I had won again! - Mike should have beaten me by 5 mins but made a 7 minute error, thank you!

Second year on to Penhale Sands, lovely sand dunes, no rocks! I retained the trophy by 7 minutes!!! (again no Mike Murray thankfully). (Continued)

Unfortunately I don't remember going to the third year's event down south, Furnace wood, but again failed in the hat trick attempt.

On to M65, bad news - hip pain prevented any decent training, soon followed by a full hip replacement and so never won a British during those 5 years.

First year M70 was another good one - won the long distance at Thrunton Woods, and became more aware of the middle distance and sprint championships which didn't really appeal to me in previous years. Well I smashed the middle distance by nearly 6 minutes but would you believe it, lost the sprint by 11 seconds, 11 seconds off a different type of hat trick! What is wrong with me! On the other hand a grand total of 8 is fine, can I make it to 10? Well no luck for the rest of my M70's

So on to 2019, my first year M75, lucky to win the British Champs due to others making mistakes (including Tony Duncan), and then won the middle distance in the Peak District, but again failed to win the sprint coming 2nd again, dammit, still no hat trick!

So up to date I've had 8 British long distance champ wins and 2 middle distance wins. Must try for a dozen. Still no hat trick, must try harder but I suspect the feet are really letting me down and if the British Champs does happen down south in the autumn after the pandemic I'm sure Mike Murray will win but you never know. I had been looking forward to the middle distance in the Lakes so when might that happen?

The Scottish 6 days have always been a favourite and I've had some good wins over the years. Also managed another 4th position in the World Masters in Portugal (forested sand dunes), incredibly in my last year M60 (when Peter Gorvett pushed me down off the podium!) I'll blame the old decrepit hip joint. With Roger Jackson and Dick Warner and other club members we have had some good wins in the relays over the years but I haven't managed to keep a record.

### A Warm Welcome to new members—Ros & Trevor Earthy.

We started Orienteering in the late 1970s. ( Although you wouldn't believe it if you saw our results these days! ) We lived in Bristol, so we joined BOK. As well as club events we got to the JK, Scottish 6 day etc etc.

Because of work we moved nearer to Gloucester, so we joined NGOC and once again became active members. The pubs closed at 2pm on a Sunday in those days, so that was a great incentive to run fast, but sometimes in the wrong direction!

When our daughter was about 6, she used to love doing String O events. Do they still exist? She is now a fell runner with CVFR and enjoys taking part in, and setting, Score events, as well as fell running.

We moved to Cumbria 16 years ago. We walked all 214 Wainwrights, but we can't think why we didn't join WCOC sooner. Anyway, here we are in our seventies and Orienteering once again.

We still make 180 degree errors and fail to double check control numbers...How can we forget the basics? It is always a champagne moment if one of us manages to beat Elizabeth Elliott!



### News

1. The Blakeley no-contact Norwegian is still out there (probably), feeling rather lonely. There wasn't much chance for people to have a go before lockdown. Here are the full results: First male: John Slater 39:38; First mixed pair with dog: Howard and Kim Leslie 52:53. Well done for getting out quickly.

2. URGENT— Easter Championships—4 day orienteering competition from your sofa—over Easter weekend. A virtual JK! Entry £10 per adult; £5 per junior. (Raising money for UK Orienteering Athlete Support Group and the GB Squad.). You do need access to some online sites such as Virtual-O. For more information visit

<https://lockdownorienteering.wordpress.com/> . Last entries by—11pm Wed 8th April.

### 3. Some JK memories!



Photos from Vanessa,

