



L ONDON O RIENTEERING K LUBB

LOKation 145



Transports of Delight

Congratulations to the Klubb members for winning back the Frolics bus* and thanks to Pete Sacares for an epic diary of his Étape du Tour

August 2006

*Well, most of it. See the small print on page .



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Chairbound chatter

I am writing this literally just before setting off for the Lakes 5-Day Event, which I do with a deal of trepidation after my recent performances!

Is this the "quiet" period for Orienteering? In respect of South-East Regional events I suppose it is; but there have been lots of smaller events down this end to keep us occupied and, of course, foremost amongst them was the "Frolics", ably organised this year by Greg Birdseye and LOK came first (albeit with SLOW). Thanks to all the LOK people who supported this series and to all those who turned out to help at our own Frolics event at Trent Park.

It has been great to see Julie up and about and attending, helping and even indulging in a bit of orienteering herself after what can only be described as a remarkably short time after her stroke. I am sure all of us in LOK and a great many people in the Orienteering Fraternity as a whole are more than pleased at her progress and wish her and Ronan all the very best.

We can look forward to the autumn with confidence that LOK will continue to feature large in events, both participating and organising. Don't forget the Hampstead Heath District Event on 10th September: lots of help needed.

Happy Orienteering, John



Thoughts from the Thicket

I owe a big thank you on behalf of you, the readers, to Pete Sacares and Duncan Minty for the articles in this edition of Lokation. Duncan's description of the nail-biting competitive spirit of orienteering at the JK is a reminder of just why we do this sport - and the benefits that SI has brought. Provided, you regard split-second timings as a good thing. 'Meanwhile', Pete has been busy orienteering in the roads around London in order to prepare for his 'tour de force' cycle ride. I thought I would try to edit his long 'diary' of the 2006 project: but, on reading it, I realised that there was little I needed to do. It is an exhilarating read! See page xx.

I hope you enjoy reading about Pete's achievements IN FULL. However, to those purists who think that we as an orienteering club should be able to publish more articles on orienteering I have only one response: start writing!

Also in this edition: opportunities to run future events - and details for the November AGM.

Camilla

- ⊥ The Frolics series was expertly managed by Greg Birdseye, with five events this year, good attendance at each, and prompt calculations of the results. He is especially to be congratuated on 'managing' to arrange a WIN* for LOK! I'm sure he'd say it can't be done without the Klubb members so thanks go to all the runners who ensured we had at least six good adjusted times in each event. These included Katerina ... and Pavla ..., recent newcomers to the Thursday night run.

* See the small print in the article which follows.

- ⊥ As many of you will know, Julie Cleary suffered an unexpected stroke in May, but is on her way to making a complete recovery. She was out and about during the Frolics season and is looking forward to taking part in next year's series. We wish her well and admire her patience in the recovery process.
- ⊥ Here is the grid with future events to be hosted by LOK. Details of September's event are below and any helpers should contact Glen or Neil as soon as possible. However, there are still openings for leaders in December and for two events in March and May next year. Time is creeping on... For further information speak to Glen Jones or the Clearys.

Event / Date	Planner	Organiser	Notes
2006 Sep 10 District - Hampstead	Glen Jones	Neil Brooks	See below
2006 Dec 26 Score - Trent Park ??			John Hardy has undertaken to do one of these roles.
2007 Mar 4 Regional - Holmbury		Nick Vass	Subject to BOF confirmation
2007 May 20 SE Relays - Hampstead			
2007 Sep 30 District - Location TBD			
2008 Feb 24 Regional - Leith Hill			

Hampstead Heath District Event - 10 September 2006

- ⊥ New map: 1: 10 000. Pre-marked maps on waterproof paper. SI punching
- ⊥ White to Brown courses plus String.
- ⊥ Start: Registration 9.30 to 11.30 Starts 10.00 to 12.00
Courses close 14.00
- ⊥ Start and finish 5 min walk from East Heath car park at TQ 272859 (pay) or free parking in local side roads.
- ⊥ Seniors £5.00 / £6.00 (non BOF) Jun, unemployed, students £2.50 Dibber Hire £1.00

Contact neilbrooks@msn.com if you can volunteer to help and he does not yet have your name.

- ⊥ The AGM will be held on **Thursday November 23rd 2006** after a short training run in Hampstead. The meeting will start at **8.00pm** in the upstairs room at the Stag pub, on Fleet Road. It was a very successful venue last year. Please make the effort to attend your Klubb's AGM: it is an important meeting to discuss the future!
- ⊥ Watch the LOK website for further information about the AGM.

Provisional Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of the minutes of last AGM
3. Chairman's report
4. Treasurer's report and approval of accounts
5. Election of officials
6. Any Other Business

 **The Frolics Series 2006**

Congratulations and thanks from all the participants at this year's Frolics go to the Co-ordinator, Greg Birdseye. There were 5 events compared with 4 in the last few years, so to make things reasonable, Greg determined that the best 3 of the first 4 events would contribute for each eligible club and that the final event had to count (to keep up the suspense). The result of this was the first event TIE for First Place between LOK and SLOW. Unfortunately, we narrowly missed out on the 2nd place at Wimbledon which would have guaranteed LOK an overall series victory.

Greg: "As far as I remember we've never needed a tie breaker before. I suppose SLOW could argue that they haven't been beaten so they should retain the trophy (cf the Ashes?). But the best way to split SLOW and LOK on a tie break would surely be to look at the result over all five events which would make LOK the winners" (See the table below for evidence of LOK's superior claim to the Bus.)

Position	Club	Event points					
		Whippen-dell	Foots Cray	Trent Park	Horton CP	Wimbledon Common	Best 3 + Wimbledon
1=	LOK	18	19	20	16	18	75
1=	SLOW	17	15	19	19	20	75
3	MV	16	18	17	20	19	74
4	HH	20	16	18	14	17	71
5	HAVOC	19	17	16	17	16	69
6	DFOK	15	20	15	13	15	65
7	SAX	13	13	13	18	14	58
8	CROC	12	14	11	15	13	54
9	TVOC	14	0	14	0	12	40
10	CHIG	11	0	12	0	11	34



Hands Off, That's My Time, Guv'nor - by Duncan Minty



It's the JK 2006 and my Day 1 run on Ilkley Moor has gone relatively well. As expected, the planners took us up onto the moor above and then west towards the boulder fields. These were easier than first appearances indicated, as long as you focussed away from the map's small black dots and triangles and onto the dashed line path network. Some clumps of white forest also acted as useful locators. The net result was a time of 64.49 and wow, I'm first !

Well, until that is, the other sixty people on the course finish. My few seconds of personal glory, but then, can glory be glory if no one else knows ? (Answers on a postcard please.)

What's this? I'm first equal with someone called Nev Myers. That's weird - all those slopes and detours, hesitations and manic leaps can't mean that I share my time with someone else. It's my time !?! And I'm not sharing any more. Task for Day 2 at Keldy is to make sure Mr Myers and I don't tie again. I don't care if it's faster or shorter, but it must be different.

The walk to Keldy's assembly area and then to the red start add up to more than the 5.5km of my course. And it's dry and getting sunnier by the minute. My start time is just before the 2pm close down.

After a while, I catch up with someone with a watch - since electronic punching, I never wear a watch when orienteering, but I like to check if I'm behind or ahead on my walk time, especially on a long one like this. We have a chat about Ilkley and I mention how I definitely want to get a different time to someone with whom I've had a matching Day 1 time. My walking companion turns out to have exactly the same ambition. And turns out to be Nev Myers, the very one I matched times with ! I daren't look up into the sky - the sight of all my pre-run karma floating away would be too much.

His Day 1 start time had been 10:06 and mine 10:09, so we must have been close all the while. The splits later show that we were never more than a minute apart. We must have been within shouting distance for the whole run, but never picked up on what the other was doing. Lucky for Day 1, but what about Day 2 ? I avoid disclosing today's start time, but it's obvious we're close to the 2pm last run. Nev went at 13:50 and myself at 13:51. This is awful for my concentration. Despite trying not to look, I see him on the way to control 2 while I'm on the way to 1. After that, I concentrate and forget about him.

The splits later show that by the time we reached control 16 out of 18, our times are only one second apart. Control 17 is in the finish field, but getting there involves a gully and stream. There's a muddy slide, a jump into a wide pool of oozy mud and a clamber out the other side, and then a slog up and across the field to the control on a fence. For some reason, my brain equates finish field with finish, so I give this next bit of field all I've got.

The last five yards allows reality to slip back in and I swing round to cross the field through the tapes to the finish. Arriving at the finish, just about to punch, is Nev Myers, my first sight of him for 55 minutes. I'm sure I've arrived less than a minute behind, so the real weirdness of another matched time has been avoided. It turns out there was a gap of 32 seconds.

The splits later show that I was slow in the first 4 or so controls, which crossed an area of planted blocks of forest. My 'attack point, attack point, attack point' mentality hadn't been of much use when all you're doing is skipping from a control in the middle of one forest block to a control in the middle of the next one, with little other than the odd contour in between. After that, the legs to controls 5 and 6 are long and relatively flat and the forward route planning this allowed me meant that I could clip through each of the following 10 controls relatively smoothly. So in the end, I was able to leave the 2006 JK with a time to call my own - much better than a pot, I think !!



L'Étape du Tour 2006 - by Pete Sacares

The Entry



Summer last year. Nothing to train for. No goals. No nothing. Except the impending doom of a 40th birthday. Nick's summer pub crawl. Talk turns to cycling. Whippet describes a shift in his training - still running pointlessly round an athletics track, but... now also cycling to prevent sore-paw-syndrome. I describe my youthful cycling around Wakefield wasteland and Nottingham campus roads, for both adolescent fun and student function (it's free, until the bike gets nicked), followed by 15 years in cycling wilderness since moving to London, due simply to cowardice. Whippet describes initial trepidation venturing onto the A1, white van territory, and the City, followed very quickly by a discovery of new territory, a new sport, and a whole new vocabulary. "You can borrow my bike, I've got two," he says.

I do. It's a Trek hybrid. I wax lyrical to Joseph (Lowe) about its qualities, and he laughs and calls it a "tank". First ride is the commute to work from Welwyn train station to GSK in Harlow - 18 miles almost entirely off-road, a beautiful crisp autumn morning, and it's fantastic. The puncture exactly equidistant from hoped-for cycle shops in Hertford and/or Ware is but a minor irritation to a man with joy in his heart but no puncture-repair kit.

Time to purchase a bike, but what type? Mountain, road or tank? By this time (January), work has moved to Feltham, and fate places next to James Beech, an ex-pro triathlete from NZ. "You have to get a road bike. With clipless pedals. And a gaudy team jersey."

I do. It's a Specialized Allez Sport. In the bike shop with a £500 budget - the £500 bike sits like a tank in my right hand, and the £750 one floats like a feather in my left. And £100 off as it's last year's colours - black! And add £100 back on for clipless pedals and some fancy shoes that are also handy for those tap-dancing outings.

I'm all tooled up and ready to commute. The North Circ's my favourite - three lanes of idiots travelling at 5mph expelling a ton of CO, CO₂ and H₂S, and a single idiot with clipless pedals and a gaudy team jersey going at 20 mph breathing it all back in again.

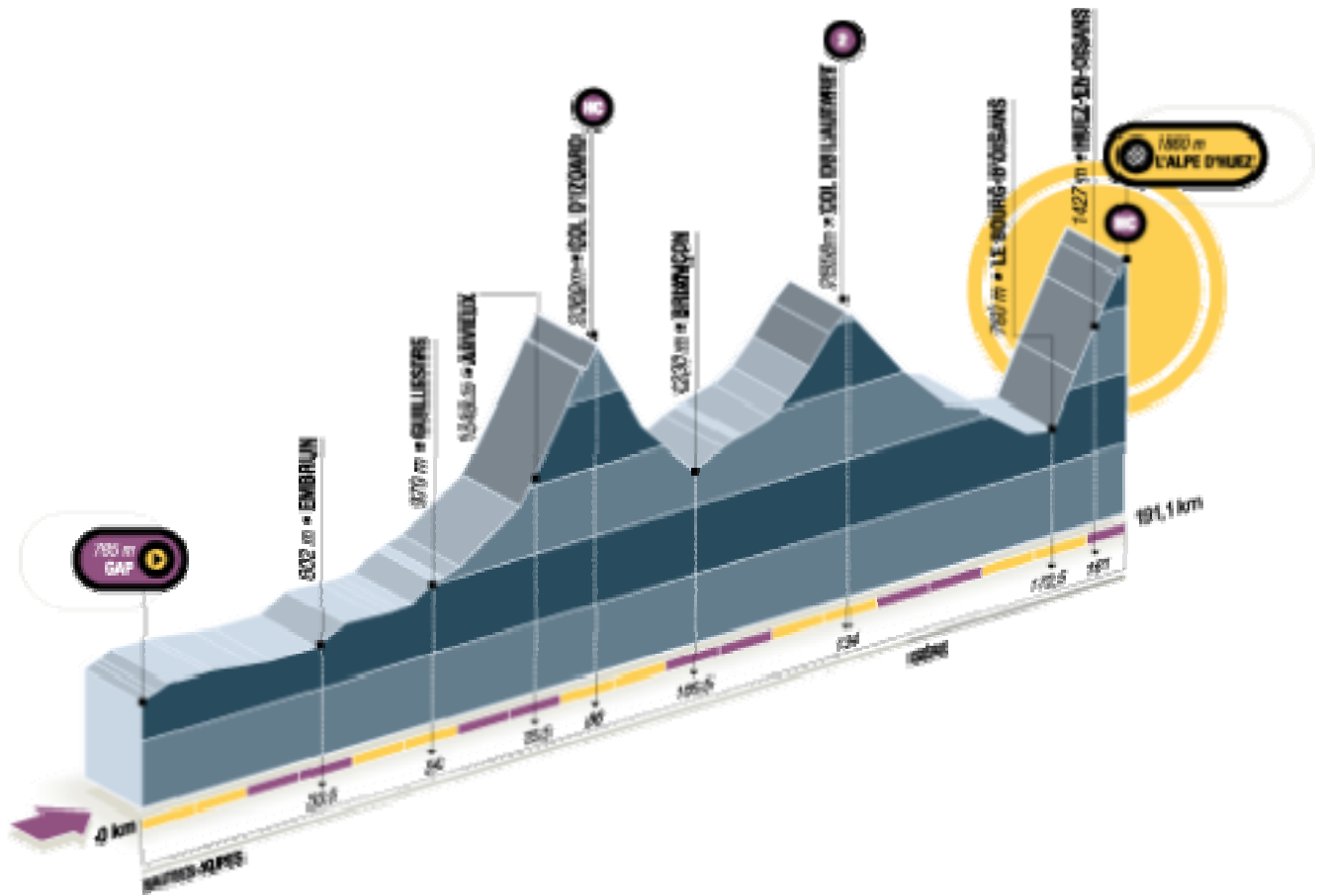


Though only a recreational cyclist in my youth, and a cowardly non-cyclist in adulthood, I got hooked on armchair cycling in the late Eighties, like many others, via Channel Four, the Tour de France, Phil Liggett, and the odd Brit or Paddy success.... "There's someone coming through the mist ... it can't be ... it is! It's Roche! It's Stephen Roche!". And I thought, "I can do that". And I have wanted to ever since. But I never did. In fact I sat in North London watching my 20-year-old student bike gather rust. And I'd kind of heard of this thing called "L'Étape" where some amateurs ride one of the stages of Le Tour just before the pros. So I mail Tim (Marlow) to ask if he's up for it this year. And he says no. He also says that it's only ever been described to him (by one-time participants), as "carnage". Hmmmm. A bit of googling later and I discover that L'Étape du Tour 2006 finishes on "the legendary 21 bends of Alpe d'Huez". Where Lance gave Ullrich "the look" in 2001. So it has to be done. A bit more googling and I find that entries have closed. So that's that. And a month later James tells me he's just got an entry for this year's L'Étape - a 5-day trip with a cycle tour company who have 4 places left, at £650 a go. I point. I click. I enter a 16-digit credit card number. It's all so easy.

The Stats

The stage is 119 miles long, starts in Gap (alt. 785m), climbs the Col d'Izoard (alt. 2360m), descends to Briançon (alt. 1230m), climbs the Col du Lautaret (alt. 2058m), descends to Bourg d'Oisans (alt. 735m), and finishes (you off) at Alpe d'Huez (alt. 1850m). The winners will take just over 6 hours. When the Tour rides it as Stage 15 a week later they will take 5 hours. A "silver badge" is awarded to the top 20% of finishers, requiring a finish time of 8 hours 11 minutes.

The "Broom Wagon" system operates just as on the Tour de France itself, ie: there is a minimum pace you have to ride at, and if the broom wagon catches you, you're swept up ("broomed") and made to retire at that point. Forcibly. By the gendarmerie. The minimum pace this year is set at 11.3mph (easy in Essex, not so easy in the Alps), which equates to a time of around 10½ hours. A rather more generous rate than the Tour allows. There will be 7,500 riders, but only 5,500 will finish.



The Training

Need some long miles and long steep hills. Five hours in the Chilterns, mindlessly riding round Berkhamstead. All is fine, except I can't get up the hills at any more than about 3mph, and after 3 hours I can't sit in the saddle any more due to severe butt-pain. More training, more gears, and a new saddle required.

Intense googling follows regarding gears and saddles. All previous Étape participants say "you can never have enough gears". Bike shop man says he can fit any gears I want as long as I have a big enough credit card - a triple chainring would be best, and priciest. Another £200 down. Now the saddle. Googling says everyone's butt is different. Get my butt measured. Turns out I have a large one. Who'd have thought it? The larger saddle feels even more painful. "Can I try it out?" "Mumble, mumble, erm, no". He can keep his saddle then. And the next 3 shops can all keep theirs too if they're not going to let me try them out. I can handle a sore butt.



Next long ride involves taking the bike to Val d'Isère on a ski trip. Need a bike bag at £100 and excess baggage payments at £70. The new gears work. I spend 8 hours doing 90 miles and 3 Alps. A massive confidence boost, tempered somewhat by the knowledge

that I had an extra descent to flatter the stats (30-40mph down from Val d'Ière to Bourg St Maurice overtaking the traffic: a tad more interesting than the North Circ commute), that the climbs weren't as big, and also by the knowledge that I could probably have walked up the last climb quicker than I rode it.

The Hernia

"Pull your trousers up!" says the wife. "No, it's not that, I just want you to look at this lump." "Oh, it's a hernia," she says. Off to the GP. "It's a hernia," she says. "Do I need to avoid any vigorous, ahem, exercise?" "You need to take it easy and avoid heavy lifting." So, that gets me out of the shopping, and means I can take it easy going up Alpe d'Huez.

More Training

Only ever ridden on my own before, so head out for 5 hours in the Chilterns with James. Up until that point I thought I was doing ok, but he heads up the hills like Pantani. And he's just got his normal racing gears on. More training needed, but in private now, no further public humiliation required. I notice that when he sees a hill he gets out of the saddle and smiles. Is that his version of "the look", or do I need to change my terribly slow, grinding approach to the hills?

Need to see what it's like to be in the saddle for 10 hours, so off to the Chilterns again. Manage 138 miles, so can do the distance, but back down to 2½ mph for the last bunch of pimply hills round Barnet - this isn't going to work on Alpe d'Huez. And I need someone else's butt - mine's no use at all - it's changed colour and I can no longer sit on it. Still, getting out of the saddle and attacking the hills seems to work better in terms of average speed. Some kind of sensation from the hernia but my guts aren't yet spilling out of the hernia wall. James tells me he's spending 2 hours daily on the turbo trainer, so I hit the gym and the exercise bike and give it welly. Then he says he's just done 150 miles round Richmond Park - I think he only stopped when he started getting dizzy. And I thought running round a track was pointless. Out to the Chilterns for one last long ride - another 10 hours at a fairly hard tempo. Completely mindless. Anyhow, manage 151 miles in the 10 hours this time, so up yours, Delors. And at least this time I felt I could've carried on. Also worked out what was wrong with my butt - just need to be getting out of the saddle every 10 minutes or so. All set, and running all the numbers through Excel says I should get round in just over 10 hours, and, most importantly, before the broom wagon. I think I should send the laptop on the bike.



The threat of the broomwagon.

Need to fiddle with the bike, and make sure I know how to adjust all the gear bits, brakes, and change an inner tube fast enough not to get broomed - had the gear mech jam on one long ride and it took me an hour to fix - a sure-fire method of being broomed. Attempt first tube change using the recommended CO₂ canister and surprise myself, the kids and the wife when it explodes. Back to the normal pump, fit another tube, and now have a bizarre tyre bulge. Buy new tyre, more tubes, more CO₂ canisters, brake blocks, power bars, lightweight waterproof, energy drink powder, stuff, and more stuff. £200 ker-ching. Eventually get a tube on successfully. Eventually manage to

use a CO₂ canister without any combustion. Bit concerned about the rear tyre which looks like it's coming off the rim. Fiddle around with the brakes. Mistake - next ride to work seems too hard and realise the brake block is rubbing against the rim. Adjust. Now rubbing on the other side. Adjust. Wrong. Adjust. Wrong. Oh why did I start this idiocy? And now I've run out of time because it's time to set off for France.

The Trip

Post-work Friday drive to Portsmouth. Wheel2Wheel, the tour company, have 2 coaches of 40 riders each, with the bikes in trailers sitting in custom-built bike racks. Overnight Brittany Ferry from Portsmouth to Caen. If you ever have a choice of ferries to France, go Brittany Ferries if you like food - head for the self-service where the chef with his big hat fries your steak in front of you, with French frites, a glass or two of red, and a top tarte. Though I notice most of the group are on water only - are these serious athletes? The entire following day is spent on the coach stiffening up. France starts its holiday today. Get to Briançon at 11pm to be told the chef's gone home, and we're then served the best meal from an absent chef I've ever had. What a country.



Up early Sunday to head for Gap, register, collect bib numbers, do retail, and take in the Etape "village" atmosphere. Massively well organised, and loads of top gear on offer. But I've spent too much on this indulgence already so the wallet stays in the pocket. Back to Briançon to put the bikes together, trying to avoid the temptation to fiddle around with them any more, and head off for an hour's ride to loosen the legs. Finally manage to sort the brakes. Hurrah. Still have tyre, tube and puncture paranoia, and have brought a spare tyre with the intention of changing the dodgy rear one, then decide that would be foolish so leave as is and content myself with just worrying about it. Get kit ready (tubes, canisters, power bars, stuff). Tomorrow will be a 3.20am alarm call for a 3.30 breakfast for a 4am depart for a 6am arrival to be in the starting pen by 6.30 for the 7am start.



Get a briefing from Tony the tour leader who's ridden a few Etapes in the past. Lots of sound advice ("For the first 2 hour flattish bit, find a big Dutch bloke and sit 2 feet behind his wheel - he'll be the bloke in orange." "Ride halfway along the right-hand carriageway - generally out of trouble and there'll be less debris in the road" "The first 4 bends of Alpe d'Huez are the steepest, it's a bit less steep once you've got past turn 5"), and answered questions ("Do the feed stations ever run out of stuff?" "Nope"), and stuff to worry about ("Last year one of our group punctured twice in the first

half-hour - got broomed - they don't listen to arguments - 6 months training over in 30 minutes"). Have dinner. More top food, but only a few brave souls drinking wine. I abstain for the second night in a row - a personal best.

Watch the World Cup Final. Would normally favour France over the slimy, permed and perma-tanned Italians, but if France won there would be car horns all over Briançon all night, and we're only due 4 hours' kip anyway. Zidane takes care of it for us and off to bed. Would normally sleep really badly due to nerves and lack of alcohol, but James says that you can do all this stuff on no sleep anyway - adrenaline and the human body are unbelievable things and you catch up on the sleep afterwards. Oddly reassuring and go straight to sleep.

The Race



3:15am

3.15am: Up. Step out onto the balcony. It's already warm. Looks like it'll be a sight warmer in another 10 hours or so. Breakfast. Coach trip. Daybreak. Pack pockets with stuff. Cover crotch and butt with half a (large) tub of vaseline. Arrive in pen at 6.30am. There are 7,200 riders in front of me and 300 behind (start order is allocated on entry date order). This is psychologically both good (not tempted/able to rush off at the start like any running race I've ever done, and should be mostly overtaking) and bad (I can see the broom wagon and I haven't even started yet), and I'm reminded of the fellow who got the 2 punctures. I'm paranoid about punctures. And brakes. And gears. I've done all the training, but there are too many uncontrollables in this sport for my liking.



7:00am

7am: We're off. Except of course we're not. Expect to take 10-15 minutes to get going. Finally cross the start line at 7.25am - at least times are adjusted for this. I'm riding. And the largest group I've ever ridden in up to now was two - James and myself. Must watch, see, copy. Look for the big Dutch bloke - he's over there in orange. Get in behind - ahhhh, now I see why the pelaton works. It's unbelievable - barely need to pedal. The novelty value lasts for 5 minutes and I feel the need to get going and do some exercise. There are far too many riders at the sides of the roads mending punctures. We were warned about crashes - rubbish riders not knowing how to ride in groups (oh, that'll be me then) - but luckily not many of those, probably due to the big wide roads out of Gap. The first 2 hours go by in a blur - trucking along over 20mph, tucking in behind whichever group is going at the right speed, taking an occasional go at the front - just like they do on the telly. And going past plenty of other riders. Cracking fun, but still paranoid about punctures, brakes, gears, and ability to get up Alpe d'Huez.



9:30am

9.30am: Guillestre - first feed station and start of the ascent of the mighty Col d'Izoard. Check the watch - in no danger of being broomed. In fact, 7 mins ahead of the schedule for a silver time - how the hell did that happen? And the first blockage. The next 10 minutes is standing, waiting. The next 7 minutes is spent faffing around in the carnage of the



feed station - empty plastic bottles, banana skins, and parked bikes everywhere. Away again. Reach for the water bottle - it's not there!! Swear, swear, swear. I remember, I put it down where I went for a pee. Turn round 180°. "Hey, Monsieur!! Faux direction!! C'est dangereux!!" "Yes mate. And it'll be a damn sight more dangereux if I have to climb the Izoard, the Lautaret and the Alpe without a sodding water bottle." Back to where I thought I'd left it. It's not there!!!! Bigger swear words. An old French bloke approaches and asks me if this is what I'm looking for. Joy!!!! "Monsieur, you're a geezer" - I think he understood, especially after I kissed him on both cheeks (facial, to clarify). Away again. At least the bottle incident only cost me 2 minutes, however I'm now 10 mins down on silver schedule - all in the space of 200 yards. And now we're climbing. Not too steep to start with, and through some dramatic gorges. Then through the pretty village of Arvieux, and then proper climbing. Settle into a rhythm, like you're supposed to. Passing loads of other riders - even at this early stage some are in difficulties at the side of the road - it makes me feel good - should I be ashamed of myself? More paranoia about whether I've set off too quickly. Feel pretty much ok and an hour later I'm at the top. This is a water stop, but without any water. There obviously had been water here once judging by the number of empty plastic bottles scattered on the road, but it's run out. What was that Tony was saying about them never running out? The café's doing a good trade. At least it's now an hour downhill and I still have some water so it's not too bad. And I get to save some time by not stopping, especially as I'm still just 10 mins down on silver pace. Confidence boost - I can climb at silver pace and I'm not tired yet.

First descent. Cracking fun. Fourth hairpin. Gendarmes, an ambulance, blood, and a bike and rider looking bent and/or in pieces. Cue more paranoia and a touch more pressure on the brakes. Doesn't last long. I suppose base-jumping might be more exhilarating than this, but it can't be by much. Takes an hour to descend to Briançon. Now 20 mins down on silver schedule - need to take more risks on the next descent. Only joking. Next food and drink station. Luckily, amongst the carnage, this one has what it says on the tin. Stock up and go. Now 30 mins down on silver - less feed station faffing required. Straight into the Col du Lautaret climb. Bit of weird one this - only 4-5% average gradient, but drags on for 20 miles, and you can see the top almost the whole way. Still feel ok, religiously out of the saddle every 5 minutes to ease the butt, passing loads of other riders now - lots of damage being done - the occasional rider sat at the roadside looking either miserable or spaced-out, and the occasional gendarme standing over a prostrate cyclist holding a saline drip - must try and avoid that. It's midday and I suppose it's hot, but I haven't really noticed. I'll discover later from the gadget boys that it hit 108°F on the road.

Up at the top. No time lost on the ascent. Top scenery - glaciers and stuff. Descend. Now I'm the one being passed. Not that I'm hanging around. Overcook one hairpin, but manage to stop a foot from the outer hairpin edge, right in front of gendarme Jean-Pierre's nose. "Bonjour!" Lose a total of 10 mins on the descent. Need to put on more weight. Now at Bourg d'Oisans, the base of Alpe d'Huez. Get enough food and drink to get to the top, but no more - don't want any more weight on this bike than necessary - maybe could replace the rider by a smaller, lighter, more powerful one. Later learn that this feed station also ran out of water not long after I'd passed through.



The 21 legendary bends of Alpe d'Huez. Suddenly the pain starts. Yep, this is steep. Obviously it's not the bends themselves that are the problem, but the bits in between. And Tony said it's only the first 4 or 5 inclines that are really bad. He lied. The swear words reappear - all directed at Tony. And I'm hot. Mind you, I'm not the only one - the word "carnage" now takes on a new sense - there are up to a dozen riders stationary at each of the bends - this is the only place there is any shade. And another

dozen either bottling water or showering under it at the mountain stream that dissects each incline. *L'Equipe* tomorrow will describe this as "une fournaise", a furnace. It will also describe how difficult it is to start off again up the Alpe once you've stopped. There's no way I'm stopping now. It's not quite Le Tour, but there are still loads of spectators up the Alpe. A madame spectator pours fresh mountain streamwater over me. It's freezing and I let out an involuntary orgasmic yelp. She interprets it for what it is - pleasure, and pours another one. It was eerily quiet climbing up Izoard and Lautaret - concentrated effort - but now that everyone's in pain you can pick out the different nationalities just from the swearing.

Four bends to go and I'm getting a tad emotional because I know I'm going to make it - it'll be just over 9 hours, an hour down on a silver time, but an hour faster than I'd guessed, and 2 hours ahead of the broom wagon. The last 2km is flat into the village, so it's out of the saddle and make like a mad sprinter with bulging eyeballs. 9 hours 16 minutes. One week later Floyd Landis does it in 5 hours, but it's not his eyeballs that are bulging.



On a massive high, phone the wife, phone my sister, start phoning random numbers just to tell the story. This is the best thing I've ever done. The question now is - do I need to do it again just to get that silver time?



Irregular Sudoku - from the FT

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column AND every outlined region contains the digits 1 to 9.

2	4						9	
					7			
1		2						
		6	3		5			
			9		2	6		
						1		2
			1					
	1						4	3



Fixtures

Orienteering Fixtures are available via the following websites:

LOK webpage: <http://www.londonorienteering.co.uk/>

South-east: <http://www.post2me.freeserve.co.uk/orienteering/>

BOF: <http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/asp/homepage.asp>

Phone before you go :-

These are the numbers of the answerphones that carry recorded events information.

SEOA	(020) 8948 6056	WMOA	(01785) 664695
SCOA	(01189) 464354		[before 10pm]
SO	(01903) 239186	NWOA	(01704) 892736
SN	(01252) 331754	BOF	(01629) 734042
MV	(01372) 279295	NEOA	(0191) 268 5449
SAX	(01303) 813344		



Club Meetings

The last Tuesday of every month is the club meeting held in bar at the Royal Free Hospital Recreation Club, Fleet Road, Hampstead, London NW3. (see below for directions) Kick off is **8.00pm**. Everyone is welcome; fresh views on club/SEOA /BOF business are always needed.

Dates are as follows:

August 29 th
September 26 th
October 31 st
November 23 rd +AGM



Club Training/Drinking

A group of members meet on a Thursday, at 6.30pm, at the Royal Free Hospital Recreation Club in Fleet Road (near the junction with Pond Street) Hampstead NW3 for a training run, sometimes technique training, and afterwards for a beer and to plan the arrangements for attending the coming weekends orienteering (lifts, timings etc). This is usually about 8.15pm in The Stag p.h. on the corner of Fleet Road and Lawn Road, NW3. There is good food served at the pub before 9pm.