



# SELOC CLUB NIGHTS



SELOC's Monday evening training started just over twelve months ago using a local primary school as a base and inviting parents and children from the school plus SELOC members and friends to join in as well. Orienteering coach Cath Wilson devised a range of indoor activities for the winter months for juniors, adult beginners and experienced orienteers. Sessions started with circuits or other physical activities, as gentle or demanding as the participant wished, followed by orienteering technique activities delivered in a fun and only slightly competitive way. Map symbol recognition was an early priority for newcomers along with explaining course descriptions, text for juniors and symbols for adults, with the more experienced helping with small groups of beginners. Games and relays followed reinforcing the skills learned. Less energetic activities included looking at pre-used maps and each person describing how they would navigate round the course. Even among the experienced there was much discussion as to the "best" route.

The junior school is a feature on a street orienteering map so in winter, while juniors stayed indoors brushing up on map reading skills, outdoor speed and navigation exercises were possible for adults. It was quite a surprise, in December, running round a corner and coming face to face with Father Christmas and five snowmen!

Both the junior school and neighbouring secondary school have their own site O maps and so various outdoor exercises took place as the light nights returned in spring. An emphasis on compass work has paid off as several new members report successfully using their compasses on full scale events. One fell runner, who has since become a member of SELOC, reported that at a recent fell event in the Lake District where navigation was required, his compass work was most effective while groups of others were heading off in all directions. This is

a skill he claims not to have had twelve months ago.

We have also been able to use the local secondary school to introduce new members to using OCAD and have run a number of sessions involving planning an organising a small event. This has encouraged a number of our new adult members to plan and organise either one of our Saturday Introductory Events or a training session for the club night itself.

The school is close to a mapped country park and so great use has been made of this facility. During the summer, eight other local mapped areas with POC's have been used with coaching in a range of techniques – distance estimation, bearings, contour recognition, etc. Added to this has



been the chance to practise learned skills at the monthly SELOC Saturday local events and the events of other local clubs.



The majority of newcomers, some of whom didn't know what orienteering was this time last year, are now SELOC members. Some were enthusiastic enough to attend a club training session and social weekend in the Lake District in May which was thoroughly enjoyed. Two complete novices had acquired the skills and the confidence to compete at a Lake District event on Pike O'Blisco and are now looking forward to moving up through the colour range of courses. One junior has competed well enough on local Yellow courses that he is now the proud possessor of a North West OA Yellow badge.

The social aspect of the sessions is also worth a mention. Sessions end with conversation accompanied by tea, coffee, juice and biscuits (preferably chocolate we have been told!). It is rumoured that some seniors then successfully navigate to a local pub! The Club night has also given us the impetus to organise a number of additional social

activities, mainly as 'competitions' against another local small club, such as the ten pin bowling challenge, quiz night and hopefully others in the pipeline for the future.

We have now lost our coach due to impending child birth but the acquiring of a replacement is well in hand so the future aim is to keep the coaching sessions going through the next winter and to increase participation at these gatherings. Word of mouth seems to have brought in as many potential participants as local newspaper advertising. It appears that coming with a friend is the least intimidating way of joining in.

We are now looking towards the next twelve months and with the help and support of both club members and the RDO we hope that we will develop and sustain an interesting and developing Club Night.

**Paul Turner and Caroline Barcham, SELOC**

