

BARTON CHALLENGE 2013

To an extent we tend to feckle the format of our Scout section events to focus on skills that are identified as lacking. So when earlier this year, the leaders involved in taking our Explorers out on expeditions asked if we could do something with the Barton Challenge to improve the open ground navigation skill of our Scouts, we were only too happy to oblige.

Usually the event sticks almost exclusively to roads but this year we tried to use public footpaths, and country parks as much as possible. I am pleased to say that two of the ten teams that set out on a hot Saturday morning actually made it all the way to Crow camp without much adult support but for the rest, it was a bit of a learning curve.

Before the final team had even started walking my mobile phone started ringing with teams who had no idea where they were. So long as they didn't answer "don't know" to the question "have you crossed any roads since starting?" we could be fairly certain that they were somewhere in Thorndon Park. I could then normally talk them to the next checkpoint. I understand one of the more sensible teams waited until after they had placed the order for the Olympic breakfast before telling me they had walked directly to a Little Chef. Apparently they didn't realise that at some stage they may have to turn a corner between Ingrave and Crow Camp!

Another team phoned for advice. They were on top of a hill and could see the A12. I thought this unlikely and asked them why they thought it was the A12. It seems it was because they could see a sign saying A127?

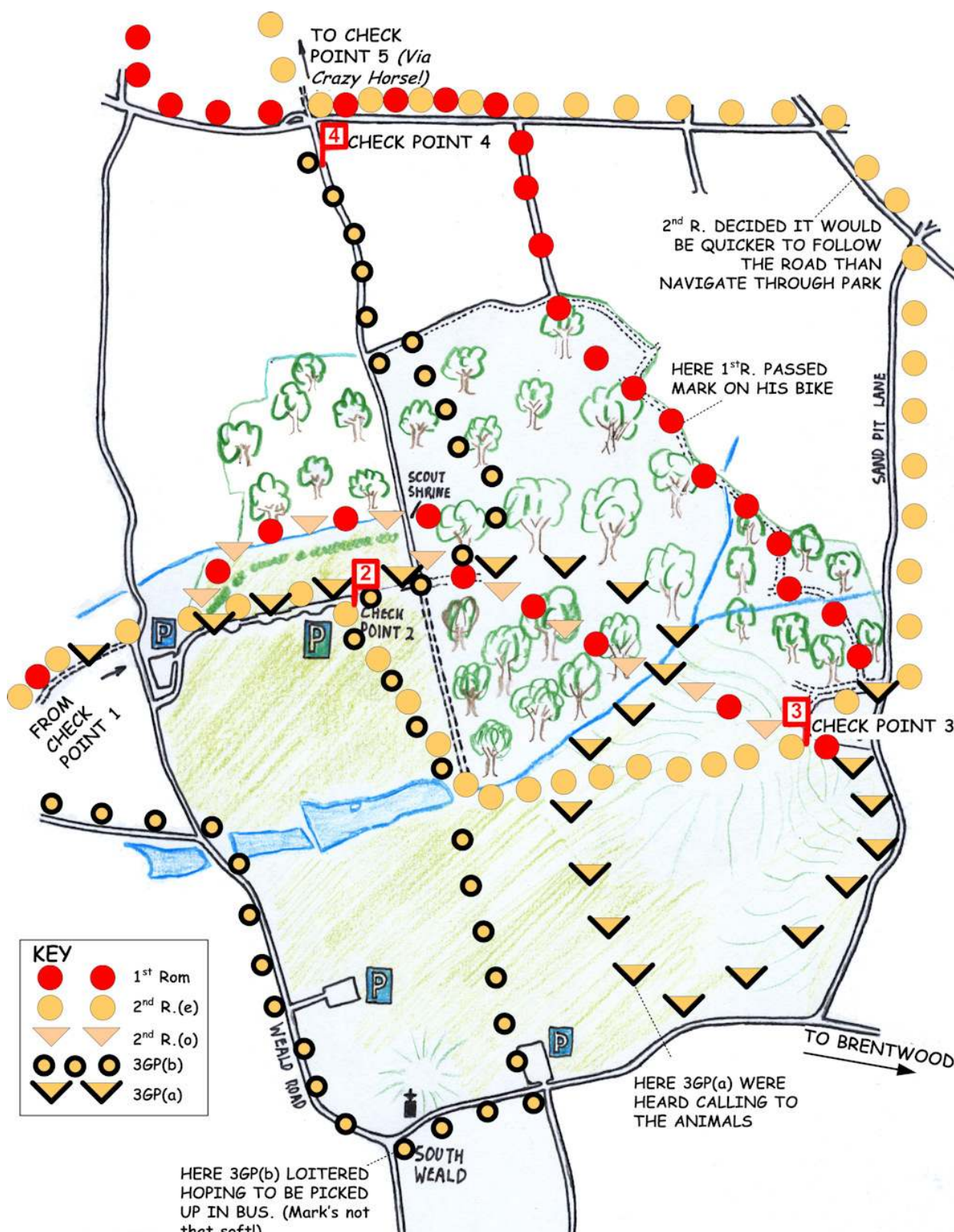
As night fell the judges settled down to mark the log books that the Scouts had been writing. The idea here is that the leaders should be able to follow the route from the description, illustrations and map in the book. Pictures of vampire bumble bees didn't get high marks, sketches of Thorndon Hall did.

Sunday was shorter but once again navigating through a country park foxed the majority of teams. When the map clearly shows a dead straight route along a hill top, why do so many teams follow a path around a corner, down a hill, around a second corner and along a stream? Check point 2 was at the top of a hill in a car park. Four teams were so convinced it was at the bottom of a hill in the woods that they left notes attached to trees, fences and gates. When purely by chance I cycled into what looked like a Nepalese prayer shrine I stopped to pick up the notes. We weren't marking illustrations on the Sunday but I can confirm 1st Romford's diagram of a gentleman's "meat and two vege" wouldn't have got many marks as it did little to help the judges determine the team's route!

Despite all this the 2013 Barton Challenge was a huge success. The confidence we may have had in our Scout's navigational ability has been well and truly adjusted but hopefully over the next few years we will start to see navigation skills across the district start to improve. Roll on the Orienteering competition...

BARTON CHALLENGE 2013 RESULTS

BARTON CHALLENGE 2015 RESULTS												
TEAM NO.	TEAM	SATURDAY					SUNDAY				FINAL TOTAL	POSITION
		BOOKING IN	HIKE	LOG BOOK	COUNTRY CODE	Sat Total	KIT CHECK	HIKE	ROUTE PLAN	Sun. Total		
OUT OF:		-190	180	300	20	500	-170	70	120	190	690	
1	3CR (Assisted)	-5	180	105	6	286	-10	50	61	101	387	(2)
2	2R Eagles	-10	120	169	20	299	-5	70	62	127	426	1
3	2R Owls	0	80	108	6	194	-5	50	36	81	275	5
4	3GP Confused	0	60	80	8	148	0	30	47	77	225	8
5	3GP Hyper Squirrels	0	100	98	14	212	0	20	50	70	282	4
6	21R Fox	-5	40	21	12	68	-5	30	21	46	114	10
7	21R Tibras	0	120	71	16	207	0	50	29	79	286	3
8	21R Panthers	-10	120	63	6	179	-15	30	61	76	255	7
9	1R Don't Beg It	-30	125	124	10	229	-5	70	58	123	352	2
9b	1R Split on Sunday						-25	20	51	46	275	5
10	3HH Ninjas	-20	90	77	2	149	-20	20	56	56	205	9



MAP SHOWING THE ROUTES OF FIVE TEAMS BETWEEN CHECKPOINT 1 AND 4 ON SUNDAY

One aspect of the Barton Challenge that teams struggle with is the sketch map of their route. Teams start armed with a selection of coloured pencils and an O.S. map they can more or less copy from. More often than not, all we get is a monochrome line drawing more akin to a tracing of the route. So I thought I would provide an example of what we are looking for. Admittedly it's got a bit cluttered once I overlaid the routes of just five of our teams. When you consider that they were all supposed to be following the same route at this stage, it gives you an indication of the fun we had trying to track them. I'm sure they all had their own adventures in South Weald and that's what it's all about.