

Dear All,

I am writing to thank you all for your support and friendship following my loss of my beloved Barbara. There is no hiding the fact that this has been the worst few weeks of my life, but I have been so grateful for all the cards, phone calls and above all the chance to talk to you at events. The Orienteering community is a great group of people and I must say that I have had more hugs from more ladies (and a few men) than I can remember!

Throughout our 52 years of marriage Barbara and I always worked as a joint team and happily enjoyed the same interests, which meant that we enjoyed what the other one was doing. We always planned her WI walks together and I was a regular helper at Oxfam.

Orienteering was our family way of life for more than 40 years and I have basked in the reflected glory of Barbara's competitive achievements for years! On the Organising and Controlling side Barbara's skills were without parallel. She had a sharp analytical mind to see through to the heart of an issue and although she did not wish to formally take on the role of Controller, in fact she and I shared the Controlling of many events including the JK at Stourhead in 1989 and more recently the TVOC CompassSport Heat at High Wycombe.

Her gift as an organiser was best seen in run up to the legendary JK at Penhale in 1997 with 4,000 competitors on each of two days with 12000 maps to sort out and on an even bigger stage when we shared the Organisers job at the World Championships Relay event at Aviemore in 1999. At WIM events Barbara was always a member of the Registration team, happy to advise and sort out the many problems that cropped up before people set off on their runs.

Of course Barbara's Organisational skills were recognised by Oxfam where 36 years as volunteer manager of the Ringwood shop was recognised with the award of the British Empire Medal.

It is very difficult for me having lost my best friend, my most valued critic and organiser, and this is why I want to thank you all for your friendship and company. The last thing Barbara would want would be for me to stop doing the things that we loved to do together, so you'll see me around for a bit longer!

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

John

P.S. As a result of your generosity we have been able to send donations of £800 to both Oxfam and to Parkinsons UK. Thank you all.