



# *Harlequins Orienteering Club*

## **Review of the Year**

### **2018** v1.0



Craig Thompson  
Mini-Relay Team - JK 2018  
Photo: David Williams



Lesley Brown  
Club Champs- Clent Hills  
Photo: Andy Johnson



50th Anniversary Meal  
'The Fox', Stourton  
Photo: David Williams



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## Welcome from the Chairman

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Welcome to a review of Harlequins 50th year. A.A Milne wrote a book of poetry entitled "Now We Are Six". Anyone fancy writing a book about Harlequins entitled "Now We Are Fifty"? It doesn't have to be poetry!

I feel that, if a theme was wanted for the events that we put on in 2018, *snow and mud* would fit the bill. Kinver in the snow; a 2017 UKUL final rescheduled due to snow; Highgate in driving rain; and British Camp the day after heavy rain. Combining the two, we were in charge of the JK Relays at Beaudesert, aka 'Glastonbury without the music'. This was where the willingness of HOC members to turn their hand to any job that needed doing really showed. We received many compliments from competitors about the way we tackled that day.

A big thankyou to all of you who took on the roles of organisers and planners for our events, acted as controllers for other clubs events (it helps us to get controllers for our events) and helped out on the day at our events.

I will finish by thanking the committee for their hard work over the last year. In particular I must thank those who are stepping down from their role after doing it for several years. They are Andy Johnson, Vice Chairman and Fixtures Secretary, Penny Hemsted as Permissions Officer for several of our areas (it's OK, she's carrying on as Social Secretary), Andy White, Membership Secretary, and Marian White, Treasurer. Many thanks to all of you.

**Barbara Ford**

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## Committee

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<i>Chairman:</i>	Barbara Ford	
<i>Vice-Chair:</i>	Andy Johnson (2017-18)	Ian Gamlen (2018-19)
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Marian White (2017-18)	Dave Aldridge (2018-19)
<i>General Secretary:</i>	Jenny Uff	
<i>Membership Sec:</i>	Andy White (2017-18)	Peter Rose (2018-19)
<i>Fixtures Secretary:</i>	Andy Johnson (2017-18)	Robert Rose (2018-19)
<i>Social Secretary:</i>	Penny Hemsted	
<i>Mapping:</i>	Paul Basher	
<i>Equipment:</i>	Peter Langmaid	
<i>Club Captain:</i>	Kerstin Mitchell	
<i>Welfare Officer:</i>	Penny Hemsted	

[www.harlequins.org.uk](http://www.harlequins.org.uk)



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(closed) groups/2214217441



HarlequinsOC

# Season Overview

## West Midlands League

The season kicked off with a visit to a snow-covered Kinver Edge, the weather reducing attendance by around 50%. The second fixture, hosted by WCH at Brindley Heath, fared little better, with the senior courses voided after the controls were set using a superseded version of the 'all controls' map.

Once the league got into its stride, it was clear that the real competition was a three-way contest for second place between HOC, WCH and WRE, positions changing regularly throughout the season. The spring phase of the season concluded with a stunning but slippery carpet of bluebells as OD hosted at Bentley Woods.

Weather continued to play a significant role in the league calendar. OD's summer event at Burton Dassett was held in baking heat, with the colour of the exposed hills for once resembling the 'rough open' colour depicted on the map. HOC hosted at Highgate Common in driving rain, a hastily arranged

event after permissions at Titterstone Clee could not be confirmed in time.

WRE also experienced permissions issues, with the very late withdrawal of permissions for the West Midlands Champs at The Ercall leading to a phenomenal effort to host a very creditable event at Telford Town Park with less than three weeks' notice.

Three consecutive December Sundays led to an exciting end of the season, with team placings changing after every event. HOC had 'home advantage' by hosting the season finale at British Camp. This proved decisive, with HOC claiming second place with 6532 points, ahead of WCH on 6435 and WRE on 6208.

Alex Morgan (M50) and Alison Sloman (W80) both contributed a maximum 500 points, with Robert Vickers (M75) not far behind on 495. First-season junior Kieran Rose (M12) contributed a creditable 436 points, with Arthur Mitchell (M12) just ahead on 440.

### Counting Events:

<b>21<sup>st</sup> Jan</b>	HOC	Kinver Edge
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	WCH	Brindley Heath (juniors only)
<b>18<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	WRE	Lizard Hill
<b>6<sup>th</sup> May</b>	WCH	Shoal Hill
<b>13<sup>th</sup> May</b>	OD	Bentley Woods
<b>8<sup>th</sup> July</b>	OD	Burton Dassett Country Park
<b>14<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>	HOC	Highgate Common
<b>11<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	WRE	Telford Town Park
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Dec</b>	WCH	Brereton Spurs
<b>9<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	OD	Itchington Holt
<b>16<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	HOC	British Camp

### League Results

<b>OD</b>	7283
<b>HOC</b>	6532
<b>WCH</b>	6435
<b>WRE</b>	6208
<b>POTOC</b>	4544
<b>COBOC</b>	504

### HOC Team Scorers

<b>A</b>	Arthur Mitchell	M12	440
<b>A</b>	Kieran Rose	M12	436
<b>B</b>	Benjamin Rauffet	M21	465
<b>B</b>	David Aldridge	M40	344
<b>C</b>	Alex Morgan	M50	500
<b>C</b>	Ian Chafer	M50	380
<b>D</b>	Marian White	W55	411
<b>D</b>	Heather Kieniewicz	W21	370
<b>E</b>	Alison Sloman	W80	500
<b>E</b>	Robert Vickers	M75	495
<b>F</b>	Robert Scott	M70	456
<b>F</b>	Mike Baggott	M65	447
<b>F</b>	Russ Fauset	M70	435
<b>F</b>	Barry McGowan	M70	427
<b>F</b>	Barry Houghton	M70	426
<b>Score</b>			<b>6532</b>



WM League 2018- HOC Age-Class Placings					
2nd	M12	Arthur Mitchell			
3rd	M12	Kieran Rose			
2nd	M14	Sebastian Mitchell			
1st	M21	Benjamin Rauffet	2nd	W21	Heather Kieniewicz
1st	M50	Alex Morgan	1st	W55	Marian White
3rd	M55	Paul Hammond	2nd	W60	Judith Evans
3rd	M70	Robert Scott	2nd	W60	Carol Farrington
1st	M75	Robert Vickers	1st	W80	Alison Sloman

## West Midlands Urban League

Counting Events:		
14 <sup>th</sup> April	OD	Rugby
3 <sup>rd</sup> June	WCH	Lichfield
17 <sup>th</sup> June	HOC	Birmingham University
15 <sup>th</sup> July	COBOC	Sutton Coldfield
8 <sup>th</sup> Sept	WRE	Whitchurch
9 <sup>th</sup> Sept	POTOC	Hanley

Each West Midlands club held one event to create an interesting urban league. Events were individually well attended, but very few competitors attended a full quota of four scoring events.

Three HOCs were class winners by demonstrating orienteering prowess alongside their enthusiasm for attending urban events: Kieran Rose (MJ), Benjamin Rauffet (MO) and Robert Vickers (MHV)

## West Midlands Champs- Telford Town Park, 11<sup>th</sup> November

Hastily arranged at Telford Town Park following a last minute withdrawal of permissions at the original venue, WRE hosted a West Midland Champs where route choice was critical and leg speed decisive.

The start window was later than usual to allow competitors to attend the Remembrance Day service held at the park's war memorial, marking 100 years since the treaty to end the Great War took effect.

WM Champs 2018- HOC Age-Class Placings					
1st	M12	Kieran Rose			
2nd	M21	Benjamin Rauffet	2nd	W21	Heather Kieniewicz
2nd	M35	Tim Kieniewicz			
1st	M50	Alex Morgan			
1st	M60	John Leeson	2nd	W60	Judith Evans
3rd	M70	Barry McGowan			
2nd	M75	Robert Vickers			
			1st	W80	Alison Sloman

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## West Midland Relays-Sutton Park, 28th October

OD were the hosts of the Relay Champs this year, and they used the north-east part of Sutton Park, which Bruce Bryant had remapped for the 2017 WM Individual Champs. The courses were challenging; there are lots of vague vegetation changes, thickets, earthbanks and small paths in this lesser-known portion of the park.

Harlequins had eight teams; unfortunately the event clashed with school holidays for the Mitchells, and illness meant that Kath and Rob Atkins had to withdraw at the last minute. However, the morning was dry, and not as cold as many of us had feared, and we enjoyed the orienteering and the company.

Unfortunately for OD, their EMIT system was misbehaving (apparently one of the downloads had not been reset for the end of BST). It was impossible to declare results on the day, and even now the published results are incomplete.

However, it was eventually confirmed that the team of **Andy Hemsted, Barry Houghton and Steve Chiverton** had been first back in the Super Vet Men category. Though the results are incomplete, the second team in this class was probably John Pearson, Barry McGowan and Bob Scott.

*Andy Hemsted (Captain for the day)*

## Harlequin of the Year

On the HOC website it says that *Harlequin of the Year* is awarded on the basis of out-of-the-ordinary service to the Club.

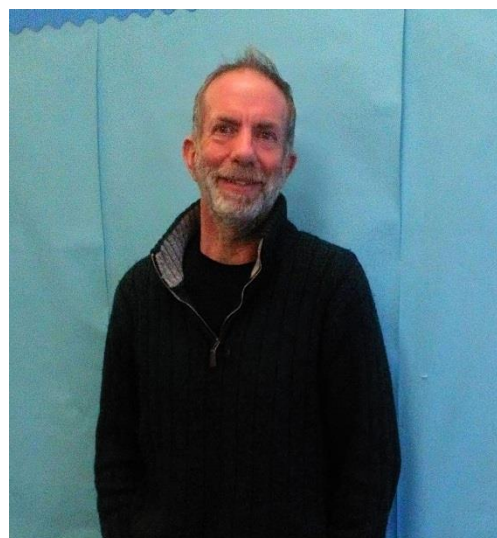
It is down to the Chairman to decide who gets the award (possibly with some advice from friends). Sometimes it is awarded for one particular role, with recent examples being Steve Bramwell for taking over as the HOC coordinator of Springtime in Shropshire and Judith and Lester Evans for organising the British Championships on Brown Clee. In other years it has been given to someone who has quietly carried out various roles within the club. One such recipient was Robert Vickers, who was, amongst many other roles, secretary of HOC for a number of years, keeper of the trophies and an excellent source of advice on many matters. Another was Peter Langmaid, webmaster and equipment officer.

The only two members that I have spotted who have received it twice are Alison Sloman and Brian Hughes.

The winner for 2018 has been chosen as a representative of his team. Those of us who were at the JK relays, i.e. most of us, will remember the snowy and muddy conditions on the day.

The fact that we managed to hold the event at all and even got the racing underway on time is largely down to the efforts of the car parking team. They parked cars all over the place. How they got away with parking cars in the Walled Garden I have no idea. As you will have worked out by this time, this year's Harlequin of the Year is **Nigel Cousins**.

*Babs Ford*



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## Night Street League 2017-18...

For me, 2017-18 was a make-or-break year for the Night Street League. I had 'retired' from the co-ordinating role the previous year after 3 years struggling to get organisers and amid falling participation rates.

As there were no takers for the role I took it on for another year in 2017-18. However, determined to make some positive changes, I consulted the membership on their preferred format for the events. Overwhelmingly there was support for moving away from the traditional S/M/L courses to a 60 minute mass start score. For a while organisers had been encouraged to start from a convivial location such as a pub, and this encouragement was redoubled for the new format, with an emphasis on easily accessible town centre locations. In the past these had produced some excellent events. Organisers were also invited to use OOMaps and disposable control site stickers in order to make the whole planning process simpler.

However organisers were, once again, hard to find and it became clear, as the season started, that there would be insufficient events to make up a league. Low participation rates would have created 'winners by attendance' which is not what you want from a league.

In the end we eventually managed 5 events which showcased the best of what night street events can produce; no-one, least of all Russ Fauset, will forget John Leeson's wonderful season opener from the King Charles pub in Worcester city centre, a great course in a great location with pie-and-mash to warm up anyone inadvertently falling in the canal!

The events for the season were:

1. **Worcester**- 17 runners  
winners Tom Cochrane/ Marian White
2. **Malvern**- 9 runners  
winners Robert Rose/ Rose Taylor
3. **Bromsgrove**- 17 runners  
winners Richard Purkis/ Marian White
4. **Blackheath**- 13 runners  
winners Robert Rose/ Siobhan Henn
5. **Stourport (BIMM)**-10 runners  
winners Tereza Rush /Peter Langmaid

John Leeson was so fired up from his event that he offered to take on the 2018-19 series with the aim of recreating the atmosphere he produced at Worcester and he has put together a fine series for this coming winter.

Thanks John, and good luck! – but maybe without any more canal incidents ;-)

*Andy White (Night Street League Co-ordinator)*

## ... and beyond

The 2018/19 Night Street League has attracted some new planner/organiser volunteers and a few new areas to add to some of the regular areas used in previous years.

The season kicked off in Redditch with an event organised by Peter Rose, from his offices in Greenlands. A burst water main outside the offices threatened to need the event to be postponed but Peter and 14 competitors rose to the challenge and enjoyed navigating a new area in Redditch.

The second event was held at Kerstin & Martin Mitchell's offices in Kingswinford on 29th November, where 15 competitors enjoyed finding full SI controls spread across a complex network of paths and roads. On return to the offices, we were able to enjoy some magnificent homemade soup prepared by Martin which made for a wonderful club atmosphere.

With another five events to come, it's shaping up to be an interesting and varied NSL season

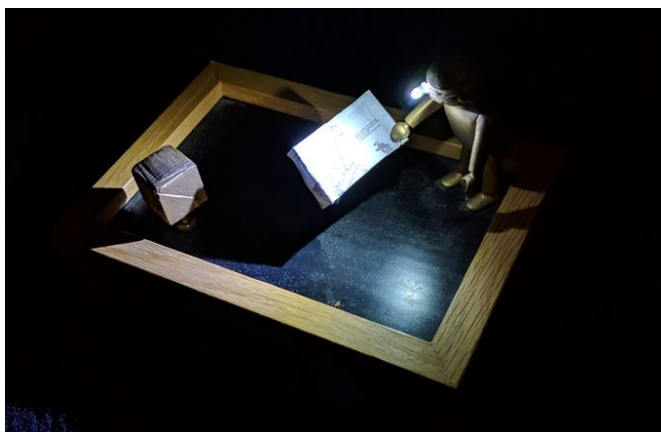
*John Leeson (NSL Co-ordinator)*



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## Winter Evening Events 2017-18 and beyond

Polishing the WEE trophy and I find we have been at this on Thursdays since 2005 – I won the league by one point from Chris McSweeney, while Alison took the ladies trophy two points ahead of Jackie Embrey.



It's Gold! (paint)



Chris McSweeney - collecting controls on a unicycle (mounting lamp under seat was unsuccessful)



A photo from the Dark Ages - pin punches and halogen lamps



November 2011 - old HOC tops, still halogen but now SI punching.

**Moving forward to 2017/18** two of the original venues were re-visited – **Habberley** and **Baggeridge**, with **Worcester Woods**, **Pitcheroak** and **Malvern Common** completing the league. The final – at Highgate Common – was snowed off and re-arranged for 2019, so we will have had to wait a whole twelve months for the (joint) best fish supper in the West Midlands.

I was convinced we would have a new name on the trophy – Alex Mitchell convincingly and consistently beating senior orienteers; but no shows at Habberley and Malvern Common meant this was not to be – until at least next season. It has been so long I have forgotten how much homework and teenage social life can really mess up an orienteering season.

Marian White interrupted Alison's near clean sweep of WEE league victories and Kieran Rose led the Juniors with a maximum 100 points scored.

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The switch from score event to 'you can never go back' format (2011) has made things easier for planner and more enjoyable for competitors though it cost several runners dearly at **Sutton Park – the opening venue for season 2018/19** – what with the very tricky #2 and the probably-gone-missing-but-really-tricky-to-be-certain #3. There I was 25 minutes in and only found two controls.

The results are in for **Beacon Hill** – part of "Little Switzerland" and the Rosehill Roundabout event centre meant a new challenge for most of us – Rednall Hill twice. The view from Beacon Hill was (more or less) worth the additional climb – bringing the total to somewhere near 400m. For the second event in succession we have Benjamin Rauffet in first place, with four events planned after Christmas to complete the season.

*David Williams (WEE Co-ordinator and 2018-19 Season Champion)*



Photo: David Williams

The view from Beacon Hill- 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018



## Harlequins League 2018

This league is designed to provide a chance for all Harlequins to compete in different age groups across all Harlequin areas in a calendar year. Where the Club Champs is our Cup Final, this is our Premiership!

The counting events were those where members represented HOC, so include all the West Midlands League Events, the Laurie Bradley New Year's Day Score and the CompassSport Cup. This meant 12 scoring events for TD4 & TD5 (Light Green, Green, Blue, Brown), and 13 for TD1, TD2 & TD3 (White, Yellow, Orange), the difference being the voiding of senior courses at Brindley Heath. Best 6 results (7 for TD1-3) count.

### TD4/5 Champions

	Men	Women
<b>Overall</b>	Alex Morgan	Heather Kieniewicz
<b>14/16/18</b>	Alex Mitchell	
<b>20/21/35</b>	Benjamin Rauffet	Heather Kieniewicz
<b>40/45</b>	Jason Howell	Phil Dolphin
<b>50/55/60</b>	Alex Morgan	Marian White
<b>65 &amp; up</b>	Barry Houghton	Alison Sloman

### TD1/2/3 Champions

<b>Juniors</b>	Kieran Rose	Rose Taylor
<b>Seniors</b>	Martin Mitchell	Gill Clerici

## Club Championships- Clent Hills, 8<sup>th</sup> December

### 2018 Champions

<b>Bert Pardoe Handicap</b>	Catherine Bailey
<b>Mens Open</b>	Dave Aldridge
<b>Ladies Open</b>	Lesley Brown
<b>Mens Veteran</b>	Peter Rose
<b>Mens Supervet</b>	David Williams
<b>Ladies Supervet</b>	Mandy Mackereth
<b>Mens Master</b>	Geoff Trewin
<b>Vintage Ladies</b>	Penny Hemsted
<b>Mens Ultravet</b>	Barry McGowan
<b>Columbine</b>	Catherine Bailey
<b>Harley O'Quinn</b>	Kieran Rose
<b>MADO Family Trophy</b>	Lewis and Heather Kieniewicz
<b>Alex Wing (Best Newcomer)</b>	Mandy Mackereth



Gathering at the finish- from M2 to W80

As always we were planning to be super organised and set out the controls the night before. However a certain mother of mine ventured to Birmingham to find herself in a cocktail bar downing Gin and Tonics.

Woke at 6:30 and set off at 7:15, after 7 Weetabix and an orange. Arrived at the carpark just before it got light so spent the time unleashing the OCD on sorting the kit. Used the MTB to get around which was tough but saved a bit of time (especially on the downhills). When I got back people were ready so 25 minutes later the elites were off, charging over the hill. I say elites as I was very impressed by the amount of controls people managed to attain on such a physically tough area.

An hour later everyone was back including the many juniors which was nice to see. (After just completing the YBT for what I think is the first time for me, it is pleasing to finally gather some impressive juniors!)

Thanks to the control collectors who made the job much easier, Peter on the download and Alison for mapping. Also the people for making their own food to bring for the social afterwards, which is always a nice touch. And of course my mum for supporting me every time I plan. Looking forward to next year!

*Alex Mitchell (Planner)*

# January

## 01 Laurie Bradley New Year's Day score

The first day of the year saw the annual New Year's Day Score, this time hosted by Walton Chasers at Hednesford Camp. The team of 20 HOCs finished 4th behind the "last-few-years-all-conquering OD Armada" and the event generated some controversy on the club forum. The WMOA committee had failed to update the new rules so the organiser used the old rules, thus disenfranchising 3 HOC runners. Since this did not affect the outcome, an apology was issued and all was forgiven without the need for a second referendum.

5th	Alex Morgan	HOC	M50	300
25th	Robert Rose	HOC	M35	250
28th	John Pearson	HOC	M70	240
32nd	Mike Baggott	HOC	M65	240
36th	Andy Johnson	HOC	M55	230
37th	Peter Langmaid	HOC	M50	230
51st=	Paul Hammond	HOC	M55	210
54th	Barry McGowan	HOC	M70	200
59th	Barry Houghton	HOC	M70	200
60th	Eric Brown	HOC	M70	200
63rd	Adrian Bailey	HOC	M50	200
65th	Lesley Brown	HOC	W65	190
82nd	Robert Vickers	HOC	M75	180
89th	Michael Dugmore	HOC	M75	170
92nd	Rick Roberts	HOC	M65	170
103rd	Paul Watterson	HOC	M65	160
115th	Alison Sloman	HOC	W80	150
118th	Nick Taylor	HOC	M70	150
126th	Stephen Nightingale	HOC	M70	130
139th	Sue Roberts	HOC	W65	100

## 06 Western Night League- British Camp

A crisp and clear evening attracted 44 runners to the top of Herefordshire Beacon, where the strong winds promptly blew them back down again. *Organiser: Bryan Laycock*

## 11 Night Street League- Malvern

"One of the enjoyable facets about organising NSL events is the fascination of finding all sorts of nooks and crannies and artefacts that would pass you by in everyday life. So perhaps it is hardly surprising that my minor obsession with alleyways, ancient boundary posts and disused gas lamps led to these featuring heavily in the event... Congratulations to Robert Rose for sweeping up all the controls with a minute to spare." *Colin Palmer*

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## 18 Winter Evening Event- Habberley Valley

"I enjoyed putting out the controls in the afternoon sunlight and I am glad someone cleared the lot in under an hour... There is holly clearance being done by the council – holly is becoming a real problem in the valley. Balancing this the trees around the ruin are now much more penetrable." *David Williams*

## 21 West Midlands League- Kinver

"The weather was not exactly kind, but the running conditions were good. The snows in December really annihilated the courses. Before then I was concerned that times would have been a bit on the long side, but in the event I have never seen the western side of Kinver so runnable. You could see some of the controls from at least 100m and run direct. Mostly impossible before the snow. Many areas I avoided would have been perfectly useable on the day.

The 'Edge' divides the area North/South into two narrow strips, so it is difficult to plan courses without unreasonable climbs, hence the slightly shorter courses. Times on the Blue and Green course were a lot quicker than I expected. I never envisaged people getting below or around 50 mins and 40 mins respectively. Well done to you all, Respect!

The snows brought down a lot of trees in the plantation area near the start, the Kinver ranger and his team did a splendid job of clearing them. Many thanks to Adrian Bailey for taking on the organiser role at the last minute. Without his input the event could not have taken place. The controller Ian Hopkins did an excellent job with the occasional comment to nudge me in the right direction. He spent a lot of time out checking control sites, even with the snow on the ground.

Obviously thanks to the many other helpers standing or sitting around in the cold and wet, not tasks to relish in the conditions. Special thanks to the control collectors who having been out getting cold and wet once then took on the extra task of collecting everything in and getting cold and wet again. Thanks also to Tim who helped put out controls on Saturday in the rain and snow, and Sunday morning in the rain and snow and he still went out to collect controls, by which time he had run out of anything dry!" *Barry Houghton (Planner)*

## 25 Night Street League- Bromsgrove

A cunning combination of map scale and spread of controls lead many of us to exceed the hour's limit, and gave everyone plenty of scope for picking different routes to maximise their score. Richard Purkis (NGOC) won the men's race by quite a way despite incurring penalty points, and well done to Marian White won the women's from Tereza Rush (BOK) by being less severely over time! Peter Langmaid and Mike Baggott could not be separated with both the same score and time. *Organiser: Robert Rose*



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## February

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### 01 Winter Evening Event- Pitcheroak Golf Course and Wood

"The area can be challenging at night due to the variable terrain: fast, open, hilly golf course contrasting with the woodland; equally hilly but slippery, rough underfoot and lacking visibility. The network of similar paths and confusing open areas add to the difficulty."

*Mike Baggott*

### 08 Night Street League- Blackheath

"I realised that I hadn't quite got the planning right just after the start when everyone headed down the hill; evidently the 20 and 30 points controls in the south-west corner were a little bit too attractive... Robert Rose won out despite being over three minutes late, bagging all the 30 pointers and leaving out the lower value controls in the middle." *Peter Langmaid*

### 10 Western Night League- Wyche Ridge

An electric fence that mysteriously disappeared just before the start of the event, and a lot of climb to visit both sides of the ridge, tested concentration, route choice and ability to operate with oxygen debt. *Organiser: Mike Farrington*

### 15 Winter Evening Event- Malvern Common

"There was 15cm of snow on the ground during the planning visit, which encouraged me to find an indoors environment for the start and finish in case the weather continued cold and inclement. Fortunately the new landlord at the Three Horseshoes was very welcoming, and I think this worked well- it certainly intrigued the locals, who followed the event's progress with interest." *Colin Palmer*

### 20 Penamacor International Orienteering Meeting, Portugal

Congratulations to Penny Hemsted, Bronze medallist, W75. Andy H explains "The 'Penamacor International Orienteering Meet' overall result was based on results for three events; Middle, Night Sprint, Long. In W75, there were six entrants, but only three entered the Night Sprint... Penny was therefore in 3rd place after the Middle and Night, and needed to finish the Long to gain the necessary points... she won her medal for perseverance in the face of boulder-fields, grot, and barbed wire fences. What a Heroine!"



## 26 British Night Championships

Held at Merthyr Mawr, near Bridgend, 8 HOCs braved the large area of slacks and vegetated sand dunes;

"Congratulations to Alison, who won yet another Night Champs title with a careful display of her skills on the very tricky Merthyr Mawr. Another winner was John Embrey (formerly HOC, now DEE), who had an impressive run at the start of his M60 career." *Andy Hemsted*

"I enjoyed my course (#6) but it was not the challenge I hoped. Sadly Merthyr is no longer to be feared - now with fences and plenty of paths and little copses to aid navigation. The view down from the plateau was striking - 200 little lamps bobbing along in all conceivable directions." *David Williams*

"Stopping at the edge of the plateau and wishing I'd had a camera with me - 50m below, a hundred headlamps looking like Van Gogh's starry night..."  
*David Williams*

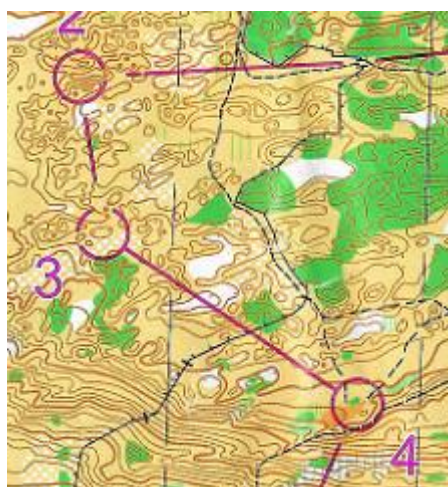


Photo: Siobhan Lock (SBOC)

6	Jason Howell	HOC	M45	78:12:00
	Rob Taylor	HOC	M45	dnf
3	Peter Langmaid	HOC	M50	82:34:00
11	David Williams	HOC	M55	71:04:00
9	Andy Hemsted	HOC	M65	91:40:00
13	Barry Houghton	HOC	M70	112:16:00
	Penny Hemsted	HOC	W75	mp
1	Alison Sloman	HOC	W80	87:36:00

## Three Weekend Breaks With Something in Common

### Part One: Cold and Sandy *by Peter Langmaid*

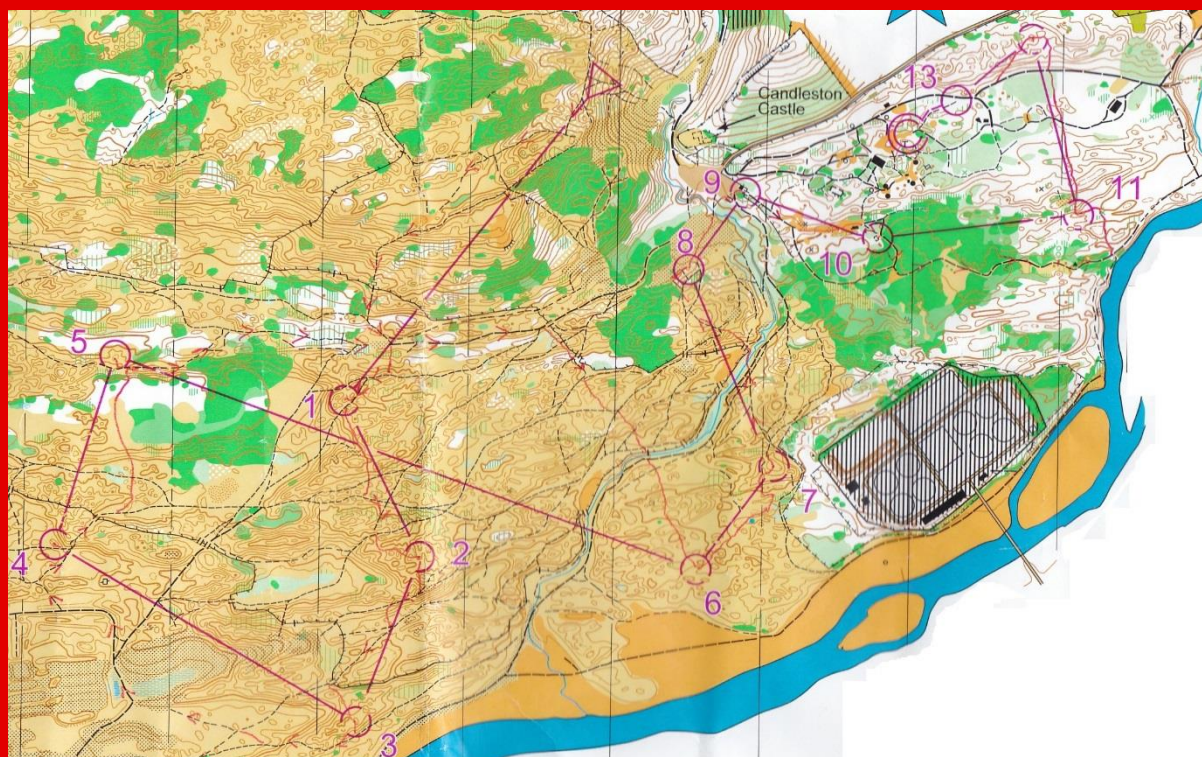
Current family circumstances and other interests mean that whilst I can get to Thursday evening events and turn out regularly at WEEs, NSLs and SEEs, I can't get to many Sunday events these days. But occasionally the stars align and a free weekend coincides with a decent package of orienteering events away from home.

The British Night Champs was held in mid-February in South Wales and partnered by a regional event on the Sunday. This also constituted some unfinished business; my last orienteering experience on South Wales sand dunes had resulted in a broken ankle.

The night event was held on Merthyr Mawr Warren, near Bridgend. This is a large area of slacks and vegetated dunes; the map looks horrendous at first glance but there's a good path network and the fences which cross the site provide excellent handrail and catching features. After crossing the fence when and where I expected to on the long first leg I settled into my run. Erring on the side of caution (perhaps too much on the long leg 5-6) I safely navigated the dunes with only one major error.

The Sunday event was at Pembrey. This is somewhere I'd heard of but never run on before – so one to tick off the list. It's a large country park with a mixture of woodland, open fields and dunes with evidence of previous use by the military in WW2.

Much of the course was relatively easy but after negotiating the first tricky dune section I got complacent in the woods towards the end and found myself slogging through brash after missing an obvious path route.





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## March

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### 01 Winter Evening Event- Highgate Common

The WEE season finale with fish and chip supper had to be postponed due to snow. Attempts to reschedule were unsuccessful, so the event was moved to the end of the 2018-19 season.

### 08 Night Street League- Stourport

The Bewdley International Mountain Marathon (BIMM) took place this year in nearby (and less mountainous) Stourport, and provided the season finale for the Night Street League.

A 1 mile prologue provided five checkpoints using a 1903 map. This provided an unusual challenge- more so because Stourport is quite unusual in having had its parish church relocated, so early assumptions on what could be relied upon had to be re-thought. Part 2 consisted of a 75-minute score format with 20 checkpoints in 10 pairs, living up to the BIMM's reputation as a tough test.

### 11 Compass Sport Cup Qualifier- Nescliffe

This was a "winner takes all" competition in the Cup as OD inconsiderately did not make the top 3 in last year's final. So all we needed to do was to beat OD, DEE and NGOC...

Wrekin's decision to use the Fabian entry system led to some pre-match jostling from club captains; Kerstin kept our tactics a secret but OD may have shown their team too early; did that give the opposition an edge?

Elsewhere in the club, Kieran Rose was preparing for his first ever Orange with the help of a previous event's Routegadget; dad Peter was sceptical: *"Kieran's got several strategies for tackling it- what's that saying about generals equipping themselves to fight the last war?!"* Andy H had some wise words; *"I don't think that Orange will get onto 'The Cliffe', which is the area used by the Orange on Routegadget" and "In this Nesscliffe section, all the 'Dark Green' is rhododendron; ALWAYS go round rather than trying to go through... unless you belong to Deeside, you are DEFINITELY better going straight through the dark green."*

The day itself was enjoyed by most and was very sociable. DEE were the winners, by such a narrow margin that one misjudgement from an OD runner cost them dear. There was some discussion about the colour of the overprinting, which caused a number of such misjudgements and the planner agreed was not quite what he expected. A few stand out performances among the many great HOC runs were picked up by Andy W on Facebook:

- Seb Mitchell scoring 100 points - brilliant!
- Kath Atkins on 99 after a sleepless night with a teething baby.
- Phil Dolphin scoring 94 on her first Blue course! Remember Phil is very new to orienteering and usually does yellow or orange and once (?) did a Short Green. Her only question before starting was *"is a Blue very different to a Short Green?"*
- Alex Morgan on Brown. He badly sprained his ankle very early on and still completed although he could barely walk at the end. Grit and determination!
- And Robin and Kieran, both running their first solo Orange courses and getting round - super effort!

Kemi (W4) on the White course made some interesting observations. We're eagerly awaiting the IOF adoption of her map symbols - the little brown dots are actually 'fairy shops', and the green circles are (obviously) 'elf houses'.

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## 30 JK 2018 Day One- Sprint, MOD Stafford

## 31 JK 2018 Day Two- Middle, Brereton Spurs



2018 saw the return of the JK to the West Midlands. Andy Yeates (WCH) was appointed Co-ordinator for the weekend and he shared out the four days between the WM Clubs:

Day 1: The Sprint was held at MOD Stafford: Royal Signals/WCH

Day 2: The Middle Race was held at Brereton Spurs: OD

Day 3: The Long Race was held at Beaudesert: POTO/WRE

Day 4: Relays at Beaudesert: HOC/COBOC

The decision to have all the Days within a small geographical area was a deliberate attempt to avoid competitors having to travel long distances each day which can happen at multi-day events.

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## April

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### 01 JK 2018 Day Three- Long, Beaudesert

The Long Race came and went, leaving behind a car park field unfit for re-use and equipment all over the place. Our promised Day 3 helpers with the equipment were literally bogged down in the car park helping vehicles to escape, so our team had to spend time getting everything in place to enable the Relay Arena to be erected.

As for the parking, we had to revert to our original plan of containing the Relay Day parking within the grounds of the Centre. We knew there was enough space for the 700 vehicles we expected, but were unsure how the ground would hold up. By nightfall it looked as though we had an Event.



### 02 JK 2018 Day Four- Relays, Beaudesert

We had originally been given sole use of Beaudesert as our venue and Andy Hemsted was soon out in the forest planning courses. In early January 2017, I had a very productive meeting with the Beaudesert Activity Centre management team and we agreed the use of a field for the Arena, looked at the parking and decided where the String Course would go. All too easy!

Then on 3 February 2017 I received an e-mail. Day 3 had been moved and we would now be sharing Beaudesert. The long process of coming up with a joint plan with the Day 3 team then started. We had to look again at the parking, the Arena, how to divide up the forest... The next fourteen months were extremely busy and sometimes stressful, but we finally worked out how we could share the Beaudesert facilities with the minimum of disruption across the two days.

The Club had agreed early on that HOC and COBOC members would not be able to have a run. (At JK2017 they had managed to organise runs for their helpers but they had a pool of well over 100, greatly exceeding the combined forces of our two Clubs). We did, however, enter three Junior teams and their successes are detailed below.

**03:00:** I wake up and see sleet in the light of the streetlamp. The car has a slight dusting of snow but nothing to worry about.



**04:00:** The bonnet of the car is looking whiter. No chance of sleep now. I have to get up and go.



**05:15:** Eric and I arrive at Beaudesert. The higher we go, the worse the conditions get. Club tents left up overnight have collapsed. The Equipment van is covered in snow. We go to the equipment store to wait for daylight. I have a list of things to do which we can do inside.

**05:45:** We start an inspection of the car parking areas. It doesn't take long to establish that we have lost a good proportion of it. We decide that the Event cannot go ahead.

**05:55:** I phone Andy Yeates and wake him with the bad news. Surely there is a way around this, he says. He can't see what we can see! He finally persuades us to survey the whole site to establish what is salvageable.

**06:10:** Eric returns with the optimistic news that the further reaches of the site are in slightly better condition and we might get away with it. Really?

**06:30:** We are ON. No time for second thoughts. Andy Johnson (who is in the HOC hut) puts a notice on the website. We may have to delay the start but we will try to put on the Event. Surely the numbers will be down, taking the pressure off the parking? The competitors can **SURELY** see the weather?



**07:00:** I see Nigel Cousins (in charge of parking) approaching. While I am scared, he to his credit hardly bats an eyelid. I am sure his outward demeanour did not reflect what was going on inside! He springs into action and he and Eric do a tour of the site to see where cars can be squeezed in.

**07:30:** I see Lester and Judith Evans and Phil Kirk (OD) don yellow jackets. They are abandoning their equipment duties to help parking. Later, Ruth Lockley from the String Course is seen dragging rubber mats to help stuck cars. There were also people I didn't recognise helping as it was hard to see faces beneath the layers of clothing.

**08:30:** We carry on with our preparations and have a run through of the Start procedure.

**09:15:** Simon Thompson goes to see how the parking is going. Are we going to start on time? He comes back and says YES.

**09:40:** First call-up for the Mini Relay. I can't see many competitors - perhaps they haven't come?



**09:50:** All but one team are in the warm up area, huddling under the gazebos. Time for a demonstration of the run-in. As we had two finish controls – one for seniors and one for juniors – I thought it would be nice to have one of our juniors accompanying Tessa Strain who had already agreed to be part of it. Poor Rosie (Taylor) was FREEZING! It was a wonderful sight as they appeared out of the mist (no one could see the final controls!). Well done Rosie!



Rosie overtaking Tessa on the run-in!



**10:00:** We are off! I go for a wander and what I see astonishes me. Cars are everywhere. The walled garden, which has been off limits to cars, suddenly has about 25 cars. How did that happen?

**10:45:** The Car Park team meets in the Helpers Hub to discuss how to get the cars out. Should we cancel the prizegiving? We have got this far so let's see the Event through to the end. Loads of vehicles are blocked in but they will just have to wait. With luck, car owners will be sensitive to the fact that they are blocking others and act sympathetically (in reality not all did!)

**11:00:** All the helpers appear to be coping – some even enjoying it! (I apologise if this wasn't the case).

**12:15:** Mini Mass Start. It's almost over.

**12:45:** Prizegiving ON TIME.

**13:30:** Three runners still out. The Dad of one comes over and asks for a copy of his son's map so he can go out and look for him. Our search procedure kicks into action. Luckily, the runners are quickly found and the control collectors go out into the forest.

**13:30:** Time for the big clear up. HOC and COBOC put on an impressive display and the Arena is quickly dismantled.\*



Was it worth it? I would give that a resounding YES. I hope you think so too. 'Glastonbury without the Music' was how it was described by one competitor. The reaction we have had both on the day and subsequently has been nothing but praise and thanks. As a matter of interest, only 5% of the expected teams didn't turn up so that a total of 1,250 runners thought it worth braving the elements!

\*Apparently there is such a thing as over-tidying. The staff at Beaudesert had erected orange netting around a row of saplings a couple of months earlier. On Tuesday morning there was the netting all neatly rolled up next to the trees. Whoever did that, thank you. The Estate Manager found it highly amusing. Far better than leaving a mess!

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## HOC achievements

Mini-Relay:	Craig Thompson / Robertas Stupelis / Kieran Rose: 6 <sup>th</sup>
Junior Relay:	Rose Taylor / Arthur Mitchell / Catherine Bailey: 12 <sup>th</sup>
Intermediate Men:	Alex Mitchell / James Thompson / Sebastian Mitchell: 16 <sup>th</sup>

### My thanks go to the 61 HOC and COBOC helpers, and particularly the team leaders:

- Sue and Rick Roberts: Registration – on duty all weekend
- Nigel Cousins: Car Park
- Marian and Andy White: Arena
- Babs Ford: Map Issue (and reserve Organiser)
- Ian Gamlen: Start
- Mike Farrington: SI
- Jenny Hunter (COBOC): String Course
- Judith and Lester Evans: Equipment for the whole Event
- Eric Brown: Safety Officer for the whole Event

### I salute you all.

*Lesley Brown (Organiser)*

## 06 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meal-

'The Fox' at Stourton, where several club meetings have taken place over the years, hosted 58 current and former Harlequins to celebrate half a century of HOC.

One of the club's founders, Harry Price, attended along with his grandson Tom. Robert Vickers won the prize for knowing the most about former members in attendance:

*Particularly welcome was **Harry Price**, since he was present at the very birth of the club and through the period in which orienteering became established in the West Midlands. In fact the meeting in 1968 at which the decision was made to call it the "Harlequins Orienteering Club" was held at Harry's office in Kinver. Subsequently he held several offices in HOC, and was awarded Honorary Life Membership in recognition of his service. Harry travelled from his home in Nottingham to join us for this important celebration.*

***Don Thompson** was an active member for a number of years, and is recorded as an early recipient of the "Harlequin of the Year" trophy to recognise his major contribution as Assistant Controller at the JK event organised by HOC in 1994.*

***Mike Felstead** was a regular competitor whose forte was the organisation of major events.*

***Rollo Rumford** established a reputation for himself as an avid event official - shouldering many major roles as Organiser, Planner and Controller. He served as Chairman.*

***Dick Wells** was a stalwart member in the '70s and '80s, and an event Planner. Dick developed the idea of an annual mini fell race over the Clent Hills, still a regular feature of our programme, and coined the title "June Jaunter" which has stuck.*



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**Peter Bylett** was an active competitor for many years. He had a major impact in developing orienteering for young people, especially through SMILE events and the British Schools Orienteering Association.

**Colin and Suzette Spears** were prominent in competition over many years, and stalwarts in Committee work. Suzette served as HOC Membership Secretary. Colin made a major contribution to mapping: not only within HOC but regionally and nationally - and was the recipient of major national mapping awards. These skills were put to good use in the game of identify HOC areas from a tiny section of the map.

Thanks were extended to staff at the Fox who arranged and decorated the hired room according to our wishes and to the Chef who served us with a tasty and appetising meal to mark the occasion.





### 19 British Orienteering Long Distance Championships

The Scottish Orienteering Association (SOA) staged the British Orienteering Championships 2018 in Royal Deeside. The Long Distance Championships were held over the Balmoral Estate. The event was filmed for BBC Two's *The Adventure Show*, with David Williams, Alex Mitchell and Kerstin Mitchell among the HOCs to experience their substantially-less-than 15 minutes of fame. Andy Hemsted (M65L) delivered the outstanding performance of the 12 HOC competitors, winning by over five and a half minutes.

Andy reflects on his experience:

#### **May Good Fortune be with you at your next event...**

Orienteering certainly needs lots of experience and skill, but sometimes a bit of **luck** can help as well. It's very rare that even the most accomplished navigator will have a perfect run, where correct techniques lead accurately to every control on every leg. They may misread the map, choose a risky route, or lose concentration for a few seconds. What about the legs where the competitor **isn't** perfect?

On a **lucky** day they will:

- ...see the features en route that they had hoped to see, even though they weren't pacing;
- ...find that they can run on a rough compass through runnable forest, though it should have been a more accurate bearing;
- ...see a couple of orienteers coming away from the control-site before the feature or the kite is visible.

On an **unlucky** day they will:

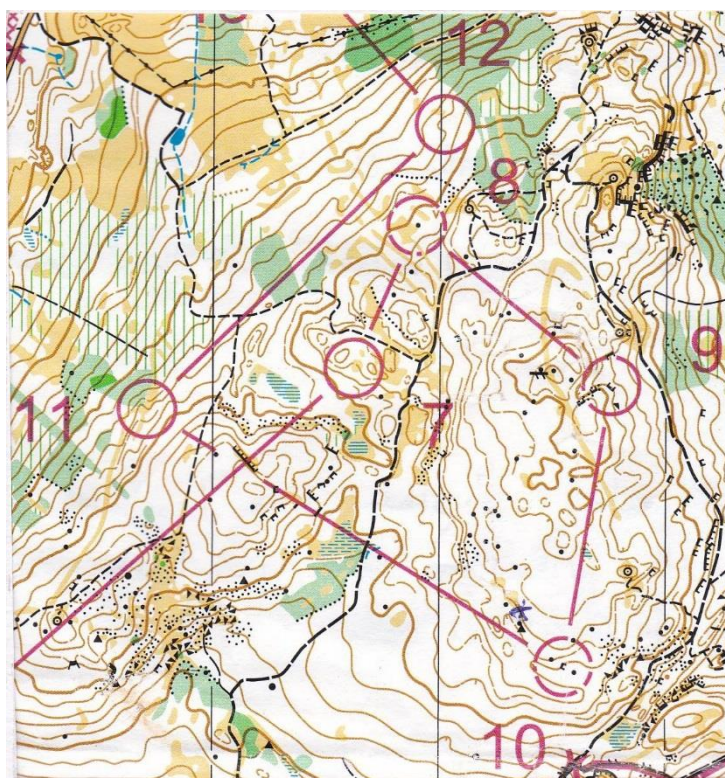
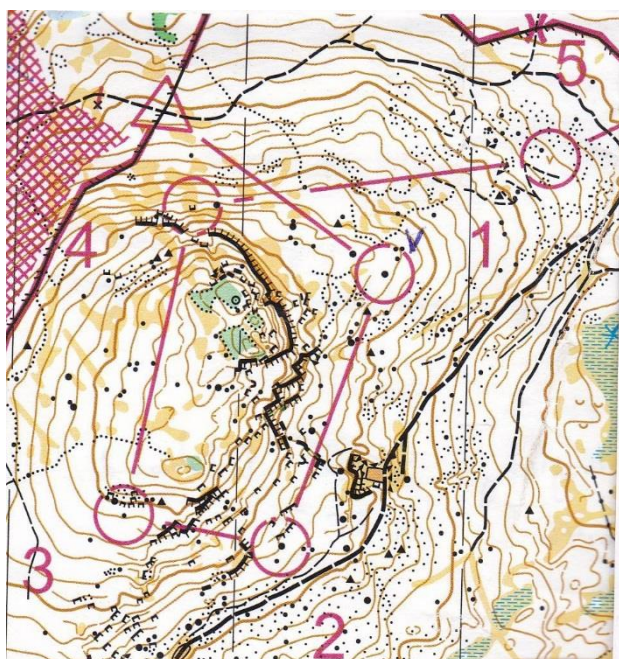
- ...fail to spot that crag/veg boundary/thicket which they were relying on as an intermediate checkpoint;
- ...find a fallen tree which throws them off their bearing;
- ...glance at the control description and see 'spur', but fail to notice the 'north side';
- ...find a spur with no control on it, and with no-one near;
- ...lose confidence, circle back, and lose several minutes before returning.

On a **lucky** day, you will get a bit lost, and suddenly see a unique feature which enables you to relocate quickly...

- ...and in an **unlucky** year, you'll do a large number of Level C events well, but have one disaster at the JK when you can't relocate easily, so a small error leads to a massive time-loss.

In 2017 and early 2018 I had had bits of bad luck in some important events, including at a very poor BOC 2017 at High Dam, but I'm always optimistic. Perhaps the British Champs on 19<sup>th</sup> May at Balmoral would be different? The terrain looked very good on Routegadget: lots of runnable forest, with a variety of rock, contour and vegetation features to help.

Here are two sections of the M65L course, scale 1:10000; look at the legs 1 – 5 and 8 – 12, and consider the techniques that you would use before reading on.



Start – 1: A tricky first leg; it would be difficult to relocate in the area near the control. I went along the track, and north of the line. I was lucky with my choice of route; the first veg boundary was clear, I saw a photographer by the boulder at the SE end, the second veg boundary was also clear, and this gave me a good attack-point (AP).

1 – 2: Plenty of well-mapped features, re-entrants and crags, all clear as I ran on a bearing.

2 – 3: More well-mapped crags.

3 – 4: Contouring to the left out of 3 might have led into areas with no clear features, so I went straight, saw the open re-entrant and the group of boulders. Dropping down towards 4, the crag was not visible... I remembered to look to the sides to spot a 'Crag Foot'.

4 – 5: Thanks to my route to 1, I was able to go straight, back past the photographer, and use the second veg boundary again. Even so, I found the downhill approach confusing, but was lucky to relocate on the paths, and then to see a couple of runners coming out of the control. Other orienteers lost significant time at this 'pit among rocks'.

6 – 7: I went straight, but the track to the SE was a better route. I also lost a minute looking on the hillside; the control was higher up, at the top of the re-entrant. - 2mins.

7 – 8: On the straight line, the veg boundary and the open rides and clearing were good.

8 – 9: The track and the contours to the NE of the redline made this OK.

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9 – 10: I had my final navigational slice of luck on this leg, when I made a small mistake. My navigation was fine south to the large royal cairn, but this is still 150m from the control. I should have taken a bearing and paced to the re-entrant/boulder SE of my 'Crag Foot', then turned right and looked to the right of the re-entrant. Instead, I aimed directly for my control, and didn't see it (I was probably close, on the NW side). I went up the re-entrant, saw a control at \*, re-located, and came straight back. Only one minute lost, where it could have been much more.

10 – 11: Fine, via the marshy re-entrant.

11 – 12: This spur looks very tricky! Best is to use the path and then go to the clearing near to 8 again, to give a good AP.

It was straightforward from 12 downhill to the Finish, and my final piece of 'competition luck' was that none of my rivals had a perfect run, so I was able to take a clear victory.

**The Moral:** when you're unlucky, don't despair; persevere, and one day Lady Luck will lead you unerringly to every control! In the meantime, work on your techniques, and you'll improve your chances...

## 20 British Orienteering Relay Championships

Four HOC teams took part at Torphantrick (Cambus o'May).

M Short- Romualdas Stupelis, Andy Hemsted, Alexander Mitchell (7<sup>th</sup>)

Mini- Craig Thompson and Robertas Stupelis

Mixed Ad-Hoc- Karen Thompson, Simon Thompson, James Thompson (27<sup>th</sup>)  
Kerstin Mitchell, Michael Dugmore, Penny Hemsted

## 26 Tamar Triple

27 Exeter University provided the venue of the sprint, with 18 HOCs in attendance. Arthur  
28 Mitchell finished 1st in MYJ. The long and middle events were held at Braunton Burrows, with 19 HOCs taking part on the Sunday and 20 on the Monday.



## Three Weekend Breaks With Something in Common

### Part Two: Hot and Sandy *by Peter Langmaid*

With the JK out of the way, my attention was taken by the Tamar Triple. This is the bi-annual event in the South-West which alternates with SInS on the late May bank holiday weekend. Often the forest events are on peat bog forest plantations like Cookworthy Forest. Having run three events through the grot and mud of Cookworthy on my only previous experience of the TT I'd never been desperately keen to go back.

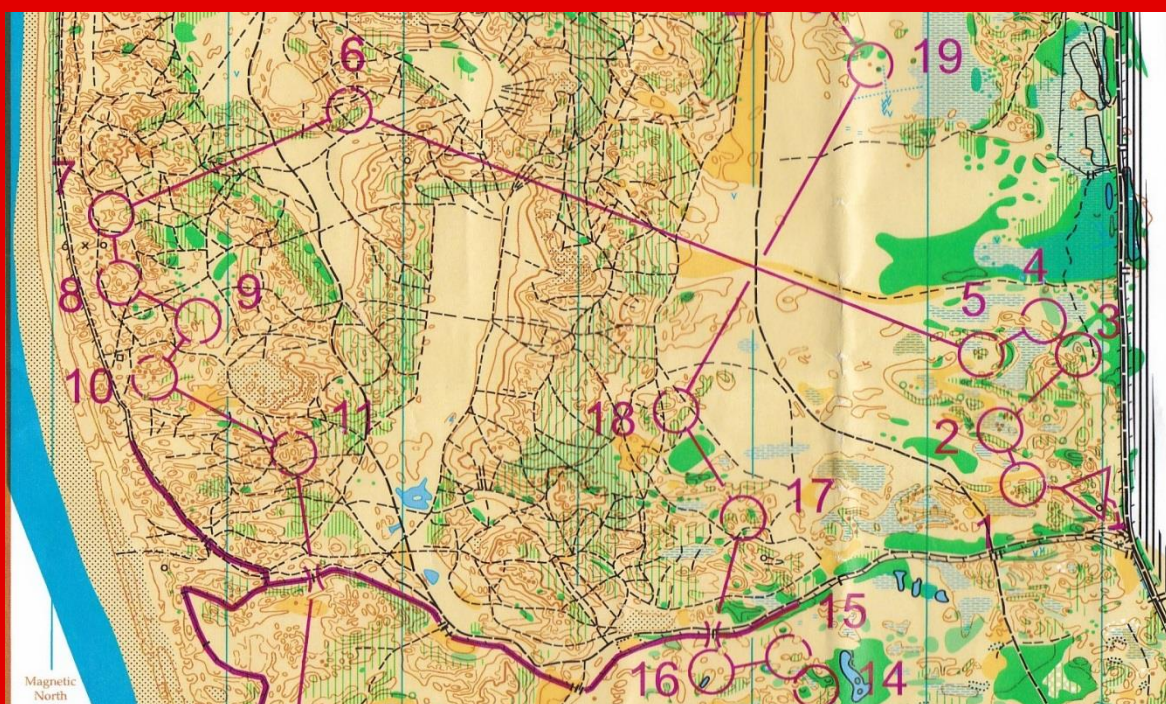
This year the main area was one of the best O-venues in the South-West; Braunton Burrows. Having never been there before I booked up.

The weekend started with a superb urban event round Exeter University campus. There's not much tricky under-or-over stuff to give the mapper and event officials as much of a challenge as to the competitors, but the venue is on the side of a hill with lots of small steps and uncrossable walls to keep you thinking. Unfortunately I switched off at a crucial moment and missed one control completely.

Thence across Devon to Braunton Burrows for two events on a scorching hot weekend. As expected the area was a technical challenge with lots of small paths and I lost time on several legs. Then with about 1km to go I felt something pressing on the end of the index toe on my right foot. A little bit painful, definitely uncomfortable and rather worrying. I hobbled on to the finish and back to download and the car.

On removing my sock I found that the skin on the end of my toe had been cut neatly below the end of the nail and was hanging down in a flap. Something had obviously been rubbing. The first aiders washed and dried my foot, pushed the flap of skin back into place and applied a bulky dressing to hold it all together.

I did "run" the following day's event, but wearing a different pair of O-shoes with the laces loosened at the toe end to make room for the comedy bandage on my toe. Most of the course was done at a walk or slow jog – the quality of my navigation was better but not 100%. So the dunes hit back.





### 16 UK Urban League 2017 Final- Castle Vale

Castle Vale is a former airfield, a UFO hotspot and a much studied example of urban regeneration. It's also one of HOC's mapped urban areas and for 2017 we decided to use it for the club's West Midlands Urban League event. The club successfully applied for UK Urban League status too, and the December date meant that it became the final. I offered to organise the event based on a number of assumptions, all of which proved to be false...

First, I knew I wouldn't want to run the event. I'd missed the earlier events there, but I'm not keen on Urban areas unless they are really tricky or scenic or preferably both. On my first visit to the area, I got us hopelessly lost navigating across the map to a school that was the potential assembly area. This was a much better urban area than I'd thought!

Second, parking and assembly wouldn't be an issue. The school was perfect and very keen to host us; the only problem was that they had a re-build / transfer of property management scheduled for the summer break and couldn't sign any contracts until the autumn term. By September their re-build was seriously late and we were the least of their problems. The nearby football stadium came to our rescue, after a very nervous wait while the season's home fixtures were decided and we waited, disloyally, for the home team to be knocked out of the cup.

Then it was organiser's business as usual, with a few extra twists as two starts and finishes were essential and helpers are always tight for urban events - a fair number of our stalwarts avoid urban running. And then came the weather. I don't have a good record with weather - I managed to flood half of Staffordshire attempting to organise an event at Kinver, but I knew Birmingham doesn't really do extreme weather in December. Wrong - the amber weather warnings for snow started a few days before the event and stayed in place as we got closer. It is the organiser's decision to cancel or postpone - I'm very grateful for the support from Andy J and Barry Elkington as planner and controller, but ultimately it was my call. People were travelling some distance to the event, and taking it very seriously - the UKUL is a prestigious competition. I could just imagine the Nopesport thread if we cancelled and the snow didn't come. Fortunately I could also imagine the risks I'd be subjecting the volunteers to if we pushed ahead - we were looking at a very long day outside for some.

So we postponed and I was delighted to wake up to heavy snow with more falling, followed by a lovely sunny day playing on Sandwell Valley and taking photos to show the orienteering world that Birmingham had indeed managed to snow itself in. The rearrangement was less of a headache for me than I would have predicted. Fabian4 managed refunds, Andy J managed the search for a suitable weekend which wouldn't conflict with the club's commitment to the JK. My role consisted of calming assorted neighbouring and not-so-neighbouring clubs as rumours circulated that we would nab one of "their" weekends. The solution was a summer double header with Birmingham Uni.

Another set of assumptions tripped me up this time – the event had been all ready to go, surely it was just a case of dusting off the maps and putting the plans into action? Well not quite – helper availability changed, lost volunteers were replaced, and I know I upset a few people by forced late changes to rotas. And attempting to keep some consistency across the two weekend events was another challenge. But the weather was good. We'll gloss over the stadium's cleaner arriving at midday to clean up the previous night's function - by that point we'd worked with the manager to shift everything and I'd persuaded him we really didn't need the floor washed before the event. I never did work out exactly why an artic lorry

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needed access to the stadium itself to deliver a few dozen trees - the car parking team grappled with that one, including the moving of competitor cars. I'd assumed IT would be straightforward - indoors, what could go wrong? Something weird with reading the start boxes seemed to be the answer, which meant we didn't know who was still out on the courses. Fortunately, we could eliminate most "missing runners" because their bibs were still hanging up. Everybody seemed happy, Roger Thetford, the League co-ordinator, did his prize presentation and I escaped with a map to collect a few controls and sample Andy J's devious planning.

And then off to Birmingham Uni to do it all over again the following day...

*Marian White (Organiser)*

## **17 UK Urban League 2018- Birmingham University**

*Robert Vickers (joint Organiser)* writes: This was an event which had quite a difficult birth. HOC had previously held a "Double Sprint" event on the area, so an old map was in existence, but the rate of rebuilding and development at the University means that the lifetime of any map is going to be pretty short, unless a lot of updating is carried out. However, the map had its origins in an unrelated event: at Easter 2018 the West Midlands hosted the JK Festival, based around Staffordshire and including a Sprint event at an MOD site in Stafford. When you run a JK, you are required to have "Reserve" areas waiting in the wings in case the chosen areas become unavailable at a late stage. Hence Birmingham University became the reserve area for MOD Stafford. Marian White agreed permission "in principle" with the University authorities, Dave Peel was commissioned to produce a completely revised professional map and Ray Collins (from WCH) drafted a set of JK standard courses. A shadow event was in waiting, but could not be finalised whilst Stafford was still "on track".

Over the Easter weekend, there was a sigh of relief from the JK team as their events all ran to plan. But this provided the opportunity for HOC to organise a significant event to capitalise on the (mainly!) up-to-date map of the university campus. HOC was already rescheduling an urban event at Castle Vale, which had been postponed due to the winter ice and snow. It was decided to put this on Saturday 16th June, with Birmingham University on the Sunday 17th, making a very marketable "Double Urban" weekend.

The Castle Vale event had been wholly planned and organised – ready to go. All the weekend needed was a HOC team to organise and plan the Sunday event.

Adrian Bailey was soon in place to plan the courses, and Ray Collins, of WCH, who had planned the "shadow" JK event stepped across to become Controller. That left the job of Organiser, for which HOC sought a volunteer... and continued to do so... without a response, as the scheduled date of the event (already very tight) continued to get closer. I was concerned that such an important event was rapidly approaching the critical date when it would have to be abandoned, which would be a dreadful shame and reflect no credit on HOC. I considered whether I could rescue it at this stage, though I didn't want to because I don't like working with short lead times – and moreover I had holidays arranged during the critical period before the event when things tend to need urgent attention, as well as immediately after. My thoughts did wander to the possibility of splitting the job with a co-Organiser to get round my concerns, but nobody had expressed any interest. And that critical cut-off date got even closer...

So it happened that one day while I was car-sharing with Ian Gamlen going to an event that I gave voice to my worries. To my surprise, Ian immediately replied that exactly the same thoughts had been going through his mind, and we very quickly agreed that there was a viable basis for working together to share the load and save the event at this eleventh hour. There was no time to lose, and we swung into action.

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Firstly, Ian and I decided that whilst we would work very closely together, we needed to determine our areas of activity. My most pressing job would be to seek formal permission from the University authorities. Marian was able to give me the initial contacts, but it became clear from the mass of documentation which they required that I would have my work cut out to meet their deadlines, bearing mind that I had a holiday absence fast approaching. Adrian had already made use of personal contacts to secure the School of Education for the event Centre – relieving us of a lot of preparation with regard to toilets, power for computers, etc. If anything, the space provided was too good, and later led to some contingency planning to protect the nice floor surfaces from muddy footwear if the weather was wet on the day. Planner Adrian and Controller Ray had already arranged a site meeting to check some control sites, and I joined them so that we could agree the layout of the event.

We had a very useful site visit, and a number of control site matters were agreed. We were able to agree the details of our set-up at the School of Education, and checked out Start and Finish locations. So the stage was set, with Planner, Controller and Organisers playing their parts, and Alison Sloman working to polish up the map and try to take account of all the construction works changing the layout of the campus.

A fair bit of thought was required to get the competitors to and from the more distant area – along with the equipment and helpers for two starts/finishes. All the details of these layouts and the areas to be included in the competition had to be specified in the documentation submitted to the University to obtain permission. Ian, meanwhile was involved in other aspects of preparing for the event, which he tells us about below. It was fortunate that we had agreed to work closely together, as I realised that the timing was such that I was unable to complete the submission of the permission application before going on holiday, and Ian was therefore able to take this over from me.

Mercifully, permission for all our proposals was soon forthcoming and with a sigh of relief we could move into the final stages. For me, this was principally recruiting and organising the HOC helpers teams to run the event on the day, and to organise the signing of the routes to the car park, the event centre, and the way to the starts of the two events.

*Ian Gamlen (joint Organiser) writes: Double Acts can be tricky at times; if you don't believe me, watch Laurel and Hardy! Fortunately this one didn't end in tears (neither sadness or laughter)!*

I was very keen to avoid duplication of effort so suggested early on to Robert that we draw up a list of jobs that needed doing and agreeing who was going to do what. Whilst Robert concentrated on getting the agreement with the University for the event to take place, I liaised with Adrian Moir from Fabian 4 about setting the event up so people could enter once we got the green light from the University. Peter Langmaid kindly agreed to be in charge of Download and Results. One early decision that we needed to make was whether or not to make the event SIAC enabled. My initial thoughts were that it should be, as I assumed that most of the UK urban league events were. However, helpful research from Peter Langmaid indicated a roughly 50:50 split. In the end we decided that as the Castle Vale was not going to be SIAC enabled the Birmingham University Event should not be either. Another important decision we needed to make early on was the format of the event. Should it be a single urban event or in 2 parts? The nature of the area was better suited to having it in two parts and Barbara HOC Chair had the final say on that. A "double sprint" event, morning and afternoon, on two separate parts of the area. The morning event would make use of "The Vale and The Tennis Court", with the afternoon part using the main Edgbaston campus.

Bibs were another headache. Some were in favour of having them, some were not. It was agreed that since they were being used at Castle Vale that we would use the same bibs. Unfortunately as the two events had been set up separately on Fabian4 we couldn't simply

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use the entry numbers generated by that system, but fortunately Marian White Castle Vale Organiser worked out a sensible way of allocating them for both days.

Adrian very helpfully produced an event programme early on which helped give shape to the event. Robert, Adrian, Ray and I had a very useful “final on-site meeting” about two weeks before the event. We looked in detail at the two starts and two finishes. The Event Centre had a number of entrances and exits on different levels which we took advantage of when planning the finish. This included a relatively narrow, covered external stairwell. Originally Adrian suggested that the finish could be at the bottom of this which seemed a good idea at the time. After a night’s sleep I had visions of competitors running down these steps at breakneck speed colliding with each other. I highlighted this as a safety concern and thankfully Adrian listened and agreed to have the finish at the upper level instead.

I agreed to create any additional signs needed for the event. On the day we agreed that Robert would oversee Start 1 and Finish 1 whilst I would oversee what happened in the Event Centre and would set up Start 2 and Finish 2 once the first part was well underway.

On the day, everything seemed to be going smoothly until Carole Sparke informed me that the floor in the Gents Toilet was getting flooded. When I went to investigate I discovered that water was leaking from behind panels above the urinals. She suggested that I contact Security to arrange for an emergency plumber to come and fix it. In the meantime she helpfully located alternative toilets elsewhere in the building, helped to create new signs to redirect competitors to them and mopped the floor.

I managed to set up Start 2 as planned and with Marian’s assistance, set up Finish 2 also. One of the early finishers was Dave Aldridge. He appeared to have mis-punched. It was assumed that perhaps a control code had been changed last minute, so this was duly changed and he was briefly reinstated. Adrian later explained that in fact Dave had mis-punched because he had punched the control on top of the bridge, and not the correct one directly below it. Unfortunately Dave had to be disqualified after all.

Robert and I happened to be standing near Download when Martin Ward, the former Chair of British Orienteering and leader of the Vet Men Class following the 1st event, also found out that he had been caught out by this. He was understandably not best pleased, although remained very civil about it. We agreed to meet on site with the Planner and Controller to look at the two controls in question and decide whether or not they had been correctly positioned and whether there were any grounds for reinstating anyone who had mis-punched. We concluded that, as both the controls were correctly positioned and that control descriptions for both were correct, there were no grounds for reinstating anyone who had mis-punched.

Adrian’s “cunning plan” to place two controls with different descriptions and numbers vertically spaced, one immediately above the other, attracted a lot of interest and debate in orienteering circles, and was an imaginative novel feature of the course – leading to the conclusion that it was important to check the control descriptions and numbers carefully in Sprint events, and not to assume that some mistake had been made with the control.

Overall, most people seemed to have enjoyed the event and it generally went smoothly thanks to all those who helped.

## **21 The June Jaunter**

The annual running of the 5k Clent Hills fell race attracted a large number of local running club members. The history of the June Jaunter is explored later on.



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## 24 Harvester Relays- Tilgate

This year's organisers described the event as "the UK's little brother equivalent to Tio Mila and Jukola. An overnight relay with a mixture of night and day laps for teams of either seven or five competitors". And like its Scandinavian big brothers, it can be enjoyed on many different levels of competitiveness.

HOC entered at team firmly at the "let's get round and have fun" end of the scale, and that's exactly what we did, from the traditional evening meal in a nearby pub to the excitement of "are we going to escape the mini mass start" towards the end. Runners, in leg order, were Marian White, Rob Taylor, Brian Laycock, Judith Taylor and Andy White with support from Rose Taylor.



Judith Taylor hands over to Andy White

### 01 Yvette Baker Trophy Final- Arrow Valley Park

I volunteered to organise the Yvette Baker Final because I feel it is important to support our juniors – after all they are the future of our sport! I was happy be working with Kerstin Mitchell as planner (she's reliably thorough, supportive and calls a spade 'a spade'!) We knew the area since we had worked there together on the British Schools Score Championship in 2014.

Both of us had to get our heads round the rules for the new competition, however, and it came as a bit of a surprise to find we were expected to put on a course for accompanying adults and an easy white course for any younger siblings. We took this on board and started to plan and organise.

What I hadn't realised was the 'knock-on' effect of agreeing to hold a summer event two weeks after the club had taken responsibility for a weekend of Urban Orienteering. Many members deserved a holiday after the Birmingham University and Castle Vale events and, at first, because of the mad exodus, I found volunteers were rather thin on the ground. We were then beset by illness of close family members. Our controller had to pull out and, for a time, we weren't sure who was going to be responsible for SI, Download and Results so as we moved into summer time we couldn't guarantee that HOC could cope with the actual entries. Fortunately Adrian at Fabian helped us out at a very late stage which lifted a lot of the pressure and we are very grateful to him for this.

I started to arrange the Start slots with the appropriate given intervals between competitors from the same team on the same course. I wasn't allowed to place children from the same team alongside each other on the start line so I bought a large pack of coloured felt-tipped pens, gave each team a colour and ended up with a sheet resembling a patchwork quilt but I could see at a glance where everyone was so didn't make a mistake.

I didn't know before committing myself that there was an Yvette Baker Trophy Co-ordinator so it was a nice surprise when Sarah Mansel made herself known to me. She had kept her eye on the heats in each of the regions in England and Wales so I could approach the clubs that had qualified about arrangements for the Final. Apparently one or two team managers whose heats had taken place very early in the year were beginning to panic because they couldn't find out who was Organiser of the Final. With hindsight I could have made sure that the names of officials were on the HOC website but because I knew that the last round of qualifiers had still to take place I was waiting until I knew all clubs that were in the frame in order to get in touch with all managers at the same time!

I found it useful to cast my eye over the qualifying rounds since it gave me an idea of how many competitors were likely to be running either yellow, orange, light green or green in each team. I had to widen the start window when I realised that one team might bring over 25 contenders for the yellow course! Another team had several contenders for the green course but this wasn't such a worry as I could see some teams were only able to bring one or two competitors with sufficient experience to cope with the highest technical difficulty.

We had excellent support from Redditch Borough Council. We were made aware that the Redditch Triathlon was being held the day before our event so since they were using 'our' planned car park space for their night-time finale and 'gig' I decided to be one step ahead 'just in case' their volunteers slept in and needed help clearing up their equipment! For this reason I delayed the proposed Start times which didn't please all comers but this did mean that teams who had to travel a long way didn't have to set off before dawn.

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There were one or two moans from parents who, apparently, had become used to having their runs before the main competition but both Kerstin and I felt that our priority was the smooth-running of the Yvette Baker Competition. We didn't have sufficient control sites to run two different green courses, gaffling was discussed as a possibility but in the end we decided that adults (and children who wanted extra experience) would run the same Green course as the Yvette Baker Trophy candidates once most of them had finished their course.

Half way through May I received an email notifying me that it was hoped we could include a different tranche of children in the main competition since in 2017 a competition for small clubs had been piloted. It was proposed that a separate shield could be presented to the winning team of this section and that this should become an integral part of the Yvette Baker Trophy Competition. Since both of us believe in the notion of widening participation Kerstin and I agreed to discuss this the following week at the British Championships. We knew it would take quite a lot of time to chase small clubs, organise participation and integrate it into the 2018 Yvette Baker Competition, for which we were still without a controller: HOC was fully committed to the two-day urban event in the middle of June and volunteers for our event were still too few. Reluctantly we told Phil Conway that we felt we couldn't give time to this new project without adversely affecting the quality of the planned YBT competition. It was suggested that this idea could be negotiated with next year's Organiser of the YBT Final well in advance

The tasks of organising then began in earnest. Requests to Team Managers were dispatched and email followed email. I enjoyed helping with their queries and problems, by some fluke managing to field everything thrown at me. I had to make a decision about the SI team. Paying a team from another club became a real possibility but at the eleventh hour, happily for me, Peter Langmaid committed himself to leading this and I, in turn, agreed to organise the actual Start List. At this point Bob Brandon (OD) offered to act as controller.

Eric Brown and Lesley took charge of the car parking and as July approached, Kerstin met Andy H (Safety Officer) and myself on site to look for any last unforeseen problems that needed to be added to the Risk Assessment. We changed the actual position of the Start marginally and decided to put bollards at the nearby entrance to a path under the main road to deter the younger children from taking a wrong turn. Kerstin decided to place 'Smiling faces' near the Start of the correct path that runners on the white, yellow, orange and light green courses would follow. Given that there could be congestion as the path was initially rather narrow through the bushes I agreed to have a word with David, the Start Marshal so that in the last box before punching at the Start runners would be placed in order according to technical difficulty: green, light green, orange, yellow and then white, a system that worked very well in practice.

Final appeals for help went out on the HOC forum and members rallied round the flag so most of the key positions were filled.

Mindful, however, of Child Safety in a large park with a deep lake and many strangers in close proximity, I felt strongly that we should have marshals on duty, particularly near the white, yellow and orange courses where the less experienced children would run. I mentioned to friends in OD that I was short of volunteers for this task and three immediately agreed to make themselves available. Since OD had a qualifying team in the Final I was anxious that my acceptance of their gesture would not be interpreted as favouritism so Bob suggested I might open up an invitation to other Team Managers in case any parents might also like to help for a limited period. With their help I felt the safeguarding of the children was assured.

Of course, there were small hitches and in spite of the best laid plans things took us by surprise. Checks with lists from Fabian revealed that SI card numbers didn't always correspond to those I had been given by Team Managers resulting in hasty emails (a good

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thing we checked!) Some children had been used to using the new non- contact SI cards but our equipment couldn't cope with this so only standard SI cards were used. Although we had provided an Assembly Area where Club tents could be erected, when young people arrived and saw the FINISH wasn't in the Assembly Area near refreshments and toilets, they moved themselves to the sides of the run in, some of which was in the shade, where finishers were highly visible and could be cheered for their last 100 metres. This provided a far better atmosphere than we had anticipated though we had to top up our water supplies more than once. I was glad that we had arranged to provide free drinks since some of the children on the longer courses were very dehydrated by the time they finished.

Results were ready on time and showed evidence of some excellent performances. Small prizes of sweets were available for every team because, without exception they had all done well and deserved congratulations. My one regret was that I didn't contact the last year's winners until three weeks before the Final so that the return of trophies could be arranged. Sadly, it appears that the trophy for second place wasn't returned in time to present to the 2017 winners and when I contacted the Organiser of the 2016 YBT Final she told me that the trophy wasn't available for presentation then. Given this news I kept hold of the trophy for the team who won third place so only the large shield was presented to SYO who for the second year running came first.

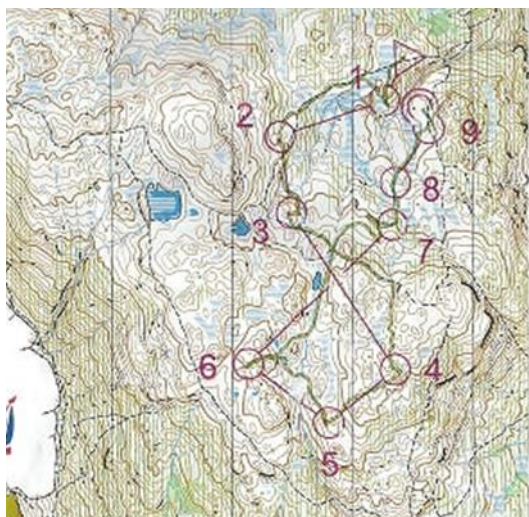
Even though I had organised one of the qualifying heats at Lickey Hills Country Park a few years ago, the organisation of the Yvette Baker Trophy Final was a steep learning curve for me and I would like to express grateful thanks to all the volunteers who turned up to support the young participants. I thought it was a superb event thanks to people like YOU!!

*Penny Hemsted (Organiser)*

## 29 Lakes 5 Days

30 According to the Met Office, the Summer of 2018 was hot and dry. The Lakes 5 days  
31 ignored that edict; the following is taken from **Steve Nightingale's** reports to the HOC  
2/8 forum with interjections from a Barry or two.  
3/8

"The heatwave lasted all the way to the campsite on Friday evening. My pitch was literally rock hard at the front with lots of rock on or near the surface and the rest very hard and cracked. Even without my shirt on I had to towel off between each tent peg! Saturday brought much cooler weather and generally drizzly all day; went to sleep to hammering rain on the tent.



**Sunday, Day 1 Sliver How** - Awoke still to heavy rain; 2.3k walk to start with 240m climb; struggled up the really steep sections towards the end and barely made it to the start. Tentatively to #1 seemed to be a simplish short one running on the needle but that seemed to be off true as I was following the indistinct path. Once I'd forced myself to turn left it was an easy jog and straight in. Conditions were still horrendous, especially when cresting a brow, the horizontal cold rain blasted by the gusting wind were quite something. By control 3 I hadn't really warmed up much and saw the long #4 leg and considered retiring again. In practice I was walking and map reading almost every step of the way as I didn't



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fancy getting lost in such complex terrain in the cloud!! I took a very careful route to #4 and got the right general re-entrant from the path but stopped short and wobbled into it. Very lucky. My only real mistake was #7, taking the safe route past the lake for confirmation, I then tried to avoid a bit of extra climb by carrying on over the indistinct path crossing between the knolls into lower terrain and veering right into the relative plateau rather than turn right at the path. As I turned right looking ahead E to the spur I did not see the boulder or the control and veered R even more thinking it was hidden in the low bracken there, then seeing nothing there I thought I should investigate the spur to the W which was fruitless; 3 minutes lost. The rest was easy, unlike the route back from the finish.

It took us down a steep sharp rock infested 10 foot ravine to cross a 4 foot wide stream with a rock bottom. I was even more knackered and had to go down with hands and bottom to safely do it. The stream was actually warmer than my feet and body were!

When I saw the results I was dead chuffed, 5th overall and second Brit.

Barry McGowan agrees that conditions on Day 1 were indeed horrendous:

"Heading for 5 I got completely lost and when I finally worked where I was I decided to cut my losses, miss out loop 5-8 and compete the end sequence. The walk back from the finish along a path was very dangerous. I'm surprised nobody got washed away crossing the stream draining much of the area, but it was probably just a gently dribbling stream the day before."

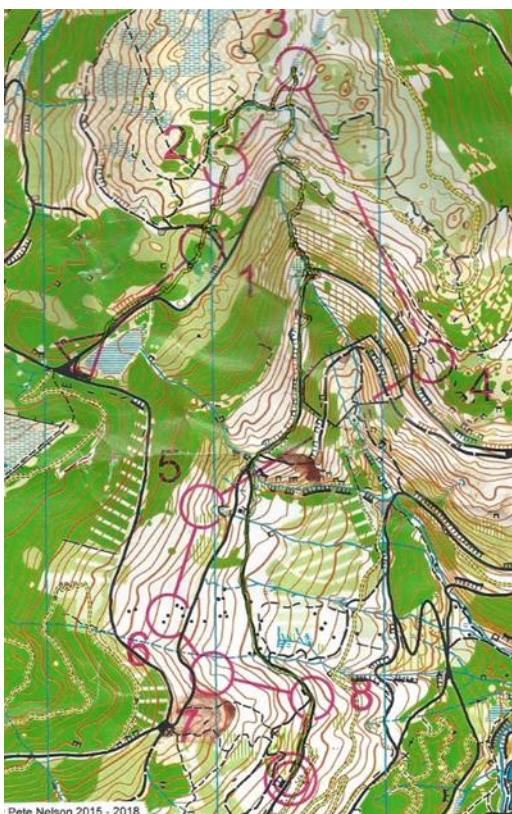
And Barry Houghton commented that:

"The television news is all geared to the SE. No mention of the 4" of rain in 24 hours that we had. Horrendous conditions indeed. Relieved to get to the finish. One major mistake, I stopped short at 9 looking round the wrong raised area. Looking over the edge in the mist it looked a lot further down than I expected so thought I must have got to the correct area. 7 mins lost!!"

Steve wisely anticipated the lengthy walk to the start on Day2 (2.5km and 280m of climb) so sat that one out. **Day 3 Whinlatter** "Bussed in from Cockermouth and a stiff climb to assembly/finish. Then another 1.2k 130m walk to the start which doesn't sound bad except that the majority of the climb was immediate and pretty much straight.

#1 Easy attack from the forest road bend and the dark green was remarkably good, just one minor detour to get through and hit it smack on. Now the climb kicked in to 2, but safely straight there. #3 was straightforward for me as well. I was feeling good about this one, I'd had a slow start (8th) a better #2 gaining 2 places overall to 6th and a very good 3 and was actually lying third overall at this point; ] the rest was almost all downhill. What could possibly go wrong?"

It's hard to make out on Steve's bloodstained map, but from control 3 "S to the forest road, picked up the little path which almost immediately had a sharp left bend and I suddenly found myself looking ahead on slowly descending straight path!" Ignoring this invitation, Steve instead sticks to his original plan, taking a "minor path wasn't even that, just a slight mark on the ground where a few walkers have taken the shortcut to the forest road below. My own impression at the time was that of a 2m deep gully so I'll carry on describing it as such. I was taking this bend L and my right foot just slipped over the lip of the gully on the loose surface. Now this wouldn't be a major problem normally but unfortunately for me it contained a large windblown conifer tree (which is why I didn't see the stream!) and a branch snagged my right angle throwing me down quickly and my forehead hit a boulder on the lip of the "gully". It was a roundish boulder and I hit it at 45 degrees relative to the vertical top.



This bounced me sideways right above the tree in the gully and my body at this point is roughly horizontal and descending below that onto the tree. And I see about a one foot stump of a broken branch, very sharp, exactly vertical off the tree trunk and my upper right stomach is dropping directly down onto it rather fast! I managed to quickly grab it with both hands and push my body left and slightly backwards before I was impaled. A side effect of me missing the branch on the diagonal tree trunk was that I ended up with my body being stopped by my head hitting the tree trunk! The branch stump went between my chest and right arm! Not even a scratch from it. Unbelievably lucky."

Extricating himself with the help of two competitors, Steve takes stock of the damage - his forehead is bleeding profusely but "no shock, no headache, no blackout, and I feel fine apart from the wound pain". Once on the forest road he decides to carry on so he "bought my map up into view to restart. And I can't see it clearly; not concussion, just glasses aren't on

my nose. Feel my eyes, not there, then pat all over the head to find the elastic thread of my O glasses and grab it and bring it before my eyes to see just the elastic and side metal spoke. The rest is smashed and halfway up that steep slope."

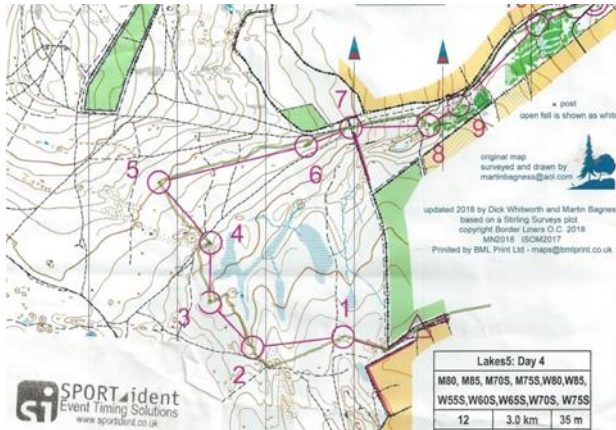
With gratitude to the female competitor who has stayed with him all this time, Steve finally gives in and makes his way to the finish and into the safe hands Kentdale First Aid. They clean him up and advise a visit to Kendal minor injuries unit. However "I have a major logistical problem, I've driven alone from Kendal and sensibly I can't drive the fairly long drive back after two blows to the head. And I'm now feeling VERY sensible." Steve positions himself before the coach pick up point and propositions various HOC and Wrekin members, before Lester & Judith Evans decisively come to the rescue, driving both Steve and his car to Kendal. This is what he looked like after the attentions of Kendal's nurses - including a fell runner - and doctors who decided Steve had left a fair amount of flesh on the fell.



**Rest day** And that is exactly what Steve did given the previous day's exploits.

**Day 4 Askham Fell** After being delayed by a road closure, Steve arrives at assembly too late to buy replacement O glasses...

"So my prep was all a bit hurried and I donned my normal reading glasses with the only restraint being my headband. The glasses fell off twice on the walk to the start over quickly undulating, tussocky rising land over plenty of brashings, not a good sign. It was so warm I ended up in tree shade before my start, a far cry from day 1!



I'm running SW from the actual start for an awful long time and I'm thinking why am I still going SW and why is there still this wood on my right? I wasn't the only one confused by this – look at my track and you can see that we actually started approx. 250m from the marked start triangle; didn't see the start kite if there was one there.

#1 ran on the needle to the R of re-entrant and depressions and nailed it.

#2, I was always heading for the path

over the spur to then dive R into re-entrant behind it but somehow lost a small amount of time investigating the depressions on the spur before my memory returned. I got a bit dispirited on #3 with another miss (twice). #4 fine, the small pool was absolutely dried out, not a hint of moisture despite being told at the start that marshes were crossable but pools were definitely there! By #5, my legs were tiring and it was a slog slightly uphill. About a third of the way there I could not make out a knoll in the open where it should be, just a clump of Marram grass, and that is indeed what it was. Past the turning point and now slightly downhill, I did overrun #6 but only by 10m. Now it was time to gun it, runnable downhill on path or short grass. #7 I'd already clocked approaching 6 and with SIAC I now started waving properly rather than stumbling near the control. 8 and 9 fine and then time to supergun it to 10...

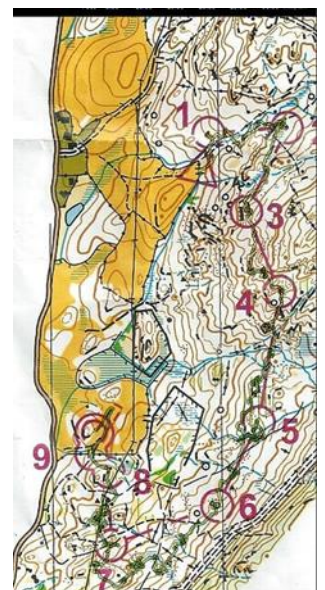
I was really fired up now pushing hard out of 10 but fell spectacularly just before the path doing a full sideways roll in full view of the finish, but not badly. Then pail it with a wave at 11 before the finish (punching). I was also second on the run-in with a time of 11 seconds, two records for me who is normally near the end of the field here.

And of course my aerobatics coming out of 10 have been observed from the finish, by Lester Evans who must be thinking I must be mad by now after day 3.

Overall, disappointed with the slow first half, but pleased with the second half. Back at the car I look down to find that I haven't changed into my O shoes in all the rush, and I've run the whole event in my heavy walking shoes. No wonder I struggled on the uphill walk to the start and the first half - dope!"

**Day 5 - a middle distance on Graithwaite.** Steve had joked down the pub the night before that he'd storm this 1.5k 75m course and do it in 20 minutes! Maybe not...

"Imagine the rain of Day 1 again, but without the wind, but still a gentle breeze. Even the paths were rocky, both fixed and small loose slabs, already wet, slippery or moving. And when there wasn't rock it was filled in with old brashings branches. And steep. Truly ankle breaking, fall inducing terrain and I walked nearly the whole course, having a bit of trouble map reading as well because of the rain. So I took my time, lots of map reading but not quite as much as day 1. The rocky path to 2 in a small re-entrant was dangerous going and I crossed the stream twice trying to find faster ground to no avail and was forced to descend back to the path. But 2 was easy, 3 just wait until the big slab crag end on the R, and then due E in. 4, got distracted by an early re-entrant control and had to climb up level with it as numbers were on the top of the SI unit and not visible from a distance.



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I'm willing to accept all the little time losses up to now but 7 was a disaster. I was trying to pick up the path to the SW of 6 which goes almost directly to 7 but I failed on that, carried on and hit bracken, I didn't even see the derelict wall, wobbled W into a re-entrant with a control which matched my control description but it was hard up against a boulder, but it was in the centre of the re-entrant and fair game.

I should be so lucky. The only re-entrant boulder I could quickly see on the map was about 50m S of mine, and luckily I guessed right or I would have lost an awful lot of time here, I reckon I lost about 5 minutes here but two others suffered badly on this leg taking 22 and 34 minutes on the leg. I took 8!

I stopped WAY too short for 8 in indistinct terrain and chicken-headed for a while until I found a wrong control but then sorted myself out and quickly got 8 but 2 minutes lost. 9 and F were sprints (no rocks or branches) and I was 3rd on the run-in, my best leg by far. I was just glad to get round unharmed, it really was a course of survival, echoed by a few others I spoke to afterwards. And my time?... just under 41 minutes (hangs head in shame). BUT, I actually did 3.6k 140m. Really, I didn't make that much of a mess of it did I? More than advertised by a mile, even Urban isn't close to that, methinks the planner measured this one wrong."

### **Reflections Back Home**

Overall, apart from my injuries, it was a good Lakes. I don't quite understand the mentality of having the hardest and longest walks to the start on the first 3 consecutive days before the rest day. It is far too knackerung unless you're super fit, it was fine for me in my forties but not in later years.

And whatever my complaints, it is a testament to the organising clubs that they manage to carry on doing this every 4 years, kudos to them!"



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## August

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### 10 **Bavarian O Tour**

**11** An event billed as where 'orienteering meets  
**12** history'. About 350 participants from 25  
**14** countries travelled across Bavaria in six days  
**15** and five stages with beautiful weather,  
experiencing impressive scenery and historic old  
town centres, the beautiful Bavarian Forest  
National Park, and the Weltenburg Monastery  
near the famous Danube Gorge.

HOC were represented by Robin Lambe and Phil  
Dolphin, finishing 86<sup>th</sup> overall.



"The map's in German... Robin is loving it!"  
*Phil Dolphin*

### 24 **White Rose**

**25** This annual August bank holiday event is an object lesson in making the most of what you've  
**26** got. EBOR might not have the quality terrain of Scotland or the lakes, but every year it  
**27** provides a camp site and a non-stop series of events, this year all within walking distance of  
your tent. And there's a quiz. And mugs.

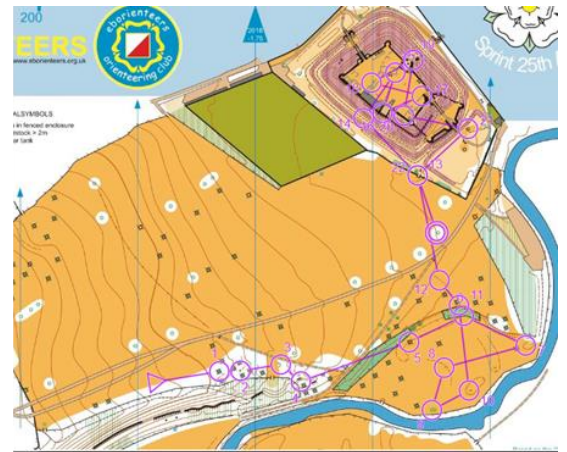
Friday evening and it's get the tent up before heading off for the mass start night score. Inevitably trains develop but they soon split; it is fast & furious but with plenty of scope for error and confusion. Three Harlequins took part and adopted different strategies to finish within one control of each other – Barry Houghton 10 points ahead of Andy & me. The post run inquest lasted longer than the event.

Saturday starts with a middle race around Duncombe Park; a mixture of steep, rough slopes and fast running on the top. 11 HOCs set out, with Alison Sloman 2nd on W80L, Barry Houghton 3rd on M70L and Ian Chafer 3rd on M50S. Ashley Ford and Rick Roberts battled it out on M65S, finishing seconds apart.

Saturday afternoon was my personal highlight; - a sprint race around the parkland and then Helmsley Castle. The castle was also printed at a much larger scale on the reverse of the map; I was not the only one to forget this important detail in the heat of the moment; it partially explains Andy White looking so perplexed below. Of the 5 HOCs taking part, Ashley had the best run, collecting over 1,000 ranking points.



Photos: Steve Rush (BOK)



It was a typical Bank Holiday wet and chilly Sunday for the Classic Race on Windy Pits. Alison fared best, finishing 2nd again. Barry Houghton was the most unlucky, recording the wrong number 1 in an otherwise winning time, thus losing his chance of a coveted mug. Fortunately Helmsley was only a short stroll away and offered a choice of warm venues to sit in and warm up.

Monday's team race started with a battle of British politeness as the four possibles for the three team slots all said "after you". This left no time to argue about the name - HOCcorks or HOCrocks? - and meant an unscheduled sprint across the camping field to register in time. This may be why the organisers thought we had a Harry Houghton in the team. It also led to very late tactical changes in the start pen – so Ashley & Marian may have "inadvertently" run on each other's' SI cards. Having won the earlier battle Andy appointed himself chief cheer leader. Sounded more like abuse to me. The actual event was far less exhausting but we suffered a narrow loss to the rival COBOC/HOC/CLOK combo of Barry McGowan, Ian Gamlen and his sister Ann Cranke.

Also on offer were the Labyrinths, where Robertas Stupelis did the club proud with a storming run, and Dad Rom won the NC category in the Mountain Bike O. The quiz is another White Rose tradition; this year's Dingbats literally kept me awake until I finally worked out "Dr Cri—en".

And last but not least, both Alison Sloman and Ian Chafer won mugs for their overall performance.

*Marian White*

## September

### 15 London City Race

The 11th London City Race took place in the City and South Bank, organised by SLOW and forming part of the Euro City Race Tour. Four HOCs participated, the stand out performance being from honorary member Tessa Strain, who finished 1<sup>st</sup> in the Women's Elite (W21) class by more than four minutes.

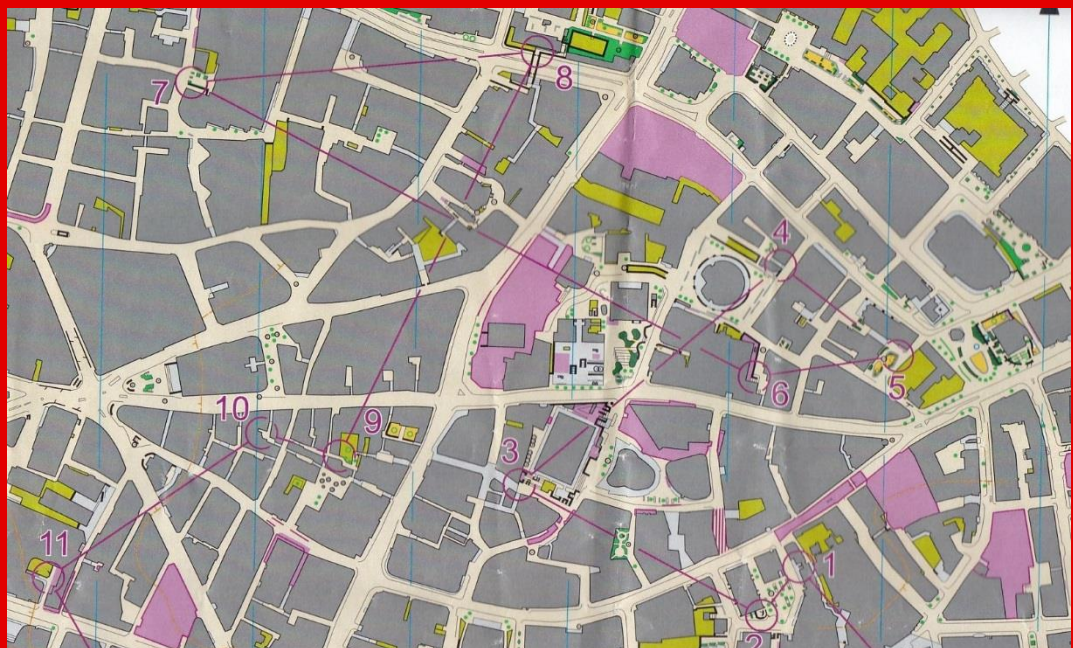
#### Three Weekend Breaks With Something in Common Part Three: Warm and Concretey *by Peter Langmaid*

Finally, onto safer (in some respects) terrain for the London City Race weekend in September. This normally features on the City Race Euro Tour (CRET) calendar and attracts a large international contingent. Some more unfinished business for me; in 2015 the main event took place around the former docks and new housing estates of Wapping, east of Tower Bridge and north of the river. Afterwards, I wandered back to the tube via the streets of Rotherhithe, on the south side of the river, and thought there was scope here for a good urban event.

And so it turned out, for this is where the main race of the 2016 event was held. But the ankle I broke in South Wales was less than a week out of plaster at the time and taking part was simply not an option. Still, I held the hope that the organisers would return there. And they did, for the Friday night middle-distance race. The area more than lived up to its promise.

The main Saturday event used areas north and south of the river. From a start just north of the Tower of London, my course took me into the City, around the base of 30 St Mary Axe (the Gherkin) and then south towards the river. Then the inevitable route choice leg to cross to the South Bank (Southwark or London Bridge? I picked the former), then east towards the finish via busy markets, quiet gardens, housing estates and some confusing multi-level walkways around London Bridge Station.

To round things off on the Sunday there was a middle-distance event centred on Birkbeck College and the surrounding streets in Bloomsbury. Then a walk over to Marylebone Station and the train home.





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## 28 Veteran Home Internationals

29 Andy Hemsted was selected to run for England in this year's VHI, and gives his account here: 2018 has been a mixture of good and bad for me; after 30 years of orienteering, I do lots of accurate legs, but then sometimes a silly error catches and punishes me. At the CompassSport Qualifier at Nesscliffe I'd totally missed out a control, but then at JK Day 2 and at BOC I'd had good runs. Luckily for me, those two successes were at England Selection Races, and so I was invited to run at the Veteran Home International (England v Scotland v Wales v Ireland) in South Wales.

After that error at Nesscliffe, I read that a number of competitors at the Welsh Champs at Newborough had done the same. I decided that I'd try to avoid missing a control at the VHI by 'counting round the course' as soon as possible after picking up my map.

The VHI Individual was held on Pwll Du, an excellent open ex-mining area that has been used for several events over the years. This time the Start was right in the middle of the moorland. My opponents were old friends Eddie Harwood (Scotland, and ex-HOC) and Dave May (Wales), plus an unknown Irish M65.

Eddie was starting three minutes before me. I watched him look at his map, turn left, and head along a path to a group of slag-heaps. Three minutes later I picked up my map, found the start triangle, orientated the map so that number 1 was to my left, and set off. As I ran along the path for 200 metres, I was able to count quickly round my 19 controls.

"That's interesting," I thought "the planner is taking us into bits of terrain where I've never been before... and the Finish is on the far side of the area!" It didn't occur to me that it would be ridiculous to have the Finish on the opposite side of Pwll Du from the Download and Carpark...!

Four minutes later I hadn't found my Number 1, or even a nearby pond, and suddenly I realised that I had my map facing south instead of north... a classic 180° error! I had to retrace my way back through the Start (oh, the shame!), and down a path to a similar slagheap with my control. Fortunately the rest of my run went pretty well, and I came second: Eddie had taken even longer than me to realise what he'd done wrong, Dave had made several navigational mistakes, and a very pleased Irishman was able to celebrate victory.

Results in other classes went our way; the Scots didn't have as strong a team as usual, and so England had a commanding overnight lead.

On the Sunday the event moved to Clydach Terraces for Relays. This is another splendid ex-mining area with masses of contour features, and perfect for head-to-head running. From the assembly area it was possible to see the early part of the courses, and there were soon competitors running back and forth searching... I had a steady run this time, and once again the England team proved much too strong for the other nations. Overall, Wales were pleased to have a rare victory over Scotland.

It was great to chat with that late-developer John Embrey (now DEE, but recently HOC), who was making his England debut in M60. He conquered his nerves admirably, and was very pleased with his two runs.

As for me, if I ever manage to be selected again, I'll remember to trust **my Compass** rather than a **Scottish Ex-Harlequin**...



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## October

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### 14 West Midlands League- Highgate Common

Following a problem getting access to Titterstone Clee, a last minute change of venue led to the third attempt to hold a Winter Evening Event scheduled for Highgate Common being postponed to make way for a daytime West Midlands League event.

With just six weeks between the decision to move the event and the event date, the HOC machine swung into action, Barbara Ford offering to organise the event while I undertook to plan the event. Alison Sloman rapidly undertook a map update and I was off. But then holidays and life intervened and we didn't have a controller so it was only about three weeks before the event that I started planning. I had the benefit of having run several times at Highgate and thought that this would help, but it was when I sat down to start planning the shorter, white, yellow and orange courses that my problems started as there are so many intersecting paths on the open area of the common that the guidelines about not more than one or two route choices between controls would have been impossible to follow without having hundreds of controls for the shorter courses.

In the end I opted to take the shorter courses into the old Forestry Commission area where a simple network of footpaths on a rectangular grid looked relatively easy. Out on the ground, however, the gaps between rows of planted trees all looked like potential paths and some of the paths seemed to veer from one planting gap to the next which gave me nightmares about losing young children in this area. After lots of stamping backwards and forwards to reinforce the routes of footpaths that were beginning to get overgrown, I convinced myself that the paths were visible and that using smiley and sad face signs would help juniors keep on track.

The longer courses were easier to plan with at least one long leg on the Green, Blue and Brown courses (often with a choice of whether to run round or through the Forestry Commission area) to test concentration and route choice abilities. To the north of the road that crosses the common, runners were also presented with the choice of longer footpath routes or shorter wades through brambly vegetation. The contribution of controller David Pal, from WRE, was fantastic, with support and advice which I found very helpful.

Just as I was finalising the courses, our Membership Secretary asked if I could come up with something like a 5km course for beginners. I was already getting a bit worried at the number of controls I was going to have to put out, but eventually we hit on the idea of combining the yellow and orange courses with runners going from the last yellow control directly to the first orange control. There were a handful of duplicate controls but no duplicate legs. Judging from the remarks of a non-orienteeing friend who tried this, it seems to be a good way of giving adults a decent run and a challenge that gets harder as one gets used to the map.

Given the lack of daylight and a terrible forecast for the day of the event, I put out about a dozen of the controls on the Saturday afternoon leaving the more accessible ones to put out on the Sunday. Fortunately Kerstin and Alex Mitchell, who were both injured, asked if they could help and their experience of control (and smiley face) placement came in handy when putting out the controls on the White and Yellow courses.

Despite torrential rain, we had a good, and cheerful, turnout at the event, helped by the RAF orienteeing club holding its annual championships at the event. Nine newcomers braved the conditions and attempted the red course with times of between 56 and 129 minutes for the 4.6km course, justifying not making the course any more difficult.

*John Leeson (Planner)*

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## November

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### **17 Winter Evening Event- Sutton Park**

The 2018/19 season opener was a COBOC event attracting an impressive 42 runners from a range of Midlands clubs.

### **22 Night Street League- Redditch Greenlands**

The 2018/19 season opener was in a new area of Redditch, with large areas of new town estates characterised by complex path networks. A burst water main just outside the event centre caused some last minute panic, but in the end only required a few last minute manual map adjustments to avoid some flooding on the edge of the map.

Robert Rose had chosen a winning route, but had difficulty finding a 30-point control and ended up being pipped by Peter Langmaid and Adrian Bailey; all collected 330 points, so victory went to Peter who had the fastest time.

### **29 Night Street League- Kingswinford**

The second event in the NSL was held at Kerstin & Martin Mitchell's offices in Kingswinford on 29th November, where 15 competitors enjoyed finding full SI controls spread across a complex network of paths and roads with John Leeson pipping Andy White and Peter Langmaid into second and third places respectively. On return to the offices, we were able to enjoy some magnificent homemade soup prepared by Martin which made for a wonderful club atmosphere.

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## December

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### 06 Winter Evening Event- Beacon Hill, Rubery

"A total of 22 runners attended the WEE at Beacon Hill on 6th December. After heavy rain and high winds, we had a relatively benign evening weather wise and I managed to register runners outside the Generous George pub at Rednal, which in its original incarnation was apparently known as the Chalet Club, a venue for drinking and live music just outside the reach of Birmingham's licensing laws.

The area is divided into the Beacon and Rednall Hills by a council golf course which has a public footpath across it. Due to delays in getting permission to run on the Hills we did not have permission to use the golf course so I elected to use the public footpath with compulsory controls at either end. The night-time views of Birmingham from the northern end of Rednall Hill, as I was putting out the last controls, were spectacular." *John Leeson*

### 15 Western Night League- British Camp

Strong winds and heavy rain during the day didn't put off 18 hardy runners.  
*Organiser: Bryan Laycock*

### 16 West Midlands League- British Camp

"The last WML event of the year was a HOC event at British Camp. The event was well-attended, helped by good weather on the day - approx. 170 runners, including 10 on the newcomers' course. The exception being the junior courses - just 4 families on white and no yellow runners.

British Camp is a steep area on the Malvern Hills, so the main planning consideration was the climb - a high start and a low finish helped. Courses generally started with a bit of a sprint around the Camp earthworks and then the opportunity for a run along the ridge of the hills before entering more complex terrain. Courses were generally well-received, though the short green was felt to be a tad steep by some, and a legitimate route choice on a couple of courses was to run back through the start - oops... The other major consideration was the Historic Monument status of the earthworks (so no ground penetration), which meant around 20 wooden stands were required on the Camp, not all of which were sufficient to keep their controls upright.

The newcomers' course couldn't follow the same yellow-then-orange format as used at Highgate due to the climb, so was planned as an additional course in its own right, sharing yellow controls at the start and finish but ranging further along the ridge with some more technical controls. This course was promoted successfully to local runners who by all accounts thoroughly enjoyed it." *Rob Atkins (Planner)*

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## Mapping Developments

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There are many bits of kit that orienteers view as essential, but there is possibly only one thing that truly is. Often taken for granted, created by many hours of unseen work, maps are the heart of the sport. HOC is fortunate to have a team of enthusiastic and skilled mappers who are constantly updating the club's maps. Here are a few highlights from 2018:

*Alison Sloman has had a busy year, with the following maps completed:*

- William Brookes School, Much Wenlock including Gaskell Field and Windmill Hill where the first modern Olympics took place. This was the fourteenth school mapped for East Shropshire schools.
- Westwood Coppice, SW Sutton Park. Map updated for COBOC.
- Updates of several HOC areas for events:
  - Castle Vale
  - Perry Hall Park
  - Birmingham University Campus
  - The Vale ( Birmingham University)
  - Kinver Edge. Addition of area round the car park west of Kingsford
  - Beacon Hill
  - Highgate Common
  - Clent Hills- extensive update for Club Champs.
- New map of Wyre forest mapped between May and September. This includes Brand Wood, Wimperhill Wood, Callow Hill North and the strip between the old railway line and Dowles Brook which links all the areas together with the Longdon Map. This was a delight to do! [This includes an area used for the British Championships in 1985 that has been off-limits to orienteering ever since. With recent permissions negotiations bearing fruit, we look forward to an event on this area early next year.]

*Brian Hughes explains some of the more recent challenges for all mappers:*

In 2018, Kay began to join me fairly regularly on mapping trips. She hopes that the exercise will put off a hip replacement for as long as possible. On the extremely steep, vegetated and loose slopes on the Malvern Hills we found being within contact range comforting. We notice different things and also find it useful to check the other's survey and cartography from the previous visit.

The year has involved much activity indoors. I have geo-referenced most of my maps. This permits other information, for example from GIS or from GPS data to be input into OCAD. The process is non-intuitive, for example using 12 digit grid references where 6 are used for many outdoor activities, e.g. hill walking. Fortunately, I have an excellent guide supplied by ex Mapping supremo David Oliphant, which makes the whole process routine.

Conversion of maps to the new International standard ISOM 2017 has been a task facing all mappers this year. There is a new set of symbols and associated control descriptions. Though most are identical to those used in the past there are some significant changes, not



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all of which seem to be improvements. For example grid lines are now 300m (not 250m) apart which clearly disadvantages base plate users. The platform symbol must now be orientated to the north rather than down the line of greatest slope. Why this is thought to be an improvement is a mystery. In order to improve map clarity, paths can no longer be drawn directly alongside fences and brown features must not touch (so no overlapping pits which we have all lived with happily for years). The aim, to improve clarity at the expense of accuracy, is laudable and may be fine for elites running over huge areas on 1:15 000 maps, but is arguably not what is required on our small, intricate patches where large number of features may need to be mapped to make the area viable. Fortunately, my attitude has always been that guidelines are there to be broken.

Of course, most runners will not notice any changes. What makes it frustrating is that the conversion process is only semi-automated and is anything but simple. Though I follow instructions, every conversion causes problems. An example is elongated knolls and bridges being rotated through 90 degrees. Some symbols disappear altogether making it easy to lose some crucial survey information from the past. Hours are spent comparing the converted map with earlier versions hoping to spot these problems.

Another indoor task has been updating the Hartlebury map using LIDAR data kindly supplied by Bruce Bryant (OD). First impressions are that the placing of features is generally very accurate on the old map, but that many of the depressions might be mapped as small form line re-entrants. The 1m LIDAR contours will allow big improvements to be made to my guesses as to where contours should be placed and to the positioning of form lines. LIDAR contours wiggle alarmingly and no doubt, for map clarity, some simplification and smoothing out of contours will be necessary after checking on the ground.

The major field project has been a major revision of the South Malverns map, some of which was used for the recent WML event on British Camp, but also includes Midsummer Hill and the Hollybush quarries to the south. I knew from competitions in the 1990s/early 2000s that the map was good, so had anticipated that the main job would be updating the vegetation and minor paths and adding the inevitable mountain bike trails. However, on our first outing we walked from the car park 400m down the A449 towards Ledbury. The map showed this to be flat but we reckoned it dropped by at least 2 contours. Next we climbed up to the hill fort. Though we were surveying at the 1:7500 scale, age and failing eye sight meant we both struggled to read the hill fort detail. There was a lot to do! We tried to improve things by creating a special symbol for the main fort rampart, using larger dots on the earthwall symbol. Then, we pulled contours as far as possible from the earthwalls, aiming to sacrifice absolute accuracy for clarity. Finally, I painstakingly ensured that no earthwall dot coincided with the crossing of a contour. Whether this was successful is dubious as in the race with the wind in my face and eyes streaming, I still had difficulty here.

Rod Postelthwaite (WRE) had generously supplied us with professional satellite images which were a cut above the quality of those that I can obtain. We decided to treat this as our base map. Towards the south the Eastnor Park chunk and Midsummer Hill parts, though very accurate in themselves, showed considerable deviation from the aerial images. As OCAD 9 has no differential stretching capability, everything had to be re-drawn, even in places where we had no problem with the survey.

On British Camp we found the position of features to be generally excellent. We found several good "new" platforms and discovered a couple of unmapped 2m high crags, perhaps previously covered with vegetation and removed several low crags (<1m high) and of very short extent, especially in areas of bramble. Particularly exciting was finding, in one broad re-entrant, a previously unmapped system of narrow spurs and re-entrants and 3 good boulders. OCAD 9/ISOM 2017 allows crags to be represented in more different ways than was possible when the original cartography was done. Every crag was converted, trying to ensure that the symbol on the map gave a clue to the size of the exposure.

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Harlequins had been reluctant to map Castlemorton Common, until Lester Hartmann persuaded me to have a go for MADO. With no rock features and few re-entrants, it became apparent to me that it could only be mapped if every substantial bit of vegetation were represented. By employing the then unfashionable scale of 1:7500, I showed it could be done, and produced a map for what is a popular and most commonly used area in the south of our catchment. I am not so convinced that Castlemorton can be adequately represented at 1:10 000, but planner and controller seemed happy, at least until one of Rob's control sites, on Brown, was cleared after the maps had gone to the printer.

This was the first time that we had used GPS as a back-up tool. On the flat tops it was very accurate, but on the steep wooded slopes, where signals from many satellites were lost, the precision was not as good as can be obtained by compass and pacing.

One error on the British Camp map was pointed out to me, an extension of a ditch/depression system in a place that I had neglected to check. A couple of night orienteers argued vehemently that a contour niche might have been mapped as a platform. The feature was in the right place and its mapping subject to personal interpretation. Otherwise comments on the map were very complimentary. Particularly pleasing was congratulations from a Grade1 and IOF controller. Of course, when one has a good map to start from it is easier to make improvements.

We are now working on finishing the Midsummer Hill/Hollybush section. On Midsummer Hill we have adjusted contours substantially so that land shapes better reflect what runners will see. The cartography still showed signs of its early origins (OCAD6?) and path and fence shapes were improved by mapping paths as Bézier curves rather than a sequence of straight line segments. Unfortunately LIDAR is not yet available for the southern Malvern Hills, so no doubt the next revision will show substantial flaws in our interpretation.

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## In Memory of Ruth Bylett

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In June, the family and friends of Ruth Bylett met at St George's Parish Church in Kidderminster to celebrate her life.

Ruth was HOC's membership secretary for many years. She worked hard to maintain numbers with reductions of around 10%-15% per year. As part of this role she maintained the club notice board promoting future events, and stayed at the board to both answer newcomer questions and to listen to their reports about their first experiences.

Together with husband Peter, and with support from a small dedicated band of volunteers, they created and ran the SMILE (Saturday Morning Introductory Local Events) events. These were around 6 events a year and a format that introduced many children and their families to the joys of the sport, including many of the adults you see in HOC today.

We remember Ruth greeting us as we attended our first events, and her

explanation of the sport. And then she met us after our runs, listened to our exploits and mishaps and explained the club membership. A recurring theme from reminiscences about Ruth is her constant, calm presence.

Ruth also supported Peter in his role as a founder British Schools Orienteering Association member. They have maintained the BSOA web shop for around 20 years; Ruth did all the packing of orders and posting all the parcels right up to the time she was no longer able to, and even then her carers helped her to do it.

As a family, her sons Trevor and Michael grew up in the tradition of orienteering and played their own part in the life of the club. Ruth was the family driver to events all over the UK including the Scottish 6 Day weeks. She was responsible for getting the family organised, including the kit; Peter reports that they would never have remembered everything without her.

Here are some words from Ruth's funeral, written by Trevor:

*Hopefully I can do justice to the kind woman that meant much to those of you who would want us to celebrate her life rather than shed a tear. How do you summarise the 80 years of my mum's life? That was the challenge that faced me in writing these few words, so apologies in advance if it turned into more than a few.*

*Mum was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon to Cyril and May Highman at the start of the 2nd World War. She stayed there throughout her childhood, the third of four sisters. She joined the congregation at St Georges, remaining a member throughout her life, and we joined the choir a few years later.*

*She led an extremely sporty life as a child. She hurdled in the National Schools Championships, played cricket, tennis, badminton, rounders, and was an especially keen hockey player for Stratford-Upon-Avon ladies. Whilst I never saw my mum play, I always remember growing up with hockey memorabilia around the house and she has stayed friends with a number of her team mates throughout her whole life.*

*She joined Derby College for teacher training in PE/Maths and then onto her first job as a PE teacher back at home at Stratford High School. Some of you may remember one of her pupils, Michelle Dotrice, famous for being the butt of Frank Spencer's 'Oooh Betty' jokes from Some Mother's Do Ave 'Em.*

*Mum left Stratford for Birmingham during the 60's and her love of hockey followed her. It was this that took her to Weymouth Hockey Festival – who knew there was such a thing, and indeed that it's still going today?*

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*There on April 5th 1969, she went to the Festival Ball where a 25 year old RAF airman, Peter Bylett, who was also playing at the festival asked her to dance. They talked all night and met again the following day.*

*Dad had long wanted to have an overseas posting and he got his wish when he got home that same weekend - he was posted to Germany in 5 months' time! He wanted to see more of Ruth though and so they spent a lot of time together, travelling between Wiltshire and Stratford. Mum had a decision to make - long distance relationship (no internet or email back then) or follow him to Germany...*

*Four months later - 26th July 1969 and my parents were married!? Planning a wedding in four months nowadays seems like a complete impossibility, but they did it back then!? Some of her hockey friends sure would've questioned whether she should be running off with a toy boy 6 years younger than herself, but clearly some things are destined to be...*

*The happy couple moved to RAF Gutersloh in Germany where they stayed for three years. Mum teaching at the British Forces School, and then spending their weekends camping their way across Europe. With neither of them speaking German and living in a foreign country for the first time it must have been a shock to the system, but an enjoyable one.*

*They moved back to the UK in 1972 and I arrived on the scene a year later in County Durham. Mum, retired from teaching at that point saying that it was the best career decision that she ever made, and 3 became 4 three years later when a baby brother, Michael, joined the family. Dad was posted away a lot during this time. Being a dad with 2 boys myself, I can imagine how tough this must've been on mum. Looking after 2 boys on her own who never really got along until they got to their teens!? I do remember getting a real coconut in the post from Belize though, which stayed in the living room for as long as I can remember...*

*In 1980 we made our last move to Kidderminster with dad getting a job based at the RAF Careers Office in Birmingham. We'd settled down. With both of us at school, mum went back to work... as a school crossing lady at the end of our road. She was always cheery and the kids loved her, especially during the autumn when she collected conkers from under the tree for us and the other children. She joined the congregation at St Georges, remaining a member throughout her life and we joined the choir a few years later. Mum helped keep the rowdy choir boys under control, making sure that we were actually dressed properly with the cassocks and ruffles that she perfectly ironed and starched for the whole choir.*

*She loved volunteering for things, taking roles in the background, working with the community and other organisations. She helped with the local Orienteering club for 15 years, Sight Concern for 10 years, and raised money for British Schools Orienteering after dad retired, something she did until last year.*

*Both Mike and I had great educations and mum had a lot to do with making sure that that was the case. She was always there to help us, making sure that we didn't waste our potential and I know that she was very proud of the people that we'd become.*

*Mike and I grew up and moved away. Mum continued with her volunteering although ensuring that family always came first, but also took to enjoying more things for herself. She pottered about in the wonderful garden that she created with dad; they travelled the UK in various types of tent, caravan, and then in later years self-catering; and she loved spending time with her four grand-children, who she adored.*

*After a few health issues, she was diagnosed with early-onset dementia at the age of 74. That was 6 years ago. It didn't knock her though and she did everything she could to keep herself and her mind active, going for regular walks, days out with the family, and doing puzzles.*

*Dad cared for her at home for several years, but last year it was clear she needed specialist care and she moved to Herons Park Nursing Home where she was wonderfully looked after and enjoyed spending time helping and talking to the other residents. She was kind and patient to the end, always with a smile on her face even when struggling to remember something.*

*The family came together a couple of months' ago for her 80th birthday which we all, and she, really enjoyed. It felt a fitting end to the final chapter of a wonderful long life for my kind, patient, and always loving mum. We will all miss you mum...*



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## A View From Oz

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Having been a member of Harlequins for 40 unbroken years, Pat and I moved to Melbourne, Australia in 2012 and joined Bayside Kangaroos Orienteers. Having decided to not renew my HOC membership this year, as a parting gift I offer a few thoughts on the differences between orienteering as practiced in the two countries.

The weather here is benign in the winter but can be brutally hot in the summer. Temperatures of 35 plus are common so hydration is vital. The ground is rocky and hard as stone and gum trees lose bark constantly, making progress through the terrain often slow and difficult. However, mud and brambles are almost unknown! The danger of bushfires in the months of summer means no forest orienteering throughout the period December - February.

Melbourne is a large and sprawling city of almost five million people, but orienteering events rarely attract more than 150 competitors. Many park & street events attract 60 - 80 folks and it is possible to compete almost every day of the week in summer. The standard of competition is high though - my 6700 ranking points only place me eighth best M70 in Victoria state.

Since our move to the Lucky Country nearly seven years ago, Pat has embraced the lifestyle as much as me, and we go to all events together. In fact, her running is better than mine. We travel two hours to bush events and up to an hour for local events - four times a week! Petrol is only half the UK price however.

I organised an event in a Melbourne park recently - a scatter & score event with 20 controls. I'd never met scatter courses before coming here- get a designated number of controls as fast as you can, a way of putting on different length courses but only needing to print one set of maps. Bizarrely, they are only used for summer

events. Winter events (with headlights) are all score events.

We get plenty of walkers at events, who aim for maximum points in 65 minutes. There is often an even split between runners and walkers. Most walkers are getting on a bit and maybe not as mobile as they once were. Here is a link to the results:

<https://www.vicorienteering.asn.au/gfolder/parkstreet/results/5-thu-summer/event14.html>

Regarding numbers, 65 people came (15 newcomers) and we were pleased with that, since many people are away on summer holiday during January. There was a move to abandon the Thursday series last year, because numbers were low (about 40), but this was successfully resisted. The Wednesday (Eastern suburbs) series is the most popular, often attracting 100 or more. A 100 people mass start in an urban area is always interesting, so a staggered start is used. A & B course runners go first, Walkers start last. Rush hour is earlier here (people start and finish work early) so traffic is not too bad at 7pm. Click on the links at the top of the above results page to see more.

I enclose the map for interest. There are a large number of similar parks in Melbourne, but this one was not all that big, so surrounding streets are included. On the map, open grassland is white while housing/OOB is coloured yellow. Many Street events use black & white maps and pin punches - very 1980's! While a recent sprintO series used Si Air, some formats are still in the dark ages. Many events are totally StreetO, some are largely ParkO.

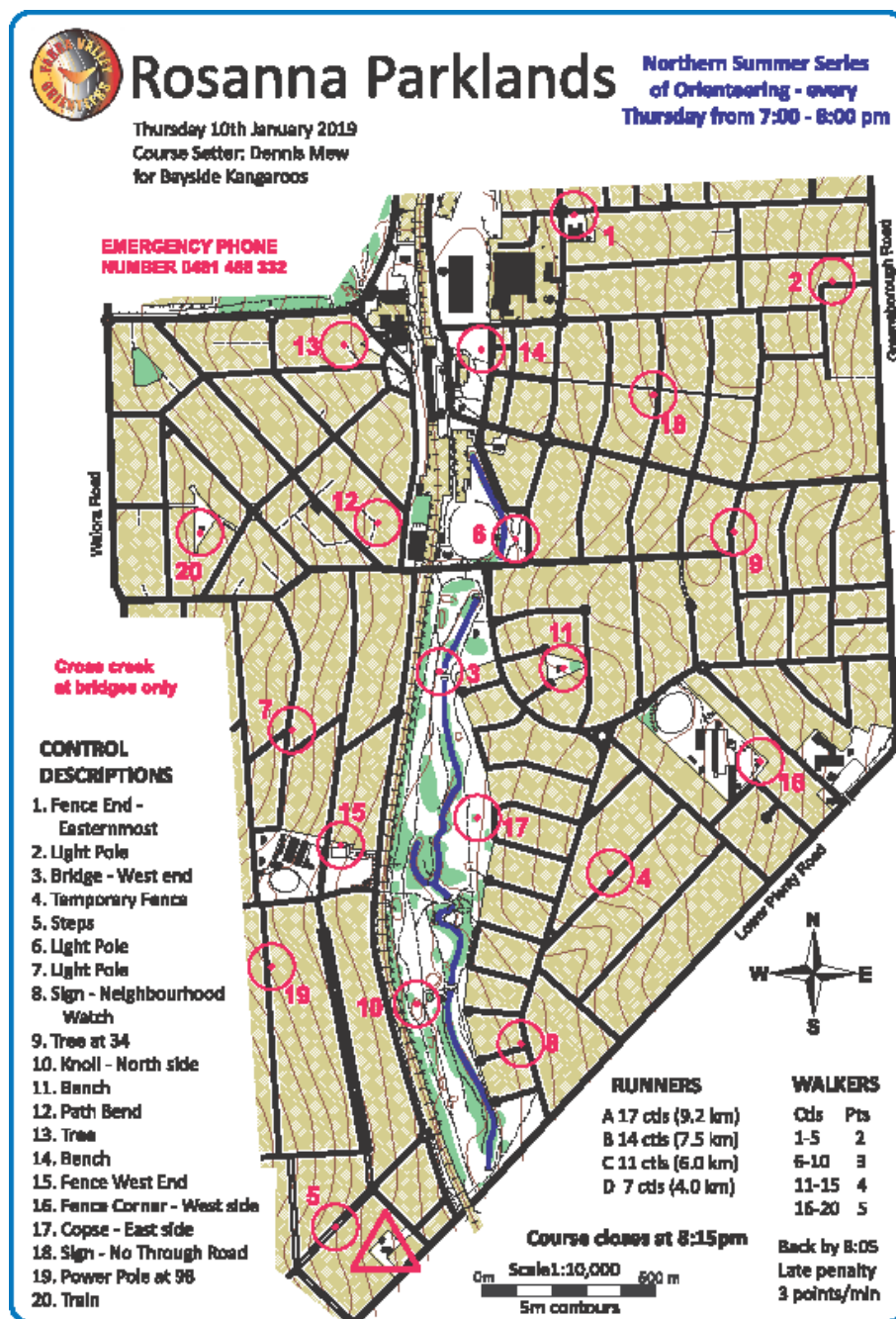
All of the technical bush orienteering terrain is at least two hours out of Melbourne, while these events are cheap/cheerful and easy to get to, city traffic notwithstanding. One unintended consequence is that clubs make good profits from StreetO while Championship events in quality terrain run at a loss.

We are both very happy Down Under and have made lots of new friends through orienteering here. We see our grandchildren all the time, which is a constant joy, and the outdoor lifestyle suits us perfectly.

Orienteering is very different here because of local conditions but we are constantly busy and involved. Best wishes to all my friends in English orienteering!

*Dennis Mews*

*Bayside Kangaroos  
& Harlequins (1978 - 2018)*



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## What Tessa Did Next

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Honorary HOC member, and multiple championship winner, Tessa Strain retired from elite orienteering in 2018. That didn't stop her taking part, or indeed coming within 15 seconds of a W21 elite overall podium finish at this year's JK. And nobody who has met Tess will be at all surprised that she also collected controls for HOC after the relay day.

She represented England – without a map – in the Home Countries International Mountain Race finishing 7th and part of the winning team.

Here are accounts of two more of her adventures outside of the world of O:

### Running Wild - from the [Acteryx blog](#)

*The Faroe Islands are located [a troll's unsuccessful throw away](#) from Iceland, about 200 miles north-west of mainland Scotland. This scattering of 18 isles in the middle of the North Sea was our playground for a few days as we prepared to run their first ever trail marathon and ultra-marathon. The remote, rugged terrain makes it a hill runner's paradise.*

*We knew we were in for a tough challenge from the first steps in the terrain. The hills are steep: you are never more than 5km from the sea, yet the highest peak (Slættaratindur) is nearly 900m. The underlying volcanic rock makes for tricky running at higher altitudes and the grassy tussocks slow progress at lower levels. You would have thought that some of the 70,000 sheep on the island would have made some useful trods, but any faint whispers of a path disappear quickly.*

*Island hopping is relatively easy using the undersea tunnels or the extensive ferry network, so long as you're not in a hurry. On the day before the race, we explored Kalsøy, a long thin island only accessibly by boat. As with so many places we visited on our short stay, I felt like I had never been anywhere quite like it. The 20km long island is barely 3km wide but has a series of 13 peaks, some approaching 800m high. With no real aim or purpose, we set off up the only road on the island the village of Trøllanes that has a population of about 20. (The single lane tunnels are an experience – there are laybys, but it still a high stakes game of chicken). From there, we explored the hill sides and sea cliffs, mixing with the gannets and fulmars who really ruled the territory. We may have been a little over-excited before the race the next day but at least we knew what we were facing.*

*The race itself went from Leymar, a village on the west of the main island Struoy, over the hills to Tjørnevik on the north east coast. My marathon-ish length course was about 45km distance with around 2300m of ascent/descent. We literally started at sea-level, backs to the waves on the black sand beach but quickly hit the fells. The initial terrain could easily have passed for some English hillsides: short-grassed spurs with marshy areas in-between.*

*As soon as we started to climb, we hit the cloud layer. This is an ever present feature on the Faroes as, although it is quite far north, the jet stream supplies it with 5-11 degree temperatures and a good volume of precipitation the whole year round. It's this moisture that keeps the spectacular waterfalls in full flow.*

*But the wonderful thing about the Faroes is that when one valley is stuck in cloud, the next valley is often clear. It certainly made the long slog up to the Koppseinni ridge (789m) well worth it. I couldn't help but whoop and holler my way down towards*

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*Saksun as I looked out over the carpet of cloud over the North Sea on one side and down towards the sea cliffs on the other.*

*It was easy to forget that it was a race – I'd have happily spent all day up there. But the run was going to be long enough already without extra stops. It was route one to the shore line at this point, dropping the 800-odd metres in not much over 2km. This was one of my favourite sections of the race as the arctic skuas (the bullies of the skies) circled overhead and I skipped my way over the skeletons of their recent victims.*

*After a run up Saksun beach, we hit a short road section that was quite welcome by this stage. 'All' that remained for me was the final 8km over a 600m ridge. For the first time in the race, there was a reasonably runnable path with cairn markers, although we had gone back up into the clouds again so visibility was poor. Also, for the first time that morning, I got my racing head on. I had just overtaken the race leader on the climb, but I had seen he had been a stronger descender and so could easily catch me back up on our plummet down to the finish line at Tjørnevik. I never looked back, so it was with great relief that I crossed the line first in 5 hours and 35 minutes.*

*The day ended as all good days should, running into an ocean that is far too cold for anyone sensible. The mist soon closed in at sea level too, but just in the distance we could make out the stone stacks of a giant and a witch, another [frozen stone reminder of a failed mission to drag these islands to Iceland](#). I for one am very happy they never made it.*

## **Lairig Ghru from the [organising club's race report](#)**

*The Lairig race this year started warm and only got hotter as the country sweltered in a Scottish heatwave, temperatures reached 25C in Aviemore and running through this iconic mountain pass was made even more difficult with a lack of a cooling breeze.*

*We were honoured this year to have The Adventure Show filming the race, we laid on the weather, the enthusiastic competitors and the ever so supportive marshals along with the expertise of the Cairngorm Mountain Rescue team. There was a high quality and very diverse women's field this year, with international orienteers, triathletes, ultra-runners, as well as the reigning Scottish hill running champion.*

*It was difficult to predict the winner but Tessa Strain (HBT) was keen to emulate husband Murray's success last year and looked very determined on the start line. At Luibeg, Cat Morrison of Stirling Tri Club had a lead with Tessa not that far behind, and with this year's Highland Fling winner and Scottish Ultra Trail Champion Rachel Normand (Carnethy) running well it looked like there would be no podium place for Scottish hill running international Steph Provan of the host club, Deeside Runners.*

*Tessa's strength started to tell and all that hill training she has been doing in Cambridgeshire(!) must have helped tremendously as she powered to an excellent win and 9th place overall in a great time of 3:40:17, fantastic run, this goes to show how good Lucy Colquhoun's record actually is. Never underestimate the hill runner, Stephanie stuck to her race plan (you probably will do it again!) and ran a commendable 3:54 to take 2nd place ahead of Cat and Rachel, the latter two also breaking four hours by a minute or two.*

*Tessa was extremely happy to have matched Murray but was more insistent on praising his time from last year, which to my mind was one of the best hill runs of 2017. Double success for the Strain household as Murray finished 8th in the World Long Distance Mountain Running Championships in Poland on the same day.*



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## The June Jaunter- A Run Through History

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**Clent ...** It all started nearly 300 million years ago, when Robert Vickers was still just a boy and the only orienteering on offer was limited to Permian-ent courses. Back then, it was still possible to walk the short distance to North America. Gradually the world entered a period of intense global warming caused, some say, by hot air generated by IOF's early attempts to create mapping standards. The forests dried out and seas inundated the land as ice sheets melted. The Clent Hills were conceived in this time of global upheaval, the product of the marriage of precambrian neighbours from Malvern and Shropshire. Sand and rocky debris flowed into Worcestershire to form the rocks which would one day rise proudly above the grubby coalfields to the north.

Over the ensuing eons, much of history passed by relatively uneventfully. Then came the first Brexit. Britain left the Pangea Union, saving BOF the trouble, and subsequently fell out with the USA too. Britain became a bit of a backwater, sometimes literally, largely ignored by the global elite, the dinosaurs, and there probably wasn't much orienteering to be had. Eventually, the seas retreated and after an exceptionally cold winter that seemed to go on and on and on, Britain, with the Clent Hills at its heart, came to be the land we see today - the June Jaunter had been born, but it would be many millennia before there was anyone around to run it.

Unfortunately, written records of the June Jaunter run only extend back to the modern

period commencing 1983. Prior to that, we know little. In the olden-days, there was an Iron Age fort across the Hagley Rd and there may have been a battle between the Britons and the Romans after a post-run lock-in at The Badger's Sett. In the not-so-quite-olden-days, the region around the hills even had its own saint, young Prince Kenelm. However, in a familial spat, his sister had him killed and hid his body in a pond behind the church just down from Nimmings car park. You can still visit the spot, the source of the River Stour. We don't know whether he ever ran the June Jaunter route but it is possible. I like to think he and others may have done so over the centuries.

**The run:** and so to the modern June Jaunter. The JJ is essentially a fell race; 5km long with about 200m of ascent and, of course, descent. Until very recently it started and finished in Nimmings car park. In the last couple of years, due to access issues caused by 'goings-on', this has been moved down the road to the Walton Hill car park. The run is a time trial and can be completed either clockwise or anti-clockwise with whatever route choice is desired, provided the runner visits the trig point on Walton Hill, the gate of Clent Church, the Four Stones on Clent Hill and Nimmings car park.

If one runs clockwise from the Walton Hill car park (yours truly's preferred option), one is immediately faced with the lung-busting climb to the trig point – 1037ft and the highest point

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on the run. The latter part of this climb is quite gentle, but most mere mortals are already in so much oxygen debt that this section still feels near vertical. Beyond the trig point, the views open up towards the Cotswolds, the Malverns and, on a really good day, one can just about catch a glimpse of the Forest of Dean and the upper reaches of the Severn Estuary.

Whilst admiring the panorama, you can enjoy the gentle downhill run along the ridge and let the lactic acid drain from your legs before starting the main descent towards Clent Church. Here you need your wits about you to negotiate the steepening rough track with its loose stones and inevitable dogs on extendable leads. There is a choice of tracks off to the right to bring you down to the lower reaches of St Kenelm's pass. The choice is either through the woods to Clatterbach Lane, and along the road, or to descend steeply through the horse fields to the rear of the church. If your attention slips and you miss these then it's a long slog back up from the houses of Walton Rise. There was time in the past that the control was on the lych gate at the front of the church which made the Clatterbach route more viable, but possibly to keep it out of sight, the control is now placed on the field gate behind. This makes a short-cut through the graveyard tempting but all competitors are told that it is definitely out-of-bounds.

From the church the choice is essentially to run behind the Vine Inn and up onto Clent Hill or to run up the pass a little way to take the narrow rough track onto the ridge, or to stay on the road to a bend and ascend a re-entrant to join the top of the ridge track. Whichever way it's a tough climb to the Four Stones at 1014ft. Rather disappointingly, these megaliths are not ancient at all, being erected around 1763 by Lord Lyttleton of Hagley Hall, as something to see from his mansion. The views from the top are just as good as those from Walton Hill with a 180° view taking in Wales to the SW, the Clees to the W, the Wrekin to the NW and across Birmingham to the Peak District in the NE. If the earth weren't so round you'd also be able to see the Urals. On a clear night you can even see the moon!

Now there is the descent to Nimmings. The choice is steeply down from the four stones to the main track and then a gentle descent along the south edge of Hagley Wood where, in 1943 the skeleton of a woman was famously found trapped in the middle of a Wych Elm tree. The suggestion that this was as a result of a misplaced control has not been proven. Some prefer to run along the ridge and descend later through the woods, but that's very rooty. After punching the control in the car park, it is then a gently downhill road run back to the start/finish at the foot of Walton Hill.

**Stats:** As I said earlier, the JJ was first run in 1983 and has been run every year since apart from during the global mouth and foot epidemic of 2001. Since then all orienteers have kept their shoes spotlessly clean. Of those who ran in 1983 only a couple are still participating with HOC; Robert Vickers, who with 31 competitive runs (PB 25.25, 1992) has completed more than anyone else, and has looked after the event every year until handing over the reins in 2017. Charlie Nelson also ran in 1983 and has 23 runs (PB 26.48 1985). John Queenan was 2nd in 1983 with his one and only time of 21.50, and although no longer competing with HOC, he is still a member. The fastest man back then was Pete Griffiths in 20.18, and fastest woman was W.Pinson in 25.25.

Barry McGowan first ran in 1984 and has the 2<sup>nd</sup> greatest number of runs with 29 (PB 27.20, 1991). Also running for the first time in 1984 was Mike Baggott (PB 24.09 1991) now on 22 runs. 1984 also saw the greatest number of participants with 53 (see chart below).

The current men's record is held by Barry Parkinson with a super swift 18.59 in 1990. The women's record is held by Janet Savage with 22.55 in 1986. Over the years just three other runners have dipped under 20 minutes: Nick Pietrowski 19.41 in 1990, Nick Barrable 19.35 in 1997 and Brian Hughes 19.45 in 1995. Brian's run must count as 'the' stand out JJ performance given he was nearly 50 years old at the time.

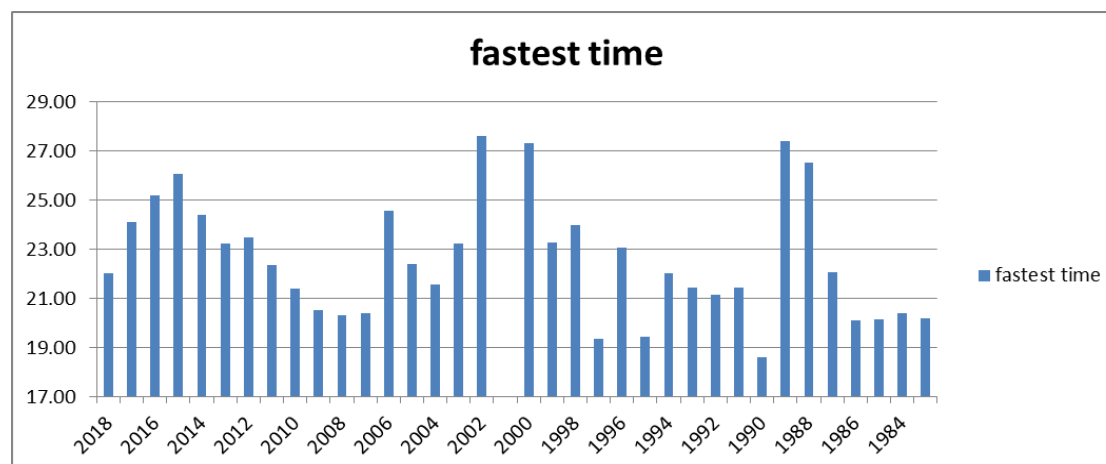
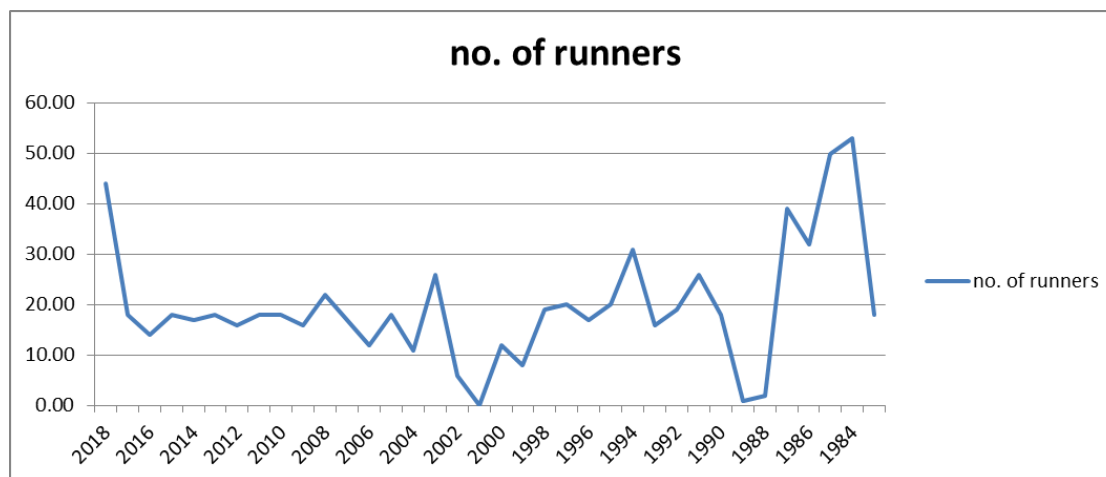
In recent years the JJ has seen the introduction of split timing so there is a wealth

of stats to be analysed for those that have that bent (not me). The numbers of people able to descend from the Walton trig point to the Church in under 6 minutes is pretty select as is the number who can get from the church to the 4 stones in under 9; under 10 is very good going.

In future, I look forward to introducing some age related reporting of results too. So even if you are not one of the quickest or you feel your previous times are inaccessible there would always be something to aim for.

Why not give it a go in 2019?

*Andy White (Organiser)*



### ***Some Personal Notes from Robert Vickers***

It is quite true that the June Jaunter all began when I was just a boy, and indeed it is so long since my first run at the event bearing that title that I was still little more than a lad even then.

History should record that the event was the brainchild of Dick Wells, a very active Harlequin and member of the Halesowen A&CC back in the 1980s. Although he no longer orienteers, Dick still lives in Halesowen and our paths cross occasionally. He announced one day that we should have a "mini fell race" over the Clent Hills, and it was

he who decided to coin the title "June Jaunter". This is a nice alliterative name, and he can be credited with introducing the word "Jaunter" in this context to the English language (although my dictionary lists other obscure meanings, but it is apparently not in the scrabble dictionary).

The earliest Jaunter runs were strongly supported by the Halesowen A&CC, encouraged by Dick, but somehow the attraction soon waned. Many of their athletes did record impressive times, but sometimes struggled a bit with the navigation, since the

event depends on fine-tuning route choice to suit the individual. For many years, you could see an arrow painted on a tree trunk by one of them, at the point where a crucial path on the descent from Walton Hill left the main track.

In the very early days, Dick presented certificates which he had designed. This practice fell into abeyance, though they were produced again for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary run in 2003, when Dick presented a special trophy – which was won by Harlequin Chris McSweeney.

In 1985, Dick decided that the event was such a good thing that it should be run twice, and it was duly repeated in August that year. Somehow “August Jaunter” never caught on, and this was the only year it was run twice. I normally run anti-clockwise, but took advantage of the opportunity to try the opposite direction and recorded a slightly faster time. I have tried the clockwise route on a few other occasions, and generally it does seem slightly better for me.

The original location of the Clent checkpoint was defined as “Stile behind Clent Church”. In the earlier years, there were marshals at all the checkpoints, who were armed with marker pens of different colours which were applied to the wrists of passing runners to prove they had complied with the route - nowadays SI punches are used. The marshals at Clent tended to site their car on the roadside outside the lych gate of the church, and this is how that became for many years the Clent checkpoint. The stile at the back of the

church was replaced by the present gate, and for the sake of returning to the original location, this was re-established as the checkpoint some time ago. In practice, if you go round the churchyard you have to pass both these locations.

The time came when Dick lost his enthusiasm for organising the Jaunter, and as one of the “original and regulars” I thought it would be a shame to abandon the tradition – which is how I came to take over its running. It took me a few more years to grow weary of the job, and was so grateful that Andy White stepped up to rescue it again.

I feel honoured to have the record for “most runs” and to be one of just two remaining participants from that first event (Charlie Nelson is the other). Colin and Suzette Spears were there, too, but have not taken part recently. Although the records omit me for some years, this is because I have been away on the dates in question – but I must state that I have still run the course and recorded my own time every year since 1983, even though some of these have been on my own. It is noteworthy that although I was getting older, my best run was several years after my first one. I attribute this to two factors: I had recently escaped from the drudgery of having to go to work, which left more time for important things like orienteering and training. Secondly, my route choice had been the subject of constant refinement, which illustrates the importance of this factor in comparison to running strength.



Chris McSweeney receives his 20th anniversary trophy from Dick Wells



Robert's first June Jaunter certificate from 1983



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## And Finally...

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Inspired by BBC Radio 4's *The Unbelievable Truth*, Andy Hemsted provides an entertaining 'history' of HOC, as first told at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meal. Can you spot the truths?

Ladies, Gentlemen, and Orienteers.

1. Let me introduce myself properly. I'm Andy Hemsted, I was the World W21 Elite Champion for 7 years until they gave me a sex-test and stripped me ..... of my titles, and I'm an accomplished liar.
2. I have decided to give you a potted history of the first 50 years of Harlequins Orienteering Club. However, we have no written archive. Luckily I had very little to do last weekend so I re-read every back copy of 'Ad Hoc', and also scraped through my memories of my 64 years of club membership. It may be that occasionally you'll think that I've tried to slip a grain of truth into my narrative. Harvest these grains carefully, but for the purpose of the game which we will play afterwards, you are not allowed to write down any notes until I have finished.
3. Long, long ago, the tribe of the Harlequiniiii roamed the forests and marshes of this part of Bronze Age Britain. Often the tribes-persons would leave their homes to hunt for red kites. On many occasions they didn't return for several days, and then come back empty-handed: you see, they hadn't invented maps then, and the bronze needles of their compasses didn't point to north. One of their myths tells of a female hunter who was still a champion when over 80 years old, but I find this very hard to believe...
4. Many centuries later, in Renaissance Italy, the 'Commedia Del'Arte' used the name of our lost Ancient Britons, and made Harlequin the hero of their productions. Their farces always involved a chase, with Harlequin managing to stay clear of a group of bumbling, stumbling clowns. Prominent among the latter were 'Dribbling Droober', 'Churlish Chaser', the twins Pottock and Cobbock, and the fool who fell into every evil-smelling swamp. His name was.....? Reeking, very good, correct, how did you guess? Though Harlequin often got lost, he always got home first, and won the hand of the beautiful Columbine.
5. And so we leap forward to that famous April 1st in 1968, when All Fools Day met Orienteering! I remember it well, although I was only... 4 at the time. Harry Price called the meeting, inviting all who were interested in the infant sport, but he and I were the only people there... everyone else got lost, and were in various places around Worcestershire, Birmingham and The Black Country. Luckily Harry had his smart-phone and laptop with him, so the inaugural meeting was a video conference. The 'lost souls' were thought to be ideal material for committee posts, and Harlequins Orienteering Club was up and running... occasionally, even in the correct direction.
6. Planning and organising in the early years was perhaps easier: get the OS 1:25000 map, decide on some suitable control-sites, and let the membership know that the event would be 'in the vicinity of Bewdley'. Only in the last week would the entrants be told where to meet. The planner would hang the controls: 'the re-entrant' would be the control description if the feature was on the map, 'a re-entrant' if it wasn't. Photo-copied maps, red pens to draw control locations. The orienteers would set out on their adventure, and eventually some of them would actually return alive!
7. Early members of the club included Chris Schaaning, who sends his greetings, and Albert Einstein, who proved that the faster you move, the heavier you become. Some members still use this as their excuse for not running at near the speed of light.
8. Ann-Frid, Benny, Bjorn and Agnetha were of course early Scandinavian members. Like their compatriot Kerstin, they had beautiful singing voices. Benny and Bjorn composed the Club

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Anthem, and the girls were the first of many to sing 'Gimme gimme gimme a Harlequin before midnight'.

9. An early hard man of the forest was Tony Jones, or TJ as he was known. In those days bears and wolves still roamed our forests, but after a confrontation with TJ, they all fled to Siberia. At one event there was a leg along a steep hillside, with two sensible options; a) climb all the way up to a path, along, then down to the control or b) contour along the hillside through much bramble and other grot. TJ chose the quickest route, c): down, wade/swim across a canal, run along the towpath, re-cross the canal and reach the control. TJ was also a keen member of the Territorial Army, and on one occasion he ran the Malvern Hills Ridge and back in full TA battle kit (with rifle) as training for the Karrimor Mountain Marathon.
10. In the early days, orienteers competed 'at their own risk'. Perhaps it was the Milton incident that changed things, when an organiser failed to clean out the orange squash containers, and seven participants subsequently died. The poor publicity led to a greater awareness of safety, and planners had to avoid those fun legs from 'major cliff, top' to 'major cliff, foot'. I remember Dennis Mews spending hours blunting the points on all the needle-punches, and Mike Baggott fitted plastic tubes onto the ends of all bamboo poles, when canes were seen to be potentially the cause of major injury. Later on an equipment officer conducted a one-man campaign of 'back to the needles' when he suspected that the SI units were emitting waves that caused him to leave the control in the wrong direction.
11. Speaking of technology, the introduction of SI did not go entirely smoothly. When it was used on Brown Clee, the units were programmed to switch on before the event, and off again at the end, and then the planner put them out all over the area. Unfortunately they switched on (and then off) one day early, so a team had to fetch them all in for re-programming, and then replace them before the start of the event.
12. Changes over the fifty years have led to different mistakes; in the 80s we would have to carry a red pen, and many of us would have copied down a control onto the wrong feature at the 'Master Maps', or had a problem when our pen didn't work on a damp map at the 'Second Master-Maps'. Now these are things of the past; we expect pre-printed maps and electronic timing at every event, but now we can miss a control out without realising. Recently, prominent ex-member Eddie Harwood discovered that even after forty years, it's still possible to find a 'new' mistake. He was approaching along a path, then across heather to a control in a quarry. Descending towards the control he was shocked to see that his SI dibber was no longer on his finger. He turned back, searched through the heather, looked along the path .... and then noticed that he had an EMIT brick on his other hand!
13. Of course, in our favourite sport we very rarely avoid making navigational mistakes somewhere at every event. Brian Hughes is no exception. At an event in the Surrey Hills he had run too fast, and was hopelessly lost. He ran into a small car-park, had no idea where he was, but then saw a 'walkers' map' on a notice-board... and it helpfully had a 'You Are Here' arrow on it!
14. We are, of course, generally a set of highly-competitive men and women, hungry for success at all costs, and so there have been scandalous incidents over the years. These shouldn't really be mentioned at this celebration dinner but... I'm a nasty selfish individual myself, so I'm going to name and shame...
15. There was the athletic Harlequin James Kudowski who entered every Badge event twice, once for a very early start with the name Fred Stevens, and once for a very late start with his real name. He walked round the course slowly on his first attempt, conserving energy so that later on he could charge round, have yet another 'perfect run', and maintain his reputation. He was only unmasked when Jane Jones wondered who Fred Stevens was, and went to the Start at the appropriate time.
16. Who can forget the married Anthony and Crystal who looked at the blank maps beforehand, and arranged to meet in a depression near the edge of the map at a certain

time. Unfortunately Anthony was married to a different W35 at the time, and Crystal to another M35. Eventually their partners became suspicious when Anthony and Crystal both claimed to have been hopelessly lost at roughly the same time, event after event.

17. And what about the scandal of the missing control-cards? A certain member who we'll call BZ stole 1000 control-cards from the club store in 1983, and tried to sell them via an unsavoury character at the local pub. Unfortunately for BZ, this bloke discovered that BZ was trying to dupe him.... there were only 998 in the box. BZ was taught a lesson, and was never able to run in a straight line again. You see, it turned out that the guy in the pub was an uncrossable fence.
18. After these darker episodes, let's return to the many successes of Harlequins. What is the greatest? There were the glory years of the 1980s, when we won the CompassSport Cup six times in a row, and of course who can forget 1991, when we staged the World Elite Championships in Habberley Valley.
19. Perhaps, though, we should be most proud of the way in which we embraced sexual re-orientation long before golf clubs even allowed women to become members. At a West Midlands Relay Russ Fauset was allowed to be part of a women's team, and he celebrated by running round in a most attractive red dress.
20. And if I remember correctly, we have a recent success to celebrate. Last week our prayers for dry weather for the JK Relays were failing to reach the appropriate divinity of orienteering, and so event organiser Lesley Brown decided to contact the spirit world. On Sunday night, with the prospect of more rain making the car parking even more muddy, she consulted the oracle. 'Shall we go ahead with the JK Relays tomorrow?' she asked, and opened the book to the 'water' page. Fortunately, she decided to defy the oracle, and led us triumphant through the mud.
21. I'll finish my round-up of the last fifty years by reminding you of one of the most memorable club dinners. The Committee had decided that the whole menu should be inspired by our favourite activity. The starter was easy: Root Stock Soup. Dessert would have to be Brown Clee, and we would drink Punch. The main course was more of a problem, until Penny had a brainwave. At the next event, at Titterstone Clee, she went out during the competition, and soon came back with sacks full of... surely the older members haven't forgotten? .... Ah, those wonderful plates of roast headless chicken!

### In case you're wondering:

Paragraph 5: Harry Price did call a meeting on April 1st, 1968. There were a couple of groups organising early events; at that meeting they combined to form Harlequins.  
 Para 6: true; Para 9: All true about TJ (except the bears and wolves); Para 10: Plastic tubes on bamboo poles was true; Para 11: True; Para 12: True; Para 13: True; Para 15: There was a case of cheating like this, but in Finland rather than Midlands....; Para 19: Russ Fauset did indeed run in a red dress....; Para 20: True  
 Sorry... no uncrossable fences, and no headless chickens at a club dinner.