The Southdowner

March 2026 No. 216



- Tim and Linda Hulley on Not Giving Up!
- Mapping: Can I get through there?
- Calling our Juniors, we need you! The Yvette Baker Event

www.southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

Southdowns Orienteers

Rogues Gallery - Know Your Club Representatives



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Chairman's Chat - Alan Williamson



I always look forward to the New Year for its orienteering. The woods are still cool, and bracken has had a chance to die back, making the going a bit easier. I have just returned from orienteering in Buchan Park: even a small area like this provides challenging choices of route and needs maximum concentration to avoid mistakes, as I discovered, to my cost. Congratulations to Ben Chapman for his convincing win. It's an ideal area for juniors: Karen Ashworth has been doing a marvellous job supporting them, and they have a bright future!

More SO successes - Emma Chapman (W16) and Roger Maher (M85) both took home gold medals at the recent British Night Championships—Roger is a familiar face on the podium, but this win was especially significant for Emma. Despite earning five previous medals at British Championships, this occasion marked her first individual gold.

On your behalf, I thank our Committee, who do all the hard work making sure we have a good selection of events. Their collective experience is invaluable. We are always welcome of supporting volunteers at events: please feel free to offer your help. Contact details can be found on our website.

Editorial – Jane Lambert



Smiley happy SO'ers before the Stockholm Indoor Cup February 2026 – little did we know that it would be the hardest challenge we've faced! Photo – Simon Fitzpatrick

The New Year is already well underway, and numerous Orienteering events have already taken place. When I first got involved with Orienteering, I had no idea that it was such a global sport with so many different formats—now there are even more options like Indoor O, Urban events, Sprints, and Sprint relays that didn't exist when I began. As a beginner, I was amazed to learn that people actually raced at night; I couldn't imagine how anyone could do that! Over time, though, I've been fortunate enough to try most types of events, and I've made plenty of new friends along the way.

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You don't have to travel far to enjoy orienteering—SO and our neighbouring clubs host many excellent local events. However, if you're new to the sport, there's a wealth of opportunities beyond your usual area. Talk with others about their plans and consider broadening your orienteering experience by joining a regional event or treating yourself to a weekend away for more competitions. This May, our Sunny Sussex Weekend will be held in and around Friston Forest; it's a chance to pitch a tent, hope for sunshine, and after your run, instead of rushing home, spend time relaxing in the beautiful countryside, sharing stories and discussions with fellow enthusiasts.

The JK event at Easter will be held in Scotland, which might be too far for some people this year. However, there are plenty of other multiday events happening across the UK throughout the year. By combining one of these events with an extended visit to the area, you can both enjoy your favourite sport and have the chance to explore even more!

Safe running to all!

Jane

Committee Chat – update from behind the scenes

We're starting an SO Club WhatsApp group for fast, free member communication. See page 8 for what to expect and how to join.

Welcome to our New Members



Samantha Gibson – Club Membership Secretary.

A HUGE and very WARM welcome to all our new club members who have joined/re-joined since December 2025

We hope you enjoy your adventures in the woods, forests, parkland and urban areas, and would really encourage you to talk to any of the club representatives, or volunteers at our events if you have any questions or would like to talk about your run etc – we are all super friendly!

Milo Lovell M16 Chris Shaw M55

It's also great to see some former Club members returning – WELCOME BACK to:

Loren Leathley W16 Alan Stobbs M55 Jules Wheeler W35
Gethyn Lewis M60 Diane-Marie Stobbs W60

A friendly reminder from Samantha to all our members to check they have renewed their membership for 2026. You can renew your membership online: https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/renew_membership
Remember to add Southdowns Orienteers (SO) as your local club.

Information about BO Member Discounts: https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/discounts

Opportunities to help out, meet others, gain experience and make new friends!

Planning your first event



The Summer Park-Os will soon be upon us and with them the opportunity to plan your first orienteering event.

If you would like to try your hand at planning, we are looking for planners for:

30th May - Preston Park, Brighton (Park-O 1)
11th July - Horsham Park (Park-O 6)

You will be supported by the many volunteers who work behind the scenes to secure permissions and smooth the way. You will also have an event advisor, an experienced planner, who will help to ensure your courses comply with BOF standards and provide a challenge to members whatever their experience and skill.

Please email Samantha, our volunteer coordinator at volunteer@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk to find out more.

Sunny Sussex weekend



The Sunny Sussex Weekend of orienteering for the whole family is taking place on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th May 2026 at Friston Forest and Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne. Our excellent planners are already working on the courses, alongside the other volunteers who make our sport possible. We still need a good communicator who can support the event as Coordinator. The Coordinator role involves promotion of the weekend, liaison with the event officials, sourcing the prizes and other logistical help. If you would like to get involved or find out more, please contact volunteer@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

Know your club member(s) – The Hill Family

It's super when the whole family take part in our sport – Ed. Here Matt Hill explains how the family got into Orienteering and what keeps them returning!

How and when did you get into orienteering:
I (dad) had done a few events when I was at school in Stoke-on-Trent in the 1980s and when I went to University, I joined the Orienteering club in freshers' week. I did a few events in my first year but then got distracted by climbing which became my main hobby for the next 20 years.



It was many years later (including 12 years in Munich where Katy, Zoe and Maya were born) that I happened to see an advert for a TVOC event and thought it would be a nice thing to do as a family. We did several TVOC events around Oxford, but it was only when we moved to Chichester in 2018 that we joined Southdowns and started to do more events.

Katy, Zoe and Maya really enjoyed the junior coaching and taking part in the junior competitions: The YBT and Peter Palmer relays.

Do you take part in any other sports/activities:
Katy, Zoe and Maya all joined the Chichester Triathlon Club as Junior and then later Youth members. They managed to win the Youth competition as a threesome in the Southwater Relay event in 2025, which was their last event together before Katy and Zoe started university.



Katy has now started rowing at university and Zoe is a keen member of the running club. Maya still goes twice a week to Tri-club training in Chichester while she studies for her A-levels.

I was a keen climber for many years especially when we lived in Munich, but now I prefer more relaxing hobbies like sailing or kayaking in Chichester Harbour when I have time.

What is your favourite type of orienteering/favourite area:

We tend to stay local when we are Orienteering, so we mainly just do the Southdown's or neighbouring clubs' events which tend to be mixed forest with some open areas. We have done a couple of events recently in the New Forest which were a real challenge but great scenery.
We also took part in a night event in January for the first time and that was great fun. Although I think we need to invest in better headtorches before trying another one.

Do you have a pre-race procedure:
Our main pre-race procedure is stopping for an "Orienteering Breakfast" on the way to the event. This is normally a Costa breakfast in Chichester if we are heading East or a Starbucks breakfast at Liphook if we are heading West. It may not be nutritionally ideal but it does get teenagers out of bed on a Saturday morning.

What advice would you give to newcomers:
Don't get disheartened if you struggle and lose a lot of time on one control: treat each control as a separate challenge. If you are lost and can't relocate then just return to the last control and start the leg again – it's all good experience and you will slowly stop making those mistakes as you get better.

Which skills would you advise a regular orienteer to work on:
I think the main area that I struggle with is planning ahead after the next control. I definitely need to improve the flow through the course and am often guilty of getting to the control and then standing around while I plan the next leg.

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Get your orders in now for a smart new Club Top!

It's that spring cleaning time of year. Maybe you will be going through your wardrobe working out what O kit is too moth-eaten, bramble-torn, or dare I say it outgrown, and needs to go into recycling.

Fear not, there are supplies of shiny new gear available from Ian, our Kit officer. Current prices are as follows:

- Jackets £38
- Long sleeved t shirts £28
- Winter weight T shirts £25
- Summer weight mesh T shirts £25
- Race singlets £18
- Race vets £1



Ian is looking to order new Winter weight T-shirts and jackets, as stock is low. Inflation means prices will be slightly higher than before. If you want to join the waiting list, let Ian know your preferred garment, gender, and size. This helps avoid unsold stock, so please share your requirements soon.

Please also share whether you would be interested in the possible addition of a Club T-Shirt with reflective design for night street or urban events. This might be just what you need to when you take part in the new SO Run Sussex Urban events! An example of the top Mole Valley use is here:





Please share your feedback with Ian, by sending an email to kit@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk, or speaking with him at one of our events.
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Run Sussex - The Urban Orienteering Series 2026



This summer, Southdowns Orienteers invites you to a weekly series of top-quality urban orienteering events. Akin to the London or Brighton City Races, we will have mapping to the ISSprOM (2019-2) International Specification at 1:4,000. The 8 events are listed below and will be hosted by Euan Marsh, Edward Lines, and Robert Lines.

Euan and Ed have spent the winter months mapping, and the series will take participants to the most interesting urban areas in Sussex.

Urban Orienteering is an accessible form of the sport and ideal for anyone who enjoys running. Starts will be from 18.00 – 19.30 each Tuesday and there will be a Short (4km), Medium (6km) and Long (8km) Course.

Get these dates in your diaries now!

- Brighton – Tuesday, 2 June 2026
- Old Portslade – Tuesday, 9 June 2026
- Shoreham North – Tuesday, 16 June 2026
- Brighton Withdean – Tuesday, 23 June 2026
- Upper Beeding – Tuesday, 30 June 2026
- Burgess Hill – Tuesday, 7 July 2026
- Ringmer – Tuesday, 14 July 2026
- Henfield – Tuesday, 21 July 2026





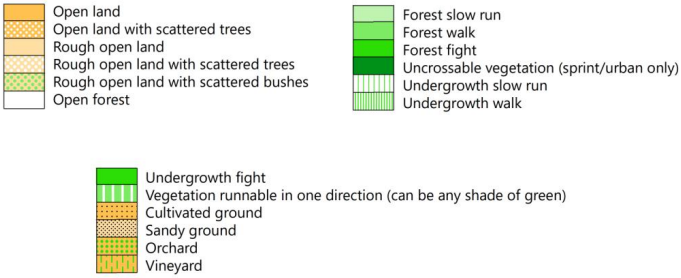
Know Your Map, by Chris Hooker
Part 6
Can I Get Through There?



Maps are composed of 3 types of symbols:

- Point symbols are for obvious features that are too small to map, such as pits, knolls, small depressions and boulders. The control circle is always centred on the middle of these symbols with the description giving further information.
- Line symbols are for features that can be accurately mapped in one dimension, that is along their length but are too narrow to be mapped width wise. Examples include streams, ditches, gullies, contours and vegetation boundaries. Control circles are positioned on the centre of the line at the location of the control with descriptions giving more detail.
- Area symbols are for features that can be accurately mapped at the scale of the map. I would sub-divide these further into block symbols and screens. Block symbols are for obvious features that you can see such as buildings, large thickets and rock pillars while screens are used to show the general state of the terrain such as vegetation and water cover.

In answer to the title, we need to consider the screen symbols. There are screens for rocky features such as bare rock and loose rock, and for water features like lakes and marshes which I will look at in future articles. For now, my advice would be to avoid any black or blue areas on the map if possible! In the South-East the predominant screens are for vegetation so let's look at what we have.



As you can see there's quite a range of screens available to the mapper. Deciding which one to use is particularly subjective although the colloquial terminology gives guidance. The official specification gives definitions by the speed that an elite runner will move through the vegetation with open forest being 100%. This leads to the slightly unusual speed of over 100% for open land! The table below gives the expected speeds for different vegetation.

Speed %	Screen
Over 100	Open land, paved area
80 -100	Rough open land; open forest; cultivated ground; sandy ground
60 – 80	Forest slow run; undergrowth slow run
20 – 60	Forest walk; undergrowth walk
Under 20	Forest fight; undergrowth fight
0	Uncrossable vegetation (sprint/urban only)

Other screen speeds can be inferred from this table.

It's also worth mentioning that hedges are generally shown in fight green on forest maps but can be any shade on urban maps. It is important to remember that if a hedge (or any other vegetation) on an urban map is mapped in uncrossable green then it must not be crossed. The other shades of green are crossable and follow the usual runnability rules.

When mapping, an issue is that vegetation affects different runners in different ways, and this is where it becomes subjective! I try to imagine how it would affect me, but I may have different strengths and weaknesses to other orienteers. A slow runner will be less hindered by light green and so might consider it to be white, but the same runner might find undergrowth much harder work and so consider slow run undergrowth as walk. Another issue is that vegetation changes with the seasons and growth spurts are not uncommon after the maps have been printed. A good rule of thumb is to expect a change in vegetation density when you see a colour change, know your own strengths, and be wary of dark shades of green!

Now for a word on vegetation boundaries. These should only be mapped when they are clear and obvious to someone running at a decent speed. If there is no vegetation boundary mapped this implies a gradual change in vegetation density over perhaps 50-100m. Vegetation boundaries are usually depicted as a line of black dots but may, on occasion be shown as a line of green dashes. This tends to be done in areas where there are a lot of black (usually rock) features on the map.

Finally, the specifications give combinations of screens that should not be used. I won't go through all of them as there are several but one that is common is that undergrowth is only shown in open (white) forest, rough open ground and marshy ground. If the forest is not open/white (i.e. the visibility is reduced) then the shade of green will be determined by either the thickness of any undergrowth that is present or the density of trees, whichever has the greater impact. So, if an area has trees that would reduce you to a slow run but also has walk undergrowth then the screen used would be green (walk).

Next time I will look at tree related features.

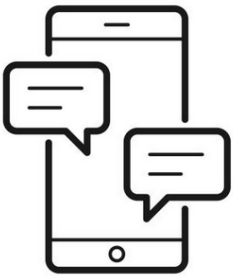


NEW!! SO Club WhatsApp Group only available to current Club members

SO has decided to establish a WhatsApp group for its members. This initiative is intended to provide a free and efficient means of communication, allowing us to share details about upcoming events and other useful information quickly and easily.

The WhatsApp group will serve as a platform for members to stay informed about club activities. In addition to receiving updates, members will be able to post questions relating to equipment and any other matters connection to Orienteering and the Club.

If you would like to be included in the group, please send your phone number to Jane Lambert at editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk . Jane will act as moderator to oversee the content shared within the group,



Please note, you must be over 18 years of age to join. As in all WhatsApp groups, phone numbers of group members will be visible to other SO Club WhatsApp members.

Not Giving Up – Linda and Tim Hulley revisit South Ashdown

Orienteering is a sport that provides many challenges. Whether it is the weather, the 'man eating' brambles, the swamp like mud or the challenge of the course set by the planner, there is always something to test you. The DFKO event at South Ashdown was no different, except that I encountered challenges entirely new to me.

Despite all the recent rain and mud, this Sunday was more of a summer's day in January. The start was near Millbrook Clump, and my course involved meandering across the forest and included a long leg below Friend's Clump with stunning views north, before dropping down to the river and returning along the valley to the finish.

My first two controls were achieved slowly but fairly smoothly, opting for a long path route to avoid a tussocky area. Control 3 then followed a long leg across to the far side of the map, straight forward enough, through woodland initially, before joining the track that took me steadily uphill to an obvious attack point that led me neatly into the control.



Control three mastered — or so I thought. As I reached out to punch the control, I discovered my trusty fluorescent yellow dibber was no longer attached to my finger. Surprise turned rapidly into disbelief as I checked both hands, then my pockets. The verdict was clear: the dibber was gone.

So what to do next? I briefly considered retracing my steps, but given the length of the leg and the number of orienteers who may already have passed through, success seemed unlikely. More optimistically, there was a chance it had already been found and handed in. I was on the far side of the map, and I still needed to get back to the finish.

The sun was shining and it was a beautiful day, so I decided to continue, touching every control on my course.

If it's on Strava, it happened — right?

When I eventually finished, queuing up at download was novel, with no dibber but a note was made of my safe return and of the lost dibber.

The Organiser kindly emailed me later that evening to say no dibber was found while collecting in the controls. So what were my options? To order a new one — not cheap — and I really wanted to keep my number, or to return to Ashdown Forest and look for it. A 'needle in a haystack' came to mind.



Tim and I scratched our heads as to how we were going to execute this challenge most effectively. Using my Strava track, we downloaded a GPX file and uploaded it to Routegadget. I recalled several moments where it was possible I may have dropped my dibber because: I had taken my gloves off and hesitated a couple of times in the woodland section; I had been confused by a public footpath not marked on

my map and then wandered slightly off route exiting the woodland to the parallel path to the north; and continuing on the long track below Friend's Clump, I had stopped to offer assistance to a youngster looking for his control and we had a chat about his dinghy sailing, (he was wearing a sailing hoodie), and off he went smiling.

Conveniently the previous day Tim and I had organised the Chailey event, and the equipment was still in our van. We wondered whether waving a control unit over the ground would make my dibber bleep, but there was question whether the dibber would have gone into sleep mode.



A plan of attack was hatched to retrieve the dibber. Tim and I revisited Ashdown Forest the following day, parking in the car park near the site of control 3. First the control units needed to be switched back on before Tim proceeded to rig 12 control units onto a dinghy spinnaker halyard attached to a windsurf mast.

Setting off from the car park on Mission Dibber created a bit of confused interest from other walkers — not helped by Tim explaining he was carrying a windsurf mast.



We considered the areas I had hesitated or removed my gloves the most likely places to have dropped the dibber. We plotted these areas on my route, then printed these areas in a much enlarged scale to take with us as reference.

First we retraced my route from control 3 back to the site of control 2, Tim wearing his windsurf gadget of hanging control units and using a combination of my memory and following the route on Routegadget. To no avail, a bit deflated we retraced our steps back again towards control 3, this time being more precise around the areas I had hesitated during the event. Then success - the area I had gone slightly off route took me between two small pits, and there, lying on the leaves, was my yellow dibber.



In conclusion:

The windsurf mast gadget looked interesting and had kept Tim occupied but wasn't helpful as my dibber had reverted to sleep mode. But. in the end it was my recall, combined with my route downloaded from Strava and uploaded to Routegadget.

Routegadget is very accurate at retracing your route.

We enjoyed another couple of hours revisiting glorious Ashdown Forest. I found my trusty yellow dibber but didn't know until two weeks later at the next event whether the battery had flattened — but it worked perfectly.

So the moral of all this is: even when the 'chips ' are down, don't give up. I still had the pleasure of completing my course and can even pretend I may have won the Green course, set by the planner.

Junior Section – Southdowns Junior Squad Report from Anna Chapman (Junior Team Manager)



The Spring season is now in full swing, some of our juniors have moved up an age class and coaching has been a regular fixture over the last few months. The next few months bring some big competitions including the CompassSport Cup Heat, the British Champs in Wales and the JK Festival of Orienteering in Scotland. Relay teams are being sorted and plans being made for more coaching in the coming months. Do let us know if there is anything we can do to encourage and reward juniors and to help increase participation.

SEOA Cloth Badges



Working towards the SEOA cloth badges is one of the best ways for juniors to see progress. These are awarded for colour coded courses between white and black. You must complete three courses per colour within 150% of the winning time or in the top 50% of competitors.

It's been great to see our juniors achieving their badges this term. If you haven't received your badge yet, do get in contact with Anna Chapman (juniorteam@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk) who will have them available to collect.

Yellow Badge Winners:
Arlo Smithard, Oliver Johnson, Spencer Turner, Henry Wright, Tom Cottrell, Sophia Reed
Orange Badge Winners:
Mark Johnson, Lucas Waters, Christopher Warner, Harriet Nichols, Daniel Duncan, Rowan Sillett, Loren Leathley, William Grainge, Maya Hill
Light Green Badge Winners:
Otis Roberts, Sophia Bowes, David Neville
Green Badge Winner:
Emily Waters
Blue Badge Winners:
Thomas Duncan, James Curtis, Emma Chapman
Brown Badge Winner:
Ben Chapman

Autumn SOG Series
We've just come to the end of the Autumn series of SOG's. It's been great to see some new names cropping up on the results. Each of these juniors will receive a certificate at the AGM in the Summer:

Yellow M	1st Finley Carrington 2nd Spencer Turner 3rd Oliver Johnson	Yellow W	1st Lizzie Nichols 2nd Millie Taylor 3rd Anabelle Carrington
Orange M	1st Mark Johnson 2nd Lucas Waters 3rd Christopher Warner	Orange W	1st Harriet Nichols 2nd Loren Leathley 3rd Sasha Smith
Short Green M	1st David Neville	Short Green W	1st Sophia Bowes
Green M	Not contested	Green W	1st Emily Waters
Blue M	1st James Curtis	Blue W	1st Emma Chapman

South East Individual League for 2025
Congratulations to the following top 3 finishers in the South East League events in 2025. Certificates were handed out at the DFOK event at Pippingford Park on 18th January.
1st Mark Johnson M10, Emma Chapman W14, Maya Hill W18
2nd Oliver Johnson M10, Ben Chapman M16
3rd Emily Waters W14, Katie Hill and Zoe Hill W20

Coaching
We've had a successful start to coaching with the juniors and noticed some great progression. In the orange to light green session, athletes have been consolidating their understanding of brown features, improving bearings, working on pacing and even doing map memory. The development squad also got an invite to take part in the South East Junior Squad coaching day at Cowdray Forest in January and got on really well.

The younger juniors and newcomers have been working hard and having fun at the same time with many themed coaching sessions. They have been trying to cement their basic skills ready to use them on yellow courses. At Angmering the two coaching groups teamed up and got together for a great relay practice and everyone got the hang of the changeover zone.

Do let the coaching team know if you'd either like to become a coach or take part in some of these coaching sessions. Email Rob Lines coach@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

Upcoming Coaching:

21st Feb	Coates Common, Fittleworth
7th March	Waterhall, Brighton – Full morning session welcoming everyone, including newcomers and novices (adults and juniors). Perhaps bring along your friends and family to give it a try.
28th March	Rivers Wood, Haywards Heath
25th April	Stanmer, Brighton

Improve your Skills – pacing
Pacing in orienteering is a technique used to measure distance traveled by counting steps. It's a very important technique we teach in coaching to help juniors to know how far to go before looking for something.

How to work out your pacing:
Measure 100m: Find a flat, straight, 100-meter section (or use a 1:10,000 map where 1cm = 100m).
Count Paces: Run/walk this distance at a normal orienteering speed, counting every time your right foot hits the ground.
Establish Average: Repeat this to get an average number. A common average for juniors (aged 10-14ish) is around 40-50 double paces per 100m, but this can vary.
Adjust for Terrain: Note that your pace will increase (shorten) when going uphill, in thick vegetation, or when tired.

TrailO (an inclusive discipline that focuses on map-reading precision rather than physical speed)
Following IOF changes, for the first time there will be a separate Junior class at the European TrailO Championships (ETOC) to be held in Poland in early August. The GB selectors are looking for up to six British Juniors to be a part of the GB team!

SO's James Curtis attended the World Trail O Champs in 2025 and will be hoping to keep his place as part of the GB team for ETOC taking part in the 3 disciplines: TempO, PreO and Relay (teams of 3).

The next TrailO event here in the UK is being staged alongside the forthcoming British Long Distance Champs in Wales on the 28th February, to which many club members will be attending. This is an opportunity to try out Trail O, demonstrate ability/ potential, and express an interest in being selected for the GB team. Find out more at: https://www.theboc.org.uk/page/trailo

You can also gain experience in the online Tempo discipline of TrailO by taking part in the regular events. Find out more and take part alongside other SO participants here: https://temposim.yq.cz/
If you have any questions about ETOC, applying for GB Junior TrailO selection or TrailO in general, please contact James, Ian or Coral Curtis.
This is a very good chance for more of our juniors to achieve an International callup - don't miss it!
Southern Champs at Star Posts, Berkshire BKO

In January five of our juniors travelled to Star Posts in Berkshire for the Southern Champs. This was the first major race of the season, so many of them were competing on longer courses as they'd moved up age classes. All juniors had good runs and Emma came away with 2nd place on W16A. Mark just missed out on a podium position coming 4th on M12A, and Christopher, Ben and Emily all completed their runs gaining valuable experience in new terrain and new age classes.

Emma becomes British Night Champion

The rain held off and the stars were out for a fantastic night of racing at the British Night Championships at Egypt Woods, near Burnham Beeches in Bucks. Navigating alone through forests at night demands endurance and composure. With visibility reduced to a narrow beam of headtorch, a moment's hesitation, or over confidence can lead to costly errors. Emma held her nerve to claim top spot in the W16 race. Emma has medalled five times at British Champs competitions, but this was a special achievement, as it was her first time on the top spot in an individual competition.

Ben also had a great run, achieving a gold standard time as a lower year in the M18 age class

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Yvette Baker Trophy – calling all juniors! By Bea Waters *(photos Rob Lines)*

Our Junior Team delivered a fantastic performance at the **2025 final** of the Yvette Baker Trophy, coming home with an amazing **3rd place trophy!**



Now it's time to do it all again in 2026 - and we need YOU to be part of it!

What is the Yvette Baker Trophy & Shield?

The Yvette Baker Trophy (YBT) and Yvette Baker Shield (YBS) are the premier Junior Inter-Club competitions for English and Welsh orienteering clubs. They are named after Yvette Baker, Britain's first World Orienteering Champion, who won Gold in the Short Distance event at the World Orienteering Championships in Scotland in 1999. Each year, two competitions are held at the same event: the Trophy (YBT) for larger clubs (9 runners to count) and the Shield (YBS) for smaller clubs (5 runners to count).
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How It Works



Regional heats are held during March, April and May; the winner of each heat will progress to the final.
There are four courses available covering age classes M/W10 (and under) to M/W18:

- Yellow
- Orange
- Light Green
- Green

If you can run a yellow course independently, you are ready to take part. But don't worry, if you're not quite able to run a yellow course on your own yet, you can still be involved by running as a pair. This is a great way to gain experience, build confidence and be part of the team atmosphere.



For the Trophy competition, the 9 best scores count, but every single runner is important. Even if your score doesn't make the counting nine, your run could push another club's scoring runners further down the results. Every place matters!

And best of all? It's always a super friendly, supportive and fun atmosphere, one of the highlights of the junior orienteering calendar. Not to forget the obligatory ice creams after the event!

2026 Key Dates

Regional Heat (save the date!)
Sunday 17th May 2026, Farley Heath (near Guildford)

If we qualify, the Final will take place on the 4th or 5th July 2026, at Penllergaer Valley Woods (near Swansea, South Wales).

What You Need To Do

Entries are made by the junior team manager, so keep an eye on Spond for details on when to sign up. Let's get as many juniors on the start line as possible.

See you at the heat!



Little Dave – My life of O



Here (again in a much-edited form) LD kindly shares a few of those humorous lessons, in just one event, that I'm sure we have all experienced in the forests!

Sunday, 28 January 2024 Concorde Chase Barossa Short Brown Course

I learnt many things from running long but the pearl of wisdom I always chant is "if it's all going well and you are feeling good, don't worry that will soon pass".

It seems that Orienteering is just concentrated long running, all the same emotions just contained in a neat little package. Although I've never run myself sick or fallen asleep whilst orienteering but I'm digressing...

Barossa. I've had a few visits here on a retirement Wednesday and I've had a few arguments and disagreements with the map. It's a fantastic area but it can also be the pits.

Anyway today is Concorde Chase day and I'm pretty excited, …… I realise almost immediately that today is going to be challenging. Into the woods and I'm spotting controls all over the place, distractions. Can't possibly be mine, can they? I'm taking a while to tune into the map and the distraction is huge. There are so many clues but still every flag appears attractive to me but I resist. Across the rough open ground and back into the trees, then I will find my control. I'm slow but I'm not visiting the wrong controls.

Next leg could have been a straight line across broken ground but I've still got the wise words of the coach ringing in my ears, slightly louder than my tinnitus so I'm listening and leads to a longer route along safe paths. I continue on the paths but I'm now looking across open ground, and the lure of the ground is too much. Break off the path and go direct, I'm confident I've identified the copse where my control is but as I leave the safety of the path the doubts start to creep in. There are a few copses and my confidence is draining away but I pick off a few collecting features, ignore some other controls and I find my control…….

I leap down from the control, jump over the fence and I am having such a good time. I'm really enjoying this run, seven controls in the bag and this is brilliant. I can't believe how much fun I am having, this is turbo hoofin. And obviously this is the moment for it all to go wrong...



……. The compass was screaming at me to head in this direction but I was lured away by good looking paths but not to worry 'cause I now know I've got a fantastic descent through the trees to enjoy. Brakes off, brains off and descend. Except this is orienteering not fell running. Brain should never be turned off.

…… I'm beginning to really dislike rhododendrons. I have now inspected every thicket in the area, become intimate with some of the bushes and I'm now cursing whoever it is that has stolen the control. Ten minutes or so of bush whacking and I start to wonder why absolutely no one has been here to join me. I'm now desperate and resorting to the winner orienteering strategy of waiting for someone else to find the control and telegraph it to all the lost souls but no one has appeared. I'm now beginning to think that maybe I have navigated myself expertly to a very exclusive area that all other competitors are struggling to find or just perhaps I am totally in the wrong place...

…….I am fiercely competitive; I don't see that as a problem. It's motivational, it's certainly not a negative characteristic, it's helped me achieve plenty. But with that competitiveness, I am gracious in defeat (frequently) and humble in victory (less frequent). It motivates me but it doesn't consume me.

…At this precise moment I am so angry with myself. I have let myself down massively. Made a stinking error and the realism of the situation is just sinking in. My map and compass are thrown to the floor and I'm jumping up and down on them. I'm slapping myself in the face with the control description and I can't even talk to myself. After an eternity I start to swim back to the surface of realism. OK, the sting of pride is eating away at me but let's have a think about what is going to happen now. Victory is now probably not realistic (let's be honest, was it ever? My Boss gave me the day off work to do the event with the words "you better win") but victory to me is getting round cleanish so now it's time for plan B. Don't sweat the small stuff, work on O technique and have a FUN RUN….



…..I'm back in the game, all the toys are collected and put back in the pram and I'm heading towards the next control. I'm running on a bearing. No plan, set compass and follow that needle, there's a path that swings out and round, negative ghost rider, this call sign is going straight line. All the other runners are cutting off and using paths, nope I am going straight. And so I do. Straight to the control. Back in the game….

…….. I'm heading in the right general direction, and I decide that maybe I don't need to know exactly where I am as long as I am moving. And moving in the general right direction, I pass a couple of junctions and each one I decide where I am on the map but change my mind. I narrow it down to two tracks that I could possibly be on, they are parallel so direction ain't giving it away. ……... A lesson that perhaps it's not always essential to know exactly where you are as long as you are moving in the right direction and then use features to pinpoint exact location and bring yourself on to the control. ……. happy I ignored the distraction of the others…

……..Penultimate control and it's a simple path control but the paths seem numerous compared to the map but running in the general direction and the amount of people telegraph the final control and it's a dip and dash to try and get that final control sprint finish. I finish and I'm absolutely buzzing, the rhododendron conundrum has been completely forgotten and I'm bouncing with the joy of some very fun adventurous running. The result is going to be disappointing, but the fun factor is through the roof.



The sun is shining and I'm absolutely buzzing after such an amazing adventurous run. I love it. It's not running, it's adventure scampering. It's fighting over the terrain lapping up the challenges of the ground. Navigating and running with purpose. There's no strides and bounding, it's just shift and giggles. I need to get some training runs in to get distance in my legs for some upcoming challenges but the thought of just running distance absolutely bores me.

Orienteering you have delighted me but destroyed me!

…I'm not gonna lie, #8 and #9 broke and disgusted me but it's easy to forget that after such a fantastic adventure. Bring on the next adventure.

Steel City Cup – Can you ever have too much O packed into just one weekend?

Jane Lambert

A message from my son read “there’s going to be a weekend of O in Sheffield INCLUDING AN INDOOR EVENT – save the date”. And that was me hooked!

Once full details were finally announced, the weekend was set to feature Indoor O and an Urban Relay on Saturday, with a Regional Classic Long Distance taking place on Sunday. The idea sounded so thrilling that Christopher and I signed up right away and ended up being the first entrants, we would proudly wear number 1 bibs! There still weren't any more specifics, but it was exciting just to have a December getaway in the diary.



More information was slowly released, and we discovered that the relays were to be for a team of 2, each team member would complete 2 legs. Then the bombshell landed, I was to run with Christopher in the Open Class. From my experience of previous Urban events there, I remembered Sheffield as being quite hilly, so a little worry started to creep in.

The early morning of Day 1 eventually arrived, and we all congregated in the Sheffield Uni Student Union building. After taking part in numerous Stockholm Indoor Cup (SIC) events, the building looked rather small, but no indoor event is ever to be missed!

ShUOC definitely rose to the occasion and provided a brilliant challenge with many of the puzzles associated with Indoor Competitions, one-way corridors, blocked off staircases and even an outdoor route. There were competitors everywhere – some just standing looking totally perplexed and others on a mission.

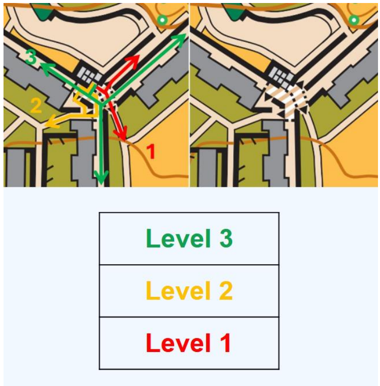


The building was to be opened to the public at 10.30am but the planners and organisers managed to get 250 competitors through the event really smoothly and I can say it was such fun and definitely more of a challenge than I had expected.

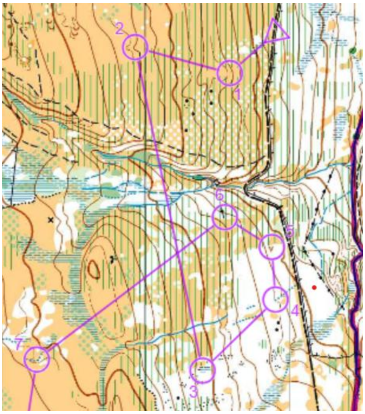


Next, there was an "O" break that allowed time to explore the city and enjoy lunch. Later, everyone travelled to Crystal Peaks on the far outskirts of town to participate in the Relays .

The Relays started in the ruins of an old building and then headed in a confusing sixties housing network with lots of alleyways, multi-levels and under/over passes. Christopher was off in the mass start, and he arrived back in good time to hand over to me for the second leg. I set off but quickly realised that at this point I had already used up most of my energy and brain capacity and my first run was horrendous.



However, it was still light when I handed over Christopher for his second run. I now had to hope that we could finish before true darkness fell – we had been warned that it could be a close call but I'd not realised that having a torch might be a really good idea! He arrives back and hands over to me for the final leg - I'm now really struggling to keep going – each leg started with a fast downhill run before very quickly heading back uphill – not kind! My second leg was much better, sympathetic planning I think, and I did make it back in one piece – now just the Sunday event to take part in……….!



It had rained overnight and very cold drizzle, with a strong wind met us as we drove out to the Peak District Moorland (Ramsley Moor). I could say a lot about this area, but I'll just summarize – it was awful! Vague vegetation covered hidden tussocks, and the thickest, blackest bogs (of course there was a control in the middle of one) were not kind to my very tired Southern legs.

Eventually I arrived at the finish and thought I'd completed the course only to find that I'd punched the wrong number 12, very close to the end. To say I was GUTTED was an understatement!

However, it was a super weekend, and feedback was welcomed so hopefully the event will become an annual feature in the calendar, with maybe just a short Middle-Distance race on the Sunday!

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Note the deadline for content for the next Southdowner edition (June 2026) is
15th May

Please send your contributions to
editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

If you have ideas for new features, I would love to hear them. Your suggestions and feedback are always greatly appreciated—they contribute to making the Newsletter both engaging and informative for everyone.

Thank you!


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Brighton City Race Weekend *(photos Rob and Alex Lines)*



The Brighton City Race 2025 offered an outstanding weekend of orienteering, meticulously brought together by Neil Crickmore and Rob Lines. This year's programme was expanded to include a Regional level Sprint event around Preston Park on Saturday morning preceding the main attraction, the Brighton City Race held that evening. The weekend concluded with a middle distance race at Stanmer Park (using a new map) on the Sunday.



The whole weekend ran exceptionally smoothly, with the added bonus of favourable weather.

The Preston Park Sprint, planned by Ed Lines made excellent use of new terrain around Preston Manor and St Peter's Church. Fast paced and fun, these courses set a vibrant mood for the rest of the weekend.



After time for afternoon shopping in central Brighton, participants benefited from a fantastic new assembly area at the Brighthelm Centre, complete with an exciting indoor start—no doubt intended to test our navigation skills right from the beginning! Neil delivered engaging courses suitable for all abilities, with the longest routes taking runners on a challenging climb up to the fun terrain of Queen's Park. Most courses included a thrilling stretch along the beach before navigating the confusing and bustling Lanes area.

Sunday brought the Middle Distance Race at Stanmer Park. Alan Velecky had planned a great range of courses from White through to Black. Alan's courses had short legs with frequent, disorienting changes in direction proved to be unexpectedly tricky. Competitors found the combination of the technical and physical elements of the area challenging despite the shorter length courses.



It truly was a memorable weekend, and sincere thanks go to everyone who contributed to make it such a success!

Check out the video on YouTube by Alex Lines, plus photos from the 3 events



Medals were awarded to the top three finishers in each category at the Brighton City Race. Additionally, Bea Waters, our talented Sewing Bea(!), created exclusive, hand-crafted "Brighton City Race" orienteering zip bags for the winners of Course 1.

British Night Championships, Egypt Woods, 7th February 2026



Ian Ditchfield

In a way, this story starts the preceding Tuesday with SLOW's night event in Battersea Park. I nearly didn't go, as it was a very wet evening, but thank goodness I did, as while I was getting my kit together in the pub, my headtorch fell to pieces in my hand! This would have been a disaster had it happened on Saturday.

The less said about my run at Battersea the better. I borrowed a torch, but it was very dim, and I could hardly see the kites. The ink rubbed off the wet map, adding non-existent patches of woodland, and I managed to miss out a control. One of the most important tips I can give any budding orienteer is to get your mistakes in at events that don't matter ;)

I had the same problem with my torch soon after buying it, and I solved it with some superglue. Glue has now been reapplied, and hopefully it will again last for a few years. Think I might get a better backup torch though, my present one weighs next to nothing but is definitely "get me home" rather than "carry on running the event".

Saturday morning brought a slightly alarming e-mail "The car park is showing the results of the heavy rain. Two tractors will be available to assist. ... It would do no harm to have your towing eye accessible." Memories came flooding back of the (morning) event at Cold Ash last year, when it took until after dark to empty the car park!

When we arrived at the event, the marshal took one look at my W80 chauffeur and told us to park where we were on the side of the road rather than go into the field. Did he not know that Ruth was one of the handful whose rally-driving skills were up to exiting the Cold Ash field unaided? Apparently not, and we weren't going to tell him; parking on the verge seemed a much better bet, provided I could squeeze out of the passenger's door without falling in the ditch.

We were fortunate to have a window of pleasant weather for the event. Dry, warm (for February), no wind. Even the lack of moonlight was a blessing, as the temperature would have plummeted if the clouds had cleared.

We assembled in the pre-start and watched people running off into the darkness. First question, where's the start? It's an easy mistake to make, to pick up the map and then rush off into the forest thinking you are at the triangle on the map. However, at big events, there's often quite a long taped route to the start kite. The rules now say the control description should tell you how far – don't forget to look!



I scuttled off down the 75m "taped" route (I think I spotted one tape) with my nose in the map. By the time I reached start, I'd decided on a simple approach for the first leg – stay on the track, turn onto a path, and dive into the forest at the last moment. Risk of missing the path mitigated by a giant, if shallow, depression besides the track some 50m earlier, and then another depression by the path marked my attack point.

Leg 2 looked more challenging. Too far through undergrowth to be confident of holding an accurate bearing. I briefly considered a path route via the start, but that would have been too much a deviation. Instead, I opted for heading south through "white" to the track, turning right, and then left onto a path which headed straight for the control, although it didn't reach it. Fingers crossed for the last 120m on the compass, partly through undergrowth.

The path turned up sooner than I expected. Was it the mapped one? I took it, and soon decided, no it was too small to be mapped, but it was going in the right direction so I continued. It degenerated into a small elephant track in bracken, but I got through OK and crossed the little stream valley (mapped as linear marsh) and up into the white. I hoped to see the mapped rootstock (and indeed Routegadget suggests I was close enough to bump into it), but didn't spot it. I climbed to what felt like the right height above the stream, and guessing I was too far left, turned right, keeping a careful eye on other lights. Obligingly, a light appeared out of the ground dead ahead; think I would have found the hole anyway but the reassurance was welcome.

Leg 3 looked tricky, a long leg with a lot of green on the purple line. The final details had warned us of a freshly cleared area with a very muddy new track around it. And there it was on the map, just east of control 3 – should make a good attack point! So I set off just slightly left of south through beautifully runnable forest, hoping to hit the middle of the NW side of the cleared area. I was expecting to run through gaps in holly, but my gap petered out and I found myself surrounded! Never mind, it wasn't hard to get through, and I emerged on what turned out to be the NE corner of the cleared area. Routegadget confirms that I had just pushed through one of the grottiest bits of the whole map – lovely forest if that's the worst it can do!



The new tractor track was indeed a sea of mud, even worse than the car park at Cold Ash. I battled through it, down to the stream junction, and made a point of jumping into the deepest part of the stream to reduce the weight clinging to my legs. Out, left, ignore the first gully and on to the second with the control.

Leg 4 was up the stream valley, but the control was well away from the stream and looked eminently missable. I found the shallow dry(ish) gully and followed that rather than the stream, keeping very careful count of the shallow reentrants and clearings to my left. When I'd gone far enough, I climbed, no sign of the control, go a bit further west, there it is!

Leg 5 looked easier. Out north to a track, use the track to cross the stream, then follow an earthbank to another track, then pick up the upper of two earthbanks to lead into the control. This went well to start with, but I didn't find the second earthbank – Routegadget suggests I crossed it without noticing. Never mind, head north until the slope bends, then the control should be in a hole in reentrant. And it was, except that I looked first in a smaller reentrant which is indicated by the slightest of bends in the contour line on the map, but appeared considerably bigger in the dark.

Leg 6 was short, and I made it simple. Out to the track, turn left to the junction, right into the forest parallel with the big fence on the left, knowing that you'll fall in either the right hole or the one next to it.

Leg 7 had "potential disaster" written all over it. Control in flat featureless forest a long way from anywhere! First find the large fenced out of bounds area (pheasant pen?), and then take a very careful compass bearing from the corner. Think we've gone about far enough, look around, there's the control fence, just off to my right. Phew!

I did think about aiming off for control 8, hitting the fence further south and turning right. But there was an elephant track heading in what the compass said was exactly the right direction, so I took a chance and followed it – straight to the control.

Control 9 was easy, but when I swiped my SIAC over it, there was no reaction. Turning around, I saw that there was no SI box, just a kite. Fortunately someone just behind me had spotted the box on the ground, and was just putting it back on the stake, so I went back and punched.



10 was a taped route, then 11 offered a route choice. I opted to take the left fork of the track, heading up to a sharp bend, then leaving the track and plunging downhill to enter the field. However, I think the right fork to a different gate may have been better, slightly further but no climb.

The last part of leg 11 was quite tricky. The map doesn't really bring out the steepness of the climb on the direct route, which was briefly quite a struggle, and then I couldn't satisfactorily identify any of the plethora of mapped features. Fortunately I got to about the right place and spotted the knoll guarding the depression with the control.

12 was contouring, around the top of a small reentrant, then down and up across a larger one. Except that I tried to contour around the larger reentrant too, which pushed me too far north, but I realised and corrected when I saw the fence.

I probably went to the wrong fence crossing leaving 12, my excuse is that the western slope looked more runnable than the eastern one. Then a path route to the control, although the forest was nice so I took short-cuts.

Leg 14 was the last route choice. Obvious as far as the NE corner of the pheasant pen beyond 13. Then I went SE across the re-entrant to rejoin the track, down and up across a big re-entrant, and ignore small thickets until you get to a big one, and drop down to the control around the back.

An attractive alternative route was to drop down to the field gate, run either side of the field fence to the next gate, and attack the control from below. Splits suggest my route may have been slightly better.
The rest of the course was technically easy, just a question of pushing tired legs in case seconds counted and keeping a tired mind focused to avoid stupid mistakes – easier said than done, but I managed it this time.
What a difference a year makes! I'm still running the same course as the M65's, and I was 5th on the course, 6 minutes behind the winner. However, if you only count M70's, I won by 6 minutes!



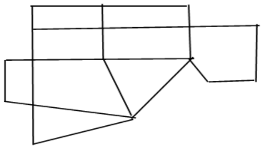
Emma Chapman – Gold in W16
Photo: Rob Lines

Southdowns winners straddled the age classes, from Roger Maher in M85 to Emma Chapman in W16. My partner Ruth was 2nd W80, and other silvers went Alan Veleky (M60) and Anna Chapman (W60). No SO bronzes, but Mark Chapman was 4th in M65 (10 seconds faster than me)!

Next year's British Nights is on the delightful sand dunes of the Gower Peninsula in South Wales. A great place for a summer holiday,

Let's get SO Quizzical – by David Wilson

December's answer - A Track Traversal Challenge



Question: This is a map of the tracks in a fictional forest. We were asked by David whether it is possible to run round all the tracks without running over the same track twice? And if so, where do you need to start and finish?
Tie-breaker – where is Shaves Wood?

Answer: It is possible, but you have to start and finish where an odd number of tracks meet, that is, start at one of the junctions in the NW corner, and finish at the other. Tie-break answer: Shaves Wood is just off the A281 between Henfield and Pyecombe

The winner decided by David from several correct answers is **Chris Hooker**. Congratulations Chris, please contact Neil for your free SOG run.

March's Problem by David Wilson

POND LIFE

Health and Safety is an ever-present concern these days, and it wouldn't be surprising to find that a controller insisted on taping round the perimeter of a pond. Let's say the pond is circular; then how much extra tape is needed if it's one metre out or exactly on the edge of the pond?
[Modified from a problem in Compass Sport, by courtesy. Please don't look it up and cheat!]

All entries to editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk by 15th May please

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Every photo tells a story… Photo Caption Competition



Another bumper lot of entries was received for December's photo (on left). Choosing the winning entry was yet again a **very tough** decision (thank you to everyone who entered we had loads of fun reading your entries!).
After much deliberation of all the creative and witty captions entered, the panel couldn't decide between these two, so a tie was deemed the only fair result:

Ian Curtis: *"Look guys, our coach said we should think about cutting through the woods more, and that's Tom's burger van directly on our bearing..."*
And Chris Hooker: *"Orienteers are highly focused athletes, interested only in finding the best route to...Hey! Isn't that a woodpecker?!"*

Ian and Chris, please let me know which prize you would like to receive, a whistle or bar of chocolate.

The Photo for the March competition is another fantastic picture from Rob Lines

Get creative and come up with a caption – I look forward to receiving your ideas!
Email your caption to the editor by
15th May 2026
editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk


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SOUTHEAST LEAGUE
Dates for your diaries!



Jill Blount, Roger Maher, Alan Velecky, Vince Joyce and Di Turner have all exceeded their target speed in one or more events but absolutely **every member** can help add points to keep SO the holders of the SE League trophy.

There are only 2 more SE League Events left to take place for League 2025/2026 - do get these dates in your diaries!

4 May 2026 Winterfold (SLOW)
10 May 2026 Sunny Sussex Weekend (SO)

Event 1: Hindleap Warren – 23rd November 2025

This event:-

Position	Club	League Score	Match Points
	DIVISION 1		
1	SO	2069	6
2	MV	1296	5
3	SN	1078	4
4	DFOK	751	3
5	SLOW	557	2
6	HH	242	1
	DIVISION 2		
1	SAX	1246	7
2	LOK	215	6
3	GO	197	5
4	HAVOC	174	4
5	CHIG	166	3
6	BAOC	144	2
7	RAFO	32	1

Total after 1 event:-

Position	Club	Match Points	Position change
	DIVISION 1		
1	SO	6	-
2	MV	5	-
3	SN	4	-
4	DFOK	3	-
5	SLOW	2	-
6	HH	1	-
	DIVISION 2		
1	SAX	7	-
2	LOK	6	-
3	GO	5	-
4	HAVOC	4	-
5	CHIG	3	-
6	BAOC	2	-
7	RAFO	1	-

COMMENTS:-

SO at the top of the 1st Division with MV comfortably in second place
SAX won by a huge margin in the second division at their own event.

Only 6 people exceded their target speed.
The top 5 scorers were:-

Sarah Rollins	SN	W45	112.5
Jill Blount	SO	W65	109.1
Sarah Howes	SAX	W65	107.9
Woo Allen	SN	W60	104.8
Roger Maher	SO	M85	104.2

Philip Gristwood SEL Co-ordinator

Event 2: Frith and Windmill Hill – 30th November 2025

This event:-

Position	Club	League Score	Match Points
	DIVISION 1		
1	SO	3009	6
2	SN	2096	5
3	MV	1498	4
4	HH	1117	3
5	SLOW	1038	2
6	DFOK	957	1
	DIVISION 2		
1	GO	669	7
2	BAOC	595	6
3	LOK	562	5
4	SAX	505	4
5	CHIG	262	3
6	HAVOC	230	2
7	RAFO	0	0

Total after 2 events:-

Position	Club	Match Points	Position change
	DIVISION 1		
1	SO	12	-
=2	MV	9	-
=2	SN	9	⇑1
=4	DFOK	4	-
=4	SLOW	4	⇑1
=4	HH	4	⇑2
	DIVISION 2		
1	GO	12	⇑2
=2	SAX	11	⇓1
=2	LOK	11	-
4	BAOC	8	⇑2
=5	HAVOC	6	⇓1
=5	CHIG	6	-
7	RAFO	1	-

COMMENTS:-

SO again at the top of the 1st Division with SN in a strong second place at their own event
4 clubs very close in the second division with GO slightly ahead bringing them into the lead.
19 people exceeded their target speed.

The top 5 scorers were:-

Colin Dickson	BAOC	M70	120.0
Sarah Howes	SAX	W65	113.6
Jill Blount	SO	W65	111.4
Ian Ditchfield	MV	M65	110.4
Abi Weeds	SLOW	W45	109.5

Philip Gristwood SEL Co-ordinator

Event 3: Epping Forest, North – 4th January 2026

This event:-

Position	Club	League Score	Match Points
	DIVISION 1		
1	HH	2116	6
2	DFOK	1468	5
3	MV	1089	4
4	SO	880	3
5	SLOW	812	2
6	SN	536	1
	DIVISION 2		
1	SAX	1414	7
2	HAVOC	937	6
3	CHIG	813	5
4	LOK	568	4
5	BAOC	200	3
6	GO	146	2
7	RAFO	0	0

Total after 3 events:-

Position	Club	Match Points	Position change
	DIVISION 1		
1	SO	15	-
2	MV	13	-
=3	SN	10	⇓1
=3	HH	10	⇑1
5	DFOK	9	⇓1
6	SLOW	6	⇓2
	DIVISION 2		
1	SAX	18	⇑1
2	LOK	15	-
3	GO	14	⇓2
4	HAVOC	12	⇑1
=5	BAOC	11	⇓1
=5	CHIG	11	-
7	RAFO	1	-

COMMENTS:-

SO still at the top of the 1st Division despite being only 4th at this event. HH won pulling them up to joint 3rd.

SAX were well ahead in the second division bringing them into the lead.

27 people exceded their target speed.
The top 5 scorers were:-

Jill Blount	SO	W65	133.0
Alan Velecky	SO	M60	122.9
Alison Howe	SAX	W50	118.8
Peter Martin	SAX	M75	114.4
Tony Burton	MV	M60	113.1

Philip Gristwood SEL Co-ordinator

Event 4 season 2025/26: South Ashdown – 18th January 2026

This event:-

Position	Club	League Score	Match Points
DIVISION 1			
1	SO	2655	6
2	MV	1598	5
3	DFOK	945	4
4	HH	594	3
5	SLOW	504	2
6	SN	179	1
DIVISION 2			
1	SAX	1405	7
2	HAVOC	444	6
3	LOK	215	5
4	CHIG	146	4
	BAOC	0	0
	GO	0	0
	RAFO	0	0

Total after 4 events:-

Position	Club	Match Points	Position change
DIVISION 1			
1	SO	21	-
2	MV	18	-
=3	HH	13	-
=3	DFOK	13	⇑2
5	SN	11	⇓2
6	SLOW	8	-
DIVISION 2			
1	SAX	25	-
2	LOK	20	-
3	HAVOC	18	⇑1
4	CHIG	15	⇑1
5	GO	14	⇓2
6	BAOC	11	⇓1
7	RAFO	1	-

COMMENTS:-

A good win keeping SO at the top of the 1st Division. A strong performance from MV in second place and overall.

SAX were again well ahead in the 2nd division maintaining their lead.

Only 8 people exceeded their target speed.
The top 5 scorers were:-

Sarah Howes	SAX	W65	121.5
Jill Blount	SO	W65	116.9
Di Turner	SO	W75	113.8
Mark Glaisher	SAX	M75	110.8
Keith Masson	MV	M65	106.4

Philip Gristwood SEL Co-ordinator

Event 5 season 2025/26: Egypt Woods – 8th February 2026

This event:-

Position	Club	League Score	Match Points
DIVISION 1			
1	HH	3983	6
2	SN	2526	5
3	SO	2272	4
4	MV	1669	3
5	SLOW	1148	2
6	DFOK	1122	1
DIVISION 2			
1	BAOC	2306	7
2	RAFO	1109	6
3	SAX	1004	5
4	GO	865	4
5	HAVOC	771	3
6	CHIG	670	2
7	LOK	397	1

Total after 5 events:-

Position	Club	Match Points	Position change
DIVISION 1			
1	SO	25	-
2	MV	21	-
3	HH	19	-
4	SN	16	⇑1
5	DFOK	14	⇓2
6	SLOW	10	-
DIVISION 2			
1	SAX	30	-
=2	LOK	21	-
=2	HAVOC	21	⇑1
=4	GO	18	⇑1
=4	BAOC	18	⇑2
6	CHIG	17	⇓2
7	RAFO	7	-

COMMENTS:-

HH had a good win at their own event but SO still at top of the 1st Division.

BAOC and RAFO at top of 2nd div due to big turnout for military competition, but leaders unchanged.

With fast terrain and shorter courses 56 people exceeded their target speed.
The top 5 scorers were:-

Ian Ditchfield	MV	M70	128.2
Woo Allen	SN	W60	126.8
Peter Jones	SN	M70	126.8
Alan Velecky	SO	M60	126.1
Peter Martin	SAX	M75	124.2

Philip Gristwood SEL Co-ordinator

Event 6 season 2025/26: White Downs and Ranmore – 15th February 2026

This event:-

Position	Club	League Score	Match Points
DIVISION 1			
1	SO	1585	6
2	MV	807	5
3	SN	484	4
4	HH	424	3
5	SLOW	418	2
6	DFOK	294	1
DIVISION 2			
1	SAX	542	7
2	LOK	198	6
3	HAVOC	170	5
4	GO	152	4
=5	CHIG	55	3
=5	BAOC	55	3
7	RAFO	0	0

Total after 6 events:-

Position	Club	Match Points	Position change
DIVISION 1			
1	SO	31	-
2	MV	26	-
3	HH	22	-
4	SN	20	-
5	DFOK	15	-
6	SLOW	12	-
DIVISION 2			
1	SAX	37	-
2	LOK	27	-
3	HAVOC	26	⇓1
4	GO	22	-
5	BAOC	21	⇓1
6	CHIG	20	-
7	RAFO	7	-

COMMENTS:-

A big turnout for SO ensured their win at top of the 1st Division.

SAX well ahead in the 2nd div increasing their lead overall.

With terrible weather and muddy paths only 1 person exceeded their target speed.

The top 5 scorers were:-

Ian Ditchfield	MV	M70	101.8
Alan Rosen	HH	M70	87.3
Vincent Joyce	SO	M70	86.3
Alan Velecky	SO	M60	86.0
Nicholas Cooper	SN	M50	85.8

Philip Gristwood SEL Co-ordinator



Major/Local Events – looking ahead:

Major events

As usual the JK takes place over Easter, this year in early April. It's quite a journey for us southerners as it's in Perthshire, Scotland but from the terrain and event details should be well worth the journey. The Sprint will be around the City of Perth with its mixture of modern streets and buildings with older alleyways and narrow lanes. Rannoch Forest for the Middle and Long distance races is described as one of Scotland's finest forests with a wealth of contour detail. What are you waiting for, get those entries in! The Relay on Easter Monday entries have now closed.
Link to further JK information: https://www.thejk.org.uk/index.php?pg=491

British Middle Distance Championships

Also in April (18th) are the British Middles at Brown Clee in Shropshire. Brown Clee is one of the best orienteering areas in the Midlands. Why not make a weekend of O and attend the Midland Classic Distance Champs the following day. Event details can be found here:
https://www.britishmiddlechamps.org.uk/page/event-overview

Sunny Sussex Weekend – A Highlight in the SO Calendar!



The Southdowns major event for this year is scheduled to take place in Friston Forest. The Middle Distance race will be held on Saturday, 9 May, with a Sprint event around Sovereign Harbour taking place later that afternoon. On Sunday, the Long-Distance challenge will encompass a different section of Friston Forest. Here is the opportunity to take part in a trio of events on our own doorstep – and also offer your assistance as a volunteer helper

SOG series

The Spring SOG series continues over the next few months. Then points are tallied to determine our series champions. All information is on the SO website

Club nights

We hold our weekly Club nights, typically on the streets of Mid Sussex until the days grow longer and we can move into the countryside. These casual and enjoyable gatherings provide a fantastic chance to meet fellow club members and stay active.

Each run starts at 6.30pm and lasts around 60 minutes. Event details can be found on the club website.

SouthEast League (SEL)

This annual competition continues into 2026 and takes place between the member clubs of the SEOA.

The league is based on events approved by SEOA and individual runners score points for their runs. **Only two more dates in this season's competition:**

4 May 2026 Winterfold (SLOW)
10 May 2026 Sunny Sussex Weekend (SO)

More information can be found here: https://www.seoa.org.uk/info/orienteering-competitions-within-seoa/south-east-league

A few events at a glance, March to June
(check club websites to confirm details and for more information and see BO website for a full list of many more events)

Date	Event Type	Location	Organising Club
Sat 28th Feb 2026	**Major/UKOL British Champs Long Distance**	**Carreg Goch**	
Sun 1st March 2026	**Major/British Relay Champs**	**Margam Country Park**	
Sat 7th March	SOG	Waterhall	SO
Sun 8th March	**National – Sarum Saunter**	**Fonthill**	**SARUM**
Sun 15th March	**Regional**	**Worthlodge**	**SO**
Sun 22nd March	**National – Chilton Challenge**	**Christmas Common**	**TVOC**
Sat 28th March	SOG	Rivers Wood	SO
Sat 28th March	**Regional SEOUL, UKUL**	**Beckton**	**CHIG**
Sun 29th March	**Regional SEOUL**	**Canning Town**	**DFOK**
Fri 3rd April	**Major UKUL - JK Sprint**	**Perth**	
Sat 4th April	**Major UKOL – JK Middle**	**Rannoch Forest**	
Sun 5th April	**Major UKOL – JK Long**	**Rannoch Forest**	
Mon 6th April	**Major – JK Relays**	**Tullochroisk**	**Entries through Club Captain**
Sat 11th April	SOG	Houghton Forest	SO
Sun 12th April	**Regional**	**Rushall Woods**	**BKO**
Sun 12th April	**Regional SEOUL UKUL**	**Cambridge**	**WAOC**
Sat 18th April	**Major UKOL – British Middle Champs**	**Brown Clee**	**HOC**
Sun 19th April	**National UKOL – Midland Champs**	**Brown Clee**	**HOC**
Sat 25th April	SOG	Stanmer Park	SO
Sun 26th April	**Regional SEOUL**	**Tisbury**	**SARUM**
Sun 26th April	**Regional**	**Kings Wood**	**SAX**
Sun 3rd May	**Regional UKUL**	**York City Race**	**EBOR**
Mon 4th May	**National SEIL SEL**	**Winterfold**	**SLOW**
Sat 9th May	**Regional - Sussex Sussex Weekend**	**Friston Forest East Middle distance**	**SO**
Sat 9th May	**Regional SEOUL – Sunny Sussex Weekend**	**Sovereign Harbour Sprint**	**SO**
Sun 10th May	**National SEIL SEL - Sunny Sussex Weekend**	**Friston Forest North**	**SO**
Sat 16th May	SOG	Selhurst	SO
Sun 17th May	**Regional inc. Yvette Baker heat**	**Farley Heath**	**GO**
Fri 22nd May	City Race Euro Tour – Event 1	Canterbury East Urban	SAX
Sat 23rd May	**City Race Euro Tour – Event 2 National SEOUL UKUL**	**Canterbury City Race**	**SAX**
Sun 24th May	**City Race Euro Tour – Event 3 SE Sprint Champs Regional**	**University of Kent**	**DFOK**
Sat 30th May	Park-O 1	Preston Park	SO

SOUTHDOWNER is the official journal of Southdowns Orienteering Club. Views and opinions expressed in SOUTHDOWNER are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, the club committee or Southdowns Orienteering Club

Southdowns Orienteers