NEWSLETTER AWARDS 09 11 14 ~ 16 18 20 23

CompassSport

The Southdowner

September 2025 No. 214

Orienteering – a sport for all ages



Congratulations Roger Maher M85 3rd Place in the both the World Masters Sprints and Middle-Distance races!



Congratulations to James Curtis M18 – selected to represent Great Britain in the Trail O World Championships in Hungary!

Southdowns Orienteers

www.southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

Rogues Gallery - Know Your Club Representatives

			
Chairman Alan Williamson chair@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk	**Treasurer Ian Curtis treasurer@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**	**Secretary Clive Hawkes Secretary@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**	**Club Captain Neil Crickmore captain@ southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**
			
Membership Secretary Samantha Gibson membership@ southdowns-orienteers.org.uk	**Safety Officer Karen Ashworth safety@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**	**Junior Team Manager & Web Manager Anna Chapman juniorteam@southdowns-orienteers.org.ukwebmanager@ southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**	**Fixtures Secretary Steve Jarvis fixtures@ southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**
			
Map Printing Neil Crickmore mapping@ southdowns-orienteers.org.uk	**Eastern Mapping and Co-ordinator Chris Hooker mapco@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**	**Land Permissions Coordinator Steve Blount permissions@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**	**Head Coach Rob Lines coach@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**
			
Junior Team Assistant Bea Waters juniordev@ southdowns-orienteers.org.uk	**Publicity (Web Content) David Marsh webeditor@ southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**	**SO Clothing Ian Curtis kit@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**	**Welfare Officer Clare Lines welfare@ southdowns-orienteers.org.uk**

Chairman's Chat - Alan Williamson



I am writing this in the middle of a number of recurring heatwaves. Not unenjoyable if you stay sedentary, but perhaps a little unwelcome if you are orienteering. I, for one, am looking forward to the cooler temperatures of Autumn and the return to the woods. Our Summer Park-O series as ever has proved very popular, especially amongst our Juniors, who are rapidly gaining in experience and confidence. You will read elsewhere in this magazine of their achievements, in Scotland and elsewhere. Our own areas in Sussex have plenty to recommend them, but nothing like Lagganlia's technicalities.

Editorial – Jane Lambert

Summer arrives and Orienteering moves into Parkland (to avoid the worst of the summer undergrowth in the forests), more Urban events take place. There are, of course, the larger events such as Scotland, and maybe trips to O events abroad – not forgetting other activities to fill the holidays!

The Summer O period feels sort of end of term like; the Club AGM has considered the previous year's O events, thanks have been given to those wonderful members who have stepped down from their committee roles, while new members (eyes shiny with excitement!) have volunteered to fill positions and help the club continue to, not only function, but to take the club forward into a new, exciting O year.

So, I'd like to recognise everyone who gives their time freely, all those with committee positions and also those who take on car parking duties, collect controls, provide SI support (week in/out), planners, mappers, permission gatherers – just EVERYONE behind the scenes who makes our friendly Club function so well!

The coming Autumn will be full of some brilliant local events, as well as those not quite so close – enjoy and maybe even volunteer to help out – as they say many hands……!
Safe running everyone!

Jane

Committee Chat – update from behind the scenes

As mentioned above the Club AGM was held in June and we welcome some new committee members:

Outgoing/Incoming:
Treasurer Ed Forman – voted in Ian Curtis
Secretary Bea Waters – voted in Clive Hawkes
Membership Secretary Mike Turner – voted in Samantha Gibson
Junior Team Manager Will Heap – voted in Anna Chapman
Map Printing Mike Gammon – voted in Neil Crickmore
Junior Team Assistant Anna Chapman – voted in Bea Waters
SO Clothing Mike Turner – voted in Ian Curtis

Thanks were given to those stepping down and new committee members were congratulated.

This still leaves a few empty positions which we would love to fill:
Permanent Course and MapRun Coordinator
Publicity Officer
Social Secretary

Please let one of the committee members know if you would like more information about any of these roles, or if you may be able to help. No experience needed - just a willingness to help support the club as and when you can.

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 June 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!

Iris Alden W21
Kai Bowers M10
Dave Turner M40
Spencer Turner M10

Member Discounts:
Don't forget there is a wide range of discounts available to members with many retailers, including GoApe, Sportsshoes, RunnersNeed, Cotswold outdoor, YHA, Car Hire, Airport parking, AA and many more: https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/discounts

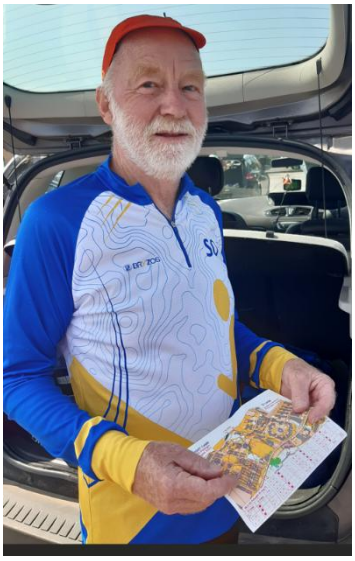
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Long term SO member and prolific orienteer, Robin Smith writes about his short-term memory loss

I recently had the dis-pleasure of discovering that I had a 'short term memory loss'.

It all started when I intended to go to the Braunton Sands for the Caddihoe in September 2024. I've been there before and knew the journey and event would be long and complicated. My bags were packed, and the local Premier Inn was booked. However, when I woke up in the morning, I couldn't face the prospect of going.

The same happened for the JK Easter at Sheffield 2025 and Kidderminster in May 2025. I fully intended to go to all these events. Again, I had entered them, booked the accommodation but I was too anxious and again couldn't face going to these events.



So, I visited my GP who gave me the GPCOG test.
https://www.cogsclub.org.uk/professionals/files/gpcog_scale.pdf

I failed and was advised to stop driving immediately.

I was told that my orienteering has not been affected, probably because I've been orienteering for over 56 years, so my orienteering skills had become embedded into my brain!

Fortunately, I live near BADO and have been lucky enough to have lifts to the MLS local events for which I'm truly grateful.

I have now signed up for a DVLA/DVA driving assessment in the hope it will help me regain my driving skills.

(Robin will shortly be changing club to BADO after many years of running for SO – we wish you all the very best Robin, please keep in touch and hope to still see you at the Army events)

Know your club member – Penny Parker

(Ed..Penny is not only a club member but a hugely valued part of the SI Team)



Karen Ashworth should be on commission for recruiting members 😊 😊 Circa 2012 whilst working with my good friends/colleagues, Karen, Joe and Jon, Karen enthusiastically described how much fun she and son Jack were having at Southdowns orienteering club and suggested coming along.

I had enjoyed many walks in the Lakes, Yorkshire, Scotland and Snowdonia, and decided to take Karen's advice and give orienteering a go and was immediately hooked. Initially my friend Jon and I did it together for the fun, camaraderie and reassurance since we were both novices. I remember being in fits of laughter stuck under a rhododendron bush saying, " I don't think this was the best route choice!".

I've improved a lot since then, yet know I'll never be brilliant at orienteering, but that doesn't spoil the enjoyment, unless I make too many silly mistakes and get angry with myself. I love the fact that the same event suits fiercely competitive and ultra fit people, as well as those, like me, who do it for fun, exercise and mental challenge.

My favourite events involve splashing through streams and clambering up muddy banks in beautiful woodland. Friend Joe, is as extremely competent at computing as he is at orienteering, and I'm very glad I said yes when he was asking for helpers when he offered to take over the SI role (the computing side of things that deals with entries and results; it's called SI simply because the software is named SportIdent.)

Joe does all the hard work of setting up the event databases, charging the equipment batteries, uploading entries on Friday evenings, and doing the results on Saturday afternoons, and I simply get the fun of helping put the tent up and making small amendments during an event, like changing someone's course or dibber number. The events would not happen without the dedication of people arranging land access, mapping the areas, doing safety and risk analysis, planning the courses, sorting the equipment and finances, and managing SI, and I'm pleased to play a little part in that.

The only difficulty in doing SI is that sometimes we struggle to all get a run because we need to stagger them. If all the team, Joe, Mike, Samantha, Les and I, are there we manage OK, but there are often times when we cannot all make the same event. So, if anyone reading this wants to help with SI please come and have a chat. It would be very helpful to have someone who either runs very fast and early, or who doesn't run at all, and would be prepared to sit at the desk for an hour and deal with minor changes and queries.



To anyone who has recently joined the club I say "welcome – good move", to anyone who is thinking of doing so I say " Do it". The members of Southdowns are among the most helpful, friendly, interesting and fun bunch of people I've ever met.

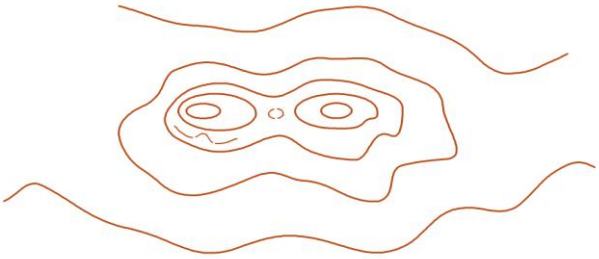
Take time to hang around during events to learn from the experienced orienteers, I've learnt so much just listening to them discuss their route choices. Attend the many training sessions available. Muck in and help with events – there are lots of things you can do - car parking, start grid, SI, course planning , control collecting etc.

Above all – have fun and bring your friends, water for afterwards, and a change of clothes – you will get wet and muddy – hopefully 😊

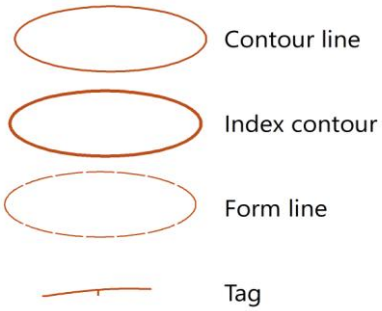
Know Your Map
by Chris Hooker
Part 5
Getting to Grips with Contours!



Understanding and interpreting contours is an important tool in the orienteer's toolbox. Look at the following map, what do you see?



This should be a difficult exercise because there's not quite enough information on the map to interpret it correctly. The map has just 2 types of symbol on it but to make things more clear we use 4 symbols, see below.



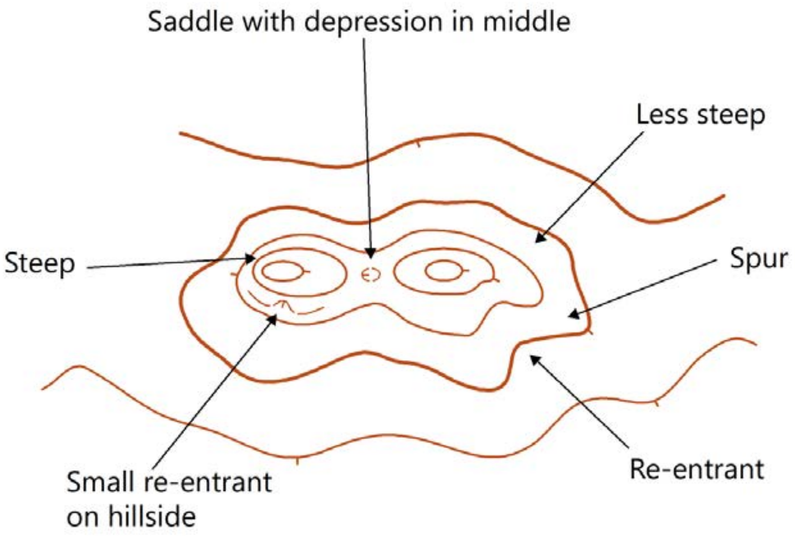
- Strictly speaking tags have different thicknesses for different lines but they all mean the same thing, they point downhill from the contour line.

- Contours are usually spaced every 5m although some less hilly areas and sprint maps may have them spaced every 2.5m.

- Index contours are spaced every 5th contour line. These often help to show the overall shape of the land more clearly. On occasions a mapper may select a contour that best shows the shape of the land over the whole map and make that an index contour. I've seen this done to great effect on some complex areas.

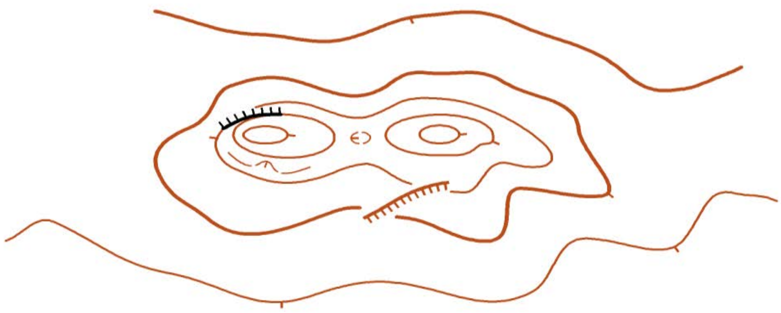
- Form lines are used to show features that the regular contour lines don't. They do not have to be positioned half way between the contour lines, this being dictated by the feature they are showing.

Now lets look at the map with tags and index contours added:



You should now have a much clearer idea of the shape of the land and it might not be what you expected! We have a main slope with a smaller double hill emerging from it. Note all the features that can now be picked out with some having been labelled. Also note that the closeness of the contour lines indicates steepness; the closer they are, the steeper the slope.

Finally, contour lines sometimes don't show features as clearly as you would like so some exageration is done! And lines are frequently cut to improve map clarity. Our map section also has a crag and an earthback so you will notice the contours have been cut near them to make them stand out, as well as some exageration of the spur and re-entrant.



Next time I will look at the whole mapping process, from blank page to fully detailed Orienteering map!

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Note the deadline for content for the next Southdowner edition (December 2025) is 17th November

Please send your contributions to
editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk
Also let me know if there are any additional features you would like to see in your Newsletter
Thank you!
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What is it like to orienteer with a colour vision deficiency?
by Karen Ashworth

(with sincere thanks to David Jukes for permission to publish from the original article in Trail O newsletter)



Karen Ashworth competed in both days at this year's JK. She is seen here on Day 1 tackling the AZ PreO course (photo David Jukes)

A discussion during JK2025 sent me off to try and find an app that would let me visualise the difficulties two of our club orienteers were describing with both maps and flags. I thought the results were interesting enough that others might also like to see them.

The images on the next page were taken using the Chromatic Vision Simulator app on an iPhone to 'screenshot' a single image displayed on my laptop. The four panels show this app's simulation of different types of colour vision.

The graphical plots in the left-hand column are taken from the article '*Comments on How Coloured Maps Might be Seen by Orienteers with Defective Colour* Vision' *(see reference information below).* These indicate the detail of the colours that are difficult to distinguish; the lines on the three lower plots (2, 3 and 4) link colours from the first plot (1) which look similar with each type of colour vision.

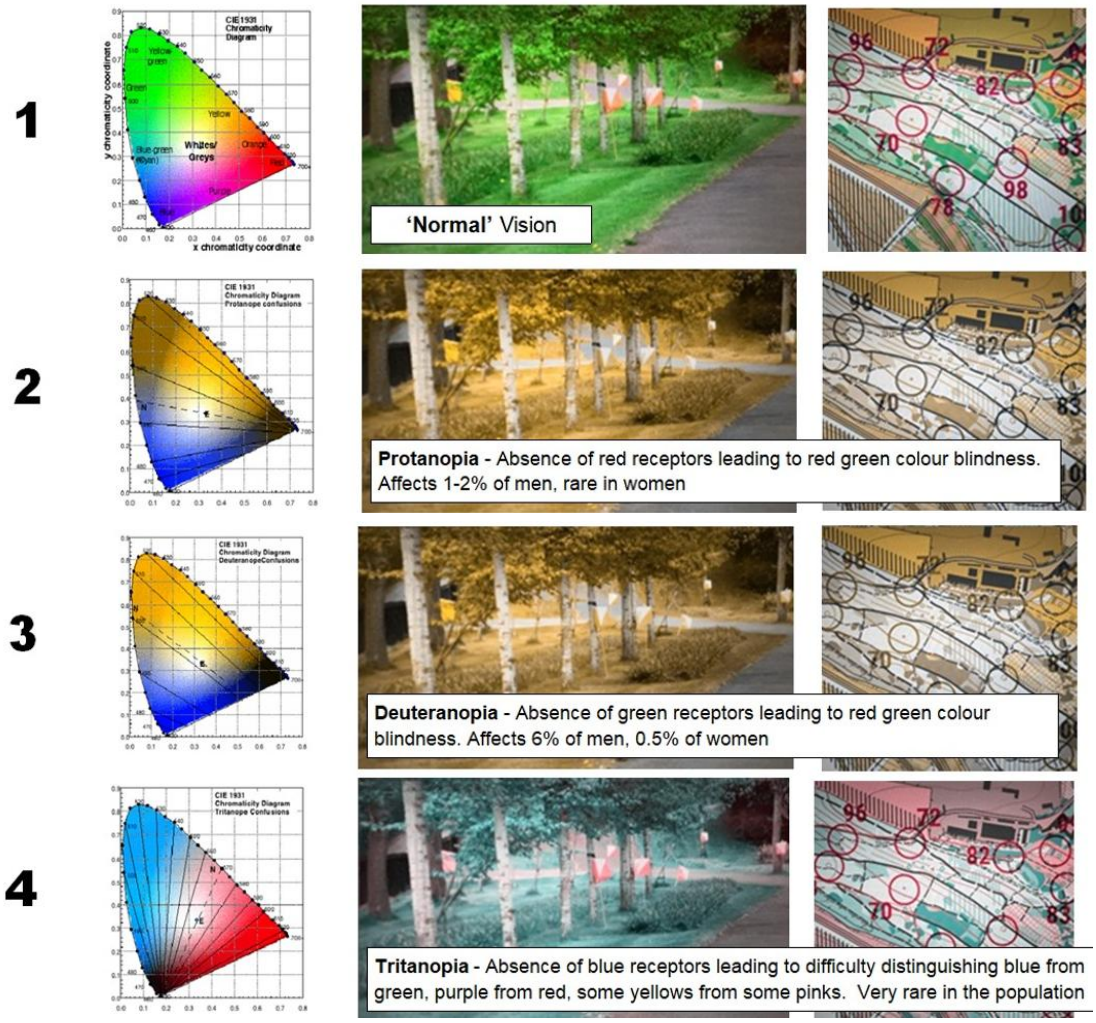
The central column shows a set of flags from a JK2025 Trail-O photo as viewed using the Chromatic Vision Simulator app. Note the disappearing act the done by the orange triangles - it's clear that the choice of orange for orienteering flags was a poor one for those with protanopia or deuteranopia!

The impact on how mapping symbols appear is shown in the right-hand column using the Chromatic Vision Simulator app to view part of an SO score event map. Note, for example, how the thickets southeast of control 72 are almost impossible to distinguish from knolls in panels 2 and 3.

I don't have any solutions to propose – ISOM is ISOM and flags are flags – but it does suggest a dialogue would be worthwhile about anything that might help.

Reference: Comments on How Coloured Maps Might be Seen by Orienteers with Defective Colour Vision, Associate Professor Barbara Junghans, School of Optometry and Vision Science, UNSW, January 2009.

The full paper is available in the mapping resources section on the British Orienteering website, see **britishorienteering.org.uk/document/481d0f9329f521999d35fe21f757b4f3/mappers_defectivecolourvision.pdf**



CONFESSIONS OF A DEUTERANOPIC (that's me!) by David Wilson

I don't know how different the photographs in numbers 1 & 3 look to you, but to me, with defective green colour vision, they look identical. The easiest way for you to visualise my world is to imagine that green doesn't exist – easier than imagining that it does. Thus grass is brown all the year round (a sort of medium oak colour) and the green aspect of traffic lights is grey (think of a rainy sky). Why you should think they have anything in common is beyond me!

For orienteering purposes this can generate difficulties in two ways. First, seeing the control flag. The orange used is not so very different from the colour of spring vegetation. Of course, this shouldn't be a problem as good navigation would take you to the flag anyway – well, maybe.

More seriously, green and brown on orienteering maps are easily confused. In the early days, clubs sometimes used brown instead of yellow for open areas. This happened at Norbury Park and again in Epping Forest. I couldn't then distinguish such an open area from a 'fight' area in green (which made quite a difference to route choice!) and had to get a companion to mark up my map for me.

Recently, I had three tries at finding a shallow pit in Selhurst Park, before realising that the aiming point I wanted to use was actually a small tree (green) and not a mound (brown). It is easier to distinguish colours if they occupy a larger area. For this reason the ISOM 2017 specifications say that 418 (Prominent bush or tree, 0.2mm, green) should be used sparingly – instead 417 (Prominent large tree,1.1mm) should be considered, and in both cases should have a white centre unlike 109 (small knoll, brown).

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



I'd like to start by offering huge thanks to Will Heap who has recently stepped down from the role of SO Junior Team Manager. Will has played a huge part in the development of our juniors and continues to encourage them whenever he can. Will is still heavily involved in Junior Orienteering and is currently one of the England Junior Team Manager's, so we know our juniors are in good hands if they get to this level.

I have now stepped up to the role of SO Junior Team Manager and Bea Waters has taken on the role of Junior Team Assistant. Do let us know if you'd like to get more involved or have any ideas for Junior development. At the end of June we got back to holding our summer junior camp at Knowlands, which was a great success, then a week later put on a great show for the final of the inter-club junior YBT final. Two fantastic events for our juniors. More about these later.

This Summer we introduced a new 15 minute warm up session for juniors at the start of each Park-O. We found that this worked very well and was a great opportunity for both juniors and parents to get together at the same time and share experiences and advice. We will try and keep it up through into the next SOG series. Here are the current standings in the Park-O league after six Park-O's, with two more left to go.

Yellow M12-	1st Finley Carrington 2nd Kai Bowers 3rd Arlo Smithard	Yellow W12-	1st Lizzie Nichols 2nd Annabelle Carrington
Orange M14-	1st Mark Johnson 2nd Christopher Warner 3rd Daniel Duncan	Orange W14-	1st Harriet Nichols 2nd Iris Alden
Sprint M16-	1st Ben Chapman 2nd Daniel Duncan 3rd William Grainge	Short Green W16-	1st Emma Chapman 2nd Emily Waters

Congratulations on selections to compete for Great Britain and England
James Curtis M18 has been selected for the Great Britain Trail-O squad and is due to competing at the World TrailO Champs in Hungary and Slovakia at the end of August.

Heather High W20 has been selected to run for Great Britain at the Junior European Cup which takes place from 3rd to 5th October in the Stirling and Loch Ard areas of Scotland.

Emma Chapman W14 has been selected to run for England at the Junior Home Internationals in South Wales on 11th and 12th Oct. This will be an individual and a relay against competitors from Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

SE Sprint Champs – Brunel University
On Sunday the 1st of June the annual SE sprint champs took place at Brunel University in London. Well done to our juniors who successfully navigated around the complex University buildings to gain podium positions.

Gold	**Silver**
Lucas Waters M12- Ben Chapman M16- Emma Chapman W16-	Emily Waters W16-

Lagganlia 2025
Lagganlia is the first of the JROS camps, which juniors of all ages attend throughout the year. It is for top year M/W14's who have achieved as certain standard at selection races. It aims to provide athletes with the skills and techniques to progress with their orienteering journey. It is also a great place to get to know members of your age class who you will have been running against previously but may not have been introduced to. Emma and Emily were both selected to go on the camp this year and share their experiences below:

Emma:
My experience this year started with a train ride from London to Edinburgh, which was a new experience as I hadn't been on a long-distance train before. I travelled with four other juniors from the South East and at Edinburgh we joined the majority of the rest of the athletes to travel on to Aviemore. Here we were collected and transported to Lagganlia. When we arrived at the site, we were shown to our rooms and settled in before exploring what was to be our home for the next week.

Each training day ran much like a regional training day, with coaching exercises in the morning, then lunch, a few more exercise, then an afternoon activity such as a relay. We had three days of training, then a rest, then one more day of training before the tour champs on the day before we travelled back. I enjoyed the terrain we used for the training because it was so different to what we are used to in the South, with complex contour detail on vast expanses of heather moorland, pine forests and wooded sand dunes.

The rest day in the middle of the week was by far my favourite day. It consisted of the tour sprint champs around Aviemore, which I came second in and then a knockout sprint which I also placed 2nd in, followed by a swim in Loch Morlich and shopping in Aviemore. The day was topped off with a night o, at a local golf course, in which we had an hour and a bit to run a choice of two light green's and an orange course. I did all three and enjoyed the slightly easier navigation after the previous three days.

At the end of the week, we took part in the tour champs which I mispunched in, which I don't do very often. The navigation at the end was a lot harder than the previous days. It was rather bingo-ish with very low visibility and no large features to navigate from. Overall, this wasn't my best day, but I still enjoyed the experience of the quarantine beforehand and the very quiet start as well as the peacefulness of the woods during the event.

At the end of the week, those staying in Scotland were transported to Ballater to reunite with our families ready for another tiring week of Orienteering at the Scottish 6 Days. During the events I felt that the week at Lagganlia has paid off as my navigation was a lot better than normal in Scottish terrain, although I wasn't running as fast as I would have wanted to.

Overall, I think it was a great experience and has improved my Orienteering skills as well as giving me a chance to get to know more people in my age class and ready me for hopefully many more JROS tours.

Emily:
On the 19th of July we took a train to Lagganlia in Scotland. There were 23 of us from all the different regions in the UK.

We stayed in wooden chalets which had bedrooms and communal areas. Outside there was a lovely, wooded area where we played games.

Every day we took a minibus to a different area to train. We did a series of activities each day followed by a competition.

The coaches were lovely and helped me focus on everything I needed to practice. Every day we went over everything we improved and what we still needed to improve. In the evenings we played games and had dinner (which was really good – I especially liked the brownies).

Halfway through the week, as a rest day, we did a sprint competition and visited a Loch to go swimming. On the last day we did an orienteering competition to put all the skills we learned during the week into practice.

Overall, the week was so much fun. It was a great opportunity to make new friends and learn new orienteering skills.

Emma and Emily would both like to thank SO and SEOA for financial support to go on this camp.

Scottish 6 Days

Five of our juniors travelled to Deeside with their families at the end of July to take part in the Scottish 6 days and were tested on some tough terrain. The events moved from Braemar to Banchory along the Dee Valley, giving plenty of scope for visiting castles along the way!



Heather – silver medal at Scottish 6 Days

The Scottish 6 Days is a great family friendly festival of orienteering, often attracting over 3000 competitors. The terrain is physically and technically challenging at the upper end, but quite achievable for younger runners at the lower end of the courses. For our younger members the string courses they provide are usually fantastic.

Heather High, who is still just about classed as a junior at W20 put in a fantastic performance over the muti-day competition and grabbed a silver podium spot. Heather lives in Switzerland but has been a long-term member of Southdowns Orienteers, flying back to take part in the bigger competitions and relays on a regular basis.

Southdowns Orienteers Juniors Take Third Place at Yvette Baker Trophy Final

National junior inter-club final held at Capite Wood, West Sussex

On Sunday 6 July 2025, Southdowns Orienteers (SO) hosted the final of the **Yvette Baker Trophy and Shield** at Capite Wood, West Sussex. This event is the premier junior inter-club competition for English and Welsh orienteering clubs, with separate competitions for larger clubs (the Trophy) and smaller clubs (the Shield). Scottish clubs compete in their own equivalent event, the Jamie Stevenson Trophy.



The SO Junior Team delivered an exceptional performance, securing **third place** in the Yvette Baker Trophy competition - a strong result in what proved to be an extremely close contest between the top teams.

A Competitive and Memorable Event
The final brought together clubs from across the country, with six clubs competing in the Trophy and eight in the Shield. The Capite Wood venue, a beautiful area of coppiced woodland with stream valleys and a complex network of rides and paths, provided a technically challenging and scenic environment for the competitors.

In the Trophy competition, the margin separating the top five teams was extremely narrow, underlining the high standard of competition on the day.

Yvette Baker Trophy Results:

1. West Anglian Orienteering Club (WAOC) – 885 points
2. Hertfordshire Orienteering Club (HH) – 877 points
3. Southdowns Orienteers (SO) – 873 points
4. Thames Valley Orienteering Club (TVOC) – 872 points
5. South Yorkshire Orienteers (SYO) – 870 points
6. Norfolk Orienteering Club (NOR) – 851 points

In the Shield competition, **North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club (NGOC)** took first place

Yvette Baker Shield Results:

1. North Gloucestershire Orienteering Club (NGOC) – 497 points
2. Harlequins Orienteering Club (HOC) – 493 points
3. South London Orienteers (SLOW) & Suffolk Orienteering Society (SOS) – 488 points
4. Dartford Orienteers (DFOK) – 485 points
5. Saxons Orienteering Club (SAX) – 387 points
6. Suffolk Orienteering Club (SUFFOC) – 383 points
7. Cornwall Orienteering Club (KERNO) – 290 points

A Well-Organised and Enjoyable Weekend
In addition to the main competition, the event offered a wide range of supplementary activities for juniors, including an orienteering maze, a tin can alley, and a craft-based activity. These activities, alongside live music and commentary from Ed Lines, contributed to a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere.

The presence of a food truck, an ice cream van, and the Compass Point orienteering equipment stall ensured that competitors and spectators were well catered for throughout the day. On-site camping was also made available and well-utilised by many clubs, contributing to a sociable and relaxed weekend.

Despite a looming thunderstorm, the prizegiving ceremony was completed promptly and efficiently. Followed, in typical British fashion, by the return of sunshine shortly afterward.

Acknowledgements
Southdowns Orienteers extend their sincere thanks to all competitors, volunteers, and supporters who contributed to the success of the 2025 Yvette Baker Final. Particular thanks go to **Anna Chapman** for overall event organisation, **Chris Hooker** (planner), **Mike Murray (SLOW)** and **Neil Crickmore** (controllers), **Dom Dakin (SYO)** for his assistance with entry administration, and **Joe and the SI team** for their professional and efficient management of results. Also to **Kasia and Jennie** for setting up the maze and crafting activity. Southdowns Orienteers are extremely proud of their junior team's performance and to have hosted such a successful and memorable national event.
Bea (YBT coordinator)

For some really wonderful photos see Rob Lines' Flickr account:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/148096286@N05/albums/72177720327375038/

SO Junior Camp 2025 at Knowlands Wood:
A Memorable Weekend of Orienteering and Team Spirit
By Bea, Camp Organiser



Over the weekend of **28–29 June 2025**, ten of our dedicated juniors, aged between 9 and 17, participated in the **SO Junior Camp** at **Knowlands Wood**. With hot, sunny weather and a beautiful woodland setting, the scene was perfect for two days of focused orienteering training and social activities. T ents were pitched in the meadow with shelter, fresh water and compostable toilets nearby.

Training and Development

The camp offered a full programme of orienteering training, with participants engaging in sessions ranging from foundational map-setting to more advanced techniques such as **simplification**, **pacing**, and **route planning,** finishing with a relay race on Sunday afternoon. Juniors demonstrated commendable enthusiasm and perseverance throughout, undeterred by the heat and the physical demands of the terrain.



Training was led by **Coach Rob**, whose experience and energy provided invaluable support to the learning process. Sessions on simplification and pacing were delivered by **Ed L and Bea**.

In addition to the structured training, an **orienteering maze**, set up by **Kasia and Ian**, offered a fun and fast-paced challenge, available throughout the weekend.

Evening Around the Campfire

The social aspect of the camp was equally rewarding. Following a full day of training, participants gathered around the campfire to enjoy their evening meal, including dessert and, of course, toasted marshmallows. The evening was filled with several lively rounds of the game 40-40 and some music from a nearby village.



Acknowledgements

The success of the SO Junior Camp would not have been possible without the generous time and support of many individuals:

- **Coach Rob**, for leading the training with expertise and enthusiasm.
- **Ed L**, for his insightful session on map simplification.
- **Steve B and Karen**, for coordinating permissions and ensuring event safety.
- **Anna**, for her outstanding organisational work and delicious catering.
- **Kasia and Ian**, for constructing the orienteering maze.
- **Pete and Ed W**, for their invaluable assistance throughout the weekend.



Looking Ahead

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many describing the camp as a highlight of their summer. There is strong interest in making the **SO Junior Camp an annual event**, building on this year's success to create a lasting tradition for our junior members.

Photos – Bea Waters

My Experience with Trail-O

By James Curtis



I had surgery on the 1st August last year that meant I was unable to compete in orienteering events for the rest of the year. But as someone who loves orienteering, I couldn't just go 5 months without doing it so instead I picked up trail orienteering. This is a sub-discipline of orienteering that can be done by anyone, even people who are on crutches or in a wheelchair. It involves identifying whether control flags are in the same place on the ground as they are shown on the map and control description.

I take part in monthly online Trail-O events on the temposim website which all contribute towards a leaderboard for the year. I am currently 24th out of 702 global competitors and am 3rd out of all the Brits for this year's competition. There is also a whole catalogue of old events which you can access at any time. I use these if I want to practice or get in the right mindset before an event.

Last October, I went to my first in person Trail O event which was the British champs held in Happy Herts terrain. It consisted of 3 events across the weekend, each testing slightly different skills. I was still on crutches while competing here but that did not impair my performance, and I was able to win the junior category across the weekend. This was a fun experience and while it was different doing it in person compared to the online events, it was nice to know that the skills transferred over. I have then since competed at this year's Trail O event held alongside the JK which consisted of 2 events held in a park on day 1 and then an event in terrain very similar to what we had been running in during the morning on day 2.

Since getting back into running orienteering courses, I have noticed a lot of the skills I have gained also help me in regular orienteering courses. For example, I can visualise the shape of the terrain when looking at contours quicker and am better at matching features on the ground to where they are shown on the map. This helps a lot when trying to relocate after making a silly mistake. It also serves as a good test of whether you know all the map symbols and control descriptions as this can be especially useful in Trail O.

I will continue to take part in Trail O events in addition to regular orienteering even as I get back to full fitness as they provide a fun technical challenge and help improve regular orienteering skills.



News update –James has been selected for the British Orienteering Trail-O squad and will be competing for Great Britain at the World Champs which are being held jointly in Hungary and Slovakia at the end of August.

We wish James all the very best!!

A Personal Experience of Lyme Disease
by Judith Carder

I've known about Lyme Disease for many years but thought the risk was exaggerated – until I caught it!

First the disclaimer: I have no medical qualifications so please read this purely as my own tale.

For the uninitiated (can there be many amongst the orienteering community?), Lyme Disease is an infection with *Borrelia* bacteria which is transmitted to humans by a tick bite. Only infected ticks can pass on the infection, and they don't always do so. The sort of habitat that ticks thrive in is the same habitat that orienteers enjoy. There's excellent mention on our website on all of the individual event pages, "Ticks", with a useful link.
Information can also be found on the NHS and Patient.info websites. I recommend reading up on how best to remove a tick; there's a right way and a wrong way. The typical British symptoms vary slightly from the American version of the disease so be aware of what you're reading online. It's not my intention here to go fully into possible symptoms but just to note that they can be severe if left untreated.

(Ticks can also pass on Tick-Borne Encephalitis – see our website – of which I happily have no experience and will not mention again.)

So how did it start for me? I'm allergic to insect bites and contact with grass pollens brings me out in a rash, so I spend much of every summer lumpy and scratching. Around the beginning of June last year, I don't know exactly when, something bit me on the back of my thigh. I never saw the culprit. This was par for the course at this time of year, and I thought nothing of it. However, the red area didn't go away and it got larger, much larger. I paid little attention; it wasn't in a place that I could see easily. After a few weeks I asked Tim to have a look in good light. He took one glance and said "you've got Lyme Disease". Hmmm! Oh dear! Apparently, I had the typical – if you looked closely – "bullseye" rash. (Not everyone gets this but in this country most do.) Time for a GP appointment - that took a further eight days!

The GP concurred and I was hastily put on antibiotics for three weeks. Well that was a treat (not); they made me feel sick, but the leaflet said I could take them with or without food and I discovered that a honey sandwich stopped the nausea. The antibiotics did their job and only then did I realise that I'd been feeling slightly unwell. I was left with an occasionally stiff and sore neck which took about ten months to go away. I can't be entirely sure of the cause, but I think I know that those pesky Borrelia were to blame.



I'll never know whether I caught Lyme Disease in England or whilst Interrailing in Europe, but the south of England is a known area of prevalence in the UK. I've since spoken to several other people who've also been infected.

So, this is a cautionary tale. It's just my personal experience but it's taught me that Lyme Disease is a genuine risk, and I wanted to pass that on. Stay safe in those sunlit forests!



Check for ticks and remove any that you find using an approved method. Monitor afterwards.

Photos from Lyme Disease Action - For more information on UK ticks see: https://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk

Montane Spine Challenger South – Race Report by Simon Fitzpatrick

Fri 13th – Sun 15th June 2025

A year ago, I successfully completed my first 100 mile race – the Centurion South Downs Way 100. The feeling of achievement, relief and exhaustion lasted for the whole of the following week. But it didn't take long to start thinking about the next challenge and I was going big….



SDW100 finished in 25h50m – thanks LittleDave

The Spine, as it is commonly called, is made up of five separate races that cover different distances – Sprint South (46miles), Sprint North (43 miles), Challenger South (108 miles), Challenger North (160 miles) and Spine (268 miles). I first came across the event when Jasmin Paris hit the news as the winner of the Winter Spine in 2019. She won the race outright beating the previous course record by over 12 hours and was expressing milk for her baby during the event! I became an avid dot watcher of both the summer & winter versions, monitoring the progress of the competitors moving slowly north on the Pennine Way. Places are limited on each race and by mid-July I had to make a decision as there weren't many left. So I entered the Challenger South (aka Spine CS). It was "only" 8 miles longer than the SDW so I reckon I could get it done!

Initially my training focused on walking as I was taking part in The Trailwalker event organised by The Ghurka Welfare Trust at the end of September 2024. It is a team of event so I had joined up with three old school friends. We had a few training hikes together over the summer and had great fun reminiscing about our teenage years. We completed the 100km along the SDW in just over 24hours. It was great time on feet training for me and a really fun event with amazing aid stations. Mo & Angela spent another sleepless night together in the car acting as our crew as they had done on the SDW100.

The autumn was not kind to me. I had a stinking cold mid-October which meant a slow Beachy Head Ultra event (50km) at the end of October. Then I fell over whilst orienteering at Cowdray in early November and broke my wrist which led to a 2 month break from trail running (I did feel comfortable on the treadmill but it's not the same).

I started again in earnest in Jan 2025 by which time I had purchased some of the mandatory kit that would be required, including a much larger running vest. I started using it to get accustomed to the feel and multiple storage pockets. I was supposed to have taken part in the Freedom Racing North Downs Ridge 50km towards the end of Feb but deferred my entry due to lack of training. I was back up to long runs of about 30km by this time and completed the LDWA Sevenoaks Circular 50km walk on 16th March and then a 10-hour 4-mile looped event by Fortitude Fullsteam on 22nd March (65km).



(Fortitude – 4mile loop every hour for 10 hours)

During this time, I had also met up with a local Spine expert who gave me lots of great tips and suggested I do a recce on the Pennine Way. So, I headed up to Leeds for 2 nights on 31st March so I could run the section from Hebden Bridge to Gargrave (both easily accessible by train). The weather had been incredibly dry since the end of Feb so the trail was bone dry and quite runnable. I was surprised by the number of sections that were covered in flagstones to prevent erosion of the bog. I was also surprised by how vicious some of the climbs were. By this time, I had started to carry more water and tried to get used to drinking slightly less than my usual 500ml an

hour as I knew there were going to be some sections where it could take me up to 6 hours before I could refill. My bag, who I'd named Stan, was certainly heavier than I was used to and my pace was considerably slower. I would be carrying approx. 8.5kg on the Spine whereas my usual race vest for ultras is around 2.5kg! The 50km recce had taken 9h15m including a few stops for food & drink. I was blown away by the landscape & scenery and how remote I felt at times. It is very different to the South Downs.

My training continued and my longest run in my schedule came around rapidly on 26th April in the form of Brighton to London (100km). I carried Stan with about 75% of the estimated Spine weight (so approx. 6kg). The race was perfect in terms of training as there were no course markings, only 5 aid stations and only 70 competitors. At check-in I met a fellow Spine CS competitor, Emma Humphrey, whom I would end up spending many hours with on the Spine (I only spent about 5mins with her on this event). I probably went off a little quick for the first 40km (5h10m) as I found myself in a little posse of runners and felt OK. But coming into the half way point I was struggling a little and then found myself on my own for the rest of the race. This was perfect training and a real eye opener as to how much more difficult it was to force myself to run rather than walk. I did a lot of the latter taking around 3 hours to cover 17km (there were only two short punchy climbs). After a long stop at the aid station to refuel on tea & pot noodle I set off refreshed and managed the last 33km in 4h50m. The next day my ankle was a little swollen and the short story was that the mid sole of my inov-8 Trailfly shoes had collapsed. I reduced my training (again) and hiking seemed to be OK but my longest taper run/walk was 31km. Did I feel ready? Not really but I'm not sure I ever feel 100% fit for these long events.

I had invested a lot of time & money into this event. The kit list was very thorough so some new purchases were required including a bivvy bag, shovel, blister needles, goggles, cup, red light and spare headtorch. Waterproof gloves & insulated jacket seemed to be causing most people problems but luckily I had managed to purchase some second hand Polaris gloves from Vinted and I already has a really good lightweight Alpkit Katabatic jacket. I'm a huge fan of Alpkit stuff. The anxiety around kit reached fever pitch in the last couple of weeks as I had it all laid out or in my drop bag ready for the event. I must have checked and repacked it three or four times in the last week and in fact I pulled out everything I needed into one bag for kit check so that it was easily accessible. The Spine is an unsupported event so no crew or pacers. The Challenger South has just one official aid station (Hebden Hey at 75km) which has hot food and one checkpoint with hot water at Malham Tarn (135km). However, competitors are allowed to use any facilities on the Pennine Way so long as they are available to everyone. Previous competitors and volunteers are very good at sharing knowledge on social media so I had prepared a schedule of places to stop, distances and an estimate of how long each section may take.

Despite the fact that the event is unsupported Mo had agreed to get me to the start line and pick me up at the finish. But she was not alone as her partner in crime, Angela, fancied keeping her company - they had planned some hiking & a spa hotel whilst I was out doing the crazy thing! They have both acted as my crew on previous events so it was nice to have them around. I always thank them for giving up their time (& sleep) at these long events but just want to say THANK YOU again. It means so much to have them around. I know how stressful it can be acting as a crew, making sure you're in the right place at the right time, driving between aid stations and helping to top up soft flasks & food. I am very grateful and hope to repay the favour on one of their adventures soon.

I was pretty anxious once we pulled into the car park at Edale around 1pm on Friday. The very first step of the check-in process was kit check which is for every competitor. It was a huge relief to only need to show 5 items and about 10mins later I was allowed to continue onto the registration stage and then the infamous photo for the tracker. Others were not so lucky and needed to show everything (it is completely random each year). We attended the race briefing which reiterated the unsupported nature of the event. I could then relax so we got a coffee & bite to eat in the lovely Penny Pot Café and wandered up the road to The Old Nags Head, the official start of the Pennine Way. Mo & Angela sussed out their breakfast at Newfold Farm café for Saturday morning before their planned hike up to Mam Tor. We then drove to our AirBnB in Buxton, close enough to Edale but far enough away from the distractions in the run up to the start! I faffed around repacking my backpack & drop bag before we headed out for an early dinner. I had a pretty reasonable sleep given the pre-race nerves.



Tracker photo for all the dotwatchers

We arrived into Edale around 7am on Saturday to deposit my drop bag, get the tracker fitted and do some last-minute faffing. I saw Emma in the car park, met her husband Chris and had a quick chat about the Brighton to London. The weather forecast was for thunderstorms through the day and then clearing. It was cloudy but warm at the start. We took some pre-race photos under the start gantry and then we were off at 8am. I made sure I didn't set off too quickly and within 300m many of us were fast hiking up the very small inclined road to the Official Start of the Pennine Way footpath. I saw Emma so we ran/walked together until Jacob's Ladder where she pulled away. It seemed like a never-ending climb up into the clouds to Kinder Low trig point. The clouds lifted a little at Kinder Downfall so we got some views at last. It was tricky underfoot with sandy trails and scattered rocks leading to a steep descent to the plateau and then a climb up to Mill Hill. I went past Emma at so me point. Once up the climb we then hit the first section of flagstones which continued for 4km to Snake Pass (A57) – even managed to bash out sub 8mins/km.



looking fresh coming into Snake Pass - © Spine®

The next 10km were just hard work and slow going on the narrow paths, initially following the streams (Devil's Dyke & Hern Clough) and then along the side of Torside Clough (a valley) with a nasty descent to the reservoir. I could see a large rain shower coming in so put on my waterproof just as it started – took it off 5mins later! I was expecting to top up water at Torside as there was a Spine Safety Team at the road crossing (B6105) but alas I subsequently discovered they only do that in the Winter event. I was super confused too as there was another race going on which crossed the road at the same point as us and there were water bottles scattered everywhere. Their race went west along the disused railway but we went across the dam wall (road). I was still half hoping to see a water refill team - in hindsight I should have topped up using the discarded water bottles (other competitors did so). I still had enough water to get me to the snack van on the A635 but I'd need to drink a bit less t han normal. I was about 30mins behind my race prediction so the 25km to Torside had taken me 4h10mins.

Into the wooded section alongside Torside Reservoir and across the busy road (A628) where apparently I just missed Mo & Angela. Unlike other events I had put my phone into Airplane mode to conserve battery life so I was not getting any messages. The clouds suddenly cleared which led to a warm sun which was not ideal on the climb up to Laddow Rocks. This was possibly the hardest part of my race and in hindsight I should have packed my Alpkit water filter as other competitors were filling up in the stream (probably Oakenbrook Clough). I was struggling with sore knees after the climb so stopped at the top of Laddow Rocks to take on a gel & Stroopwaffle (these make for a great race snack). Emma appeared and decided to stop to eat too. We both set off after 15mins feeling a little better but it was still slow going up to Black Hill. There were a couple of flagstone sections but not enough to make up time lost on the rocky sections. It was on one of the flagstone sections where we ventured slightly off the path as it was covered in water. Emma suddenly disappeared up to her thighs in the black bog. I backtracked a few metres to the flagstones and managed to escape with just wet feet. I should have either put my waterproof socks on before the water or changed my socks as soon as they got wet as it would come back to bite me very soon - be bothered as they told us at the briefing! Mo & Angela were at the snack van – I was not expecting them so it was a nice surprise. There is always a feeling of guilt when family & friends come to support me on these events as I don't want to stop for long and usually spend much of the time making sure I am doing what I need to do. But the emotional boost makes it so worthwhile. They commented on my shoes collapsing inwards (again) and I could feel it but could not do anything about it until Hebden Hey, where I had a spare pair of different shoes. In hindsight I should have stuck with my trusty Inov-8 Trailfly G-300 Max shoes from the start rather than use the somewhat untested newer Inov-8 Trailfly Max. I had intended to get a bacon butty at the snack van but instead opted for a can of Coke & 1ltr of water - I never drink Coke but felt like I needed it. I was now about 45mins behind my predicted time - the 37km had taken 6h38mins. It is nuts to think that the last 12km had taken 2h30mins but that sums up how I was feeling and if Emma was not there I would have taken more time.

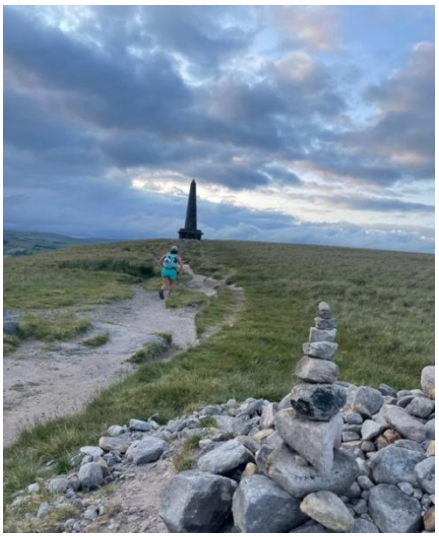


Emma and me near The White House - © Spine®

As Emma & I set off from the snack van we met Chris, her husband, but we didn't stop. The next few kilometres went by easily on a downhill wide gravel track but then it dropped steeply and climbed up a steep stone step path just below Wessenden Reservoir. We stopped at the top of the climb and I decided to take a look at my right foot. There was a small blister forming above the ridge of hard skin around my heel so I simply added a plaster at this stage. My feet were showing minor signs of trench foot after getting wet earlier. We continued up Blakely Clough and the leader of the Spine Sprint South (Chris Cope) went flying by – he'd covered the same distance as us in half the time! The wind was pretty strong and in our faces which was making it tough. It was nice to know that this section from the snack van to the Oldham Mountain Rescue Team (MRT) aid station was only 8km and the following section to Nicky's Café was another 7km. We arrived into the MRT point and filled water bottles and ate snacks. I was now about 50mins behind my prediction - the 45km had taken 8h15mins.

I don't actually remember much of the next section but we seemed to be moving along at a decent pace and arrived into Nicky's Café around 5:40pm – so the 53km had taken 9h40mins (about one hour behind my prediction). We tucked into a cheeseburger, a very welcome cup of tea and a can of Irn Bru (also took a banana & Lion bar for later). I decided to take another look at my feet and by now the small blister had grown into a larger blood blister so out came one of the mandatory needles to drain the blister. I actually can't remember how I dressed it but I did change into dry socks (I should have done this as soon as they got wet). We spent around 25mins at the café before setting off again. The next section to Hebden Hey was a long one - 23km.

After leaving the café we crossed the bridge over the M62, onto Blackstone Edge and down to The White House Inn on the A58. The Spine Team was there and we were in good spirits and the photographer got some good shots. Both Emma & I were struggling mentally with the enormity of the distances & time it was taking and finding it difficult to see ourselves continuing beyond the checkpoint but agreed to take some time out there to try to reset before making any decisions. The next section was flat alongside a few reservoirs and a drainage channel so a bit faster. Emma stopped to dress a blister hot spot and we eventually arrived at Stoodley Pike around 8:25pm to see a couple of young guys setting up a tent on the windy side! I really started to struggle with my knees on the path down from Stoodley Pike into the outskirts of Hebden and back up the other side so walked nearly all of it which meant that 8km took about 2hours.



Emma approaching Stoodley Pike

Emma went on ahead in the last few kilometres so got in about 10mins ahead of me. I had met up with some others that were walking so stuck with them for the last little bit on the road. We turned off the road onto a footpath down to the Hebden Hey Activity Centre checkpoint and suddenly a head torch was required as it was very dark. It wasn't as treacherous as I was expecting but there were lots of rocks covered in moss so one wrong step could end in disaster. I eventually arrived at 10:25pm meaning that the first 76km had taken 14h25mins (about 1h50m more than I estimated). I lost a lot of time on that last section.

The Spine Team was amazing. A volunteer showed me to a chair, carried my drop bag and got me a cup of tea. I showed my feet to one of the medical team and explained my knee pain. The feet were not that bad so could be taped up and my knee pain was probably a tendon/ligament issue as a result of my quads working hard (more hill training required in future). In the next hour I showered, changed and had a good hot meal so felt better but not mentally ready to go again so I decided to try to get some sleep. Big mistake. I'd been warned that the activity centre was noisy but ignored the warnings thinking that it would be more comfortable than being out on

the trail. I think I managed a 20min nap and then another 25min nap in the next 2 ½ hours! I eventually got up around 2:30am, dressed my blisters with the help of the medic and repacked my pack & drop bag. It was such a nice surprise to see Emma appear around 3am as I thought she'd be long gone by now and I'd be alone. We agreed to continue together so left just before 3:30am. I'd spent five hours at the checkpoint. My estimate was 30mins based upon my SDW100 experience but in hindsight there was so much more faffing as it was really busy and I needed the reset. If I return to the race in the future, I would certainly aim to spend only an hour there and sleep on the trail.

We had to climb back up to the road and once there it was not completely dark but we retained our headtorches for an hour. I knew this next section, having done the recce in April, and estimated that it would take 5 hours to get to the Triathlon Crew pop up aid station. We saw some people bivvying out near the reservoirs and Top Withens as the sun rose. We were moving pretty slowly, close to my estimated 13mins/km average which I think Emma struggled with mentally as she was probably hoping she'd be running more. The weather looked like it might rain but thankfully didn't. We arrived pretty much bang on schedule to the best bacon bap & cup of tea. Other racers had donned full waterproofs at some point so not sure how we managed to dodge the rain. We also met Harriet & Alex for the first time – they were an infamous brother & sister from the Spine WhatsApp group (yes there is such a thing). Alex had stopped his race 2 miles short of the finish last year due to an ankle injury but Harriet had finished so she was back to make sure he did so this year! We set off again about 20mins later knowing that there were more places to get food & drink over the next 30km so I felt a bit more positive. The mood swings from "I can't do this" to "I've got this" came and went.

It was on the next section I suddenly had the urge for a poo which I've never experienced whilst out on an event before. I held on for a bit but eventually needs must so I ventured off the path into some trees & long grass near Surgill Beck and rummaged around for my poo kit (trowel, tissues & poo bags). This in itself was stressful as time was of the essence! The relief I immediately felt was so good. I tried to dig a hole to bury the evidence but the ground was rock solid so it was more of a shallow grave. To be honest there was so much long grass and I was far enough off the trail I didn't worry too much. With a spring in my step I set off again to catch up with Emma. We continued down into Lothersdale and up & over Pinhaw Beacon at a slow pace. Emma was really struggling to get any energy from her food & drink. I really enjoyed running this section on the recce but there was none of that business now – just trying to fast hike as much as possible. We had another stop to eat, drink and apply sun cream as the sun was now out in force (as was the wind). I'd estimated 2h50mins for the 13km from the Triathlon Crew to the Tuck Shop but it had taken us 3h30mins due to the extra stops. The Tuck Shop was an Aladdin's cave of treasures. I had a sausage roll & Lucozade and Emma had a few milkshakes (and managed to charge her watch with mains electric). One competitor made herself a cup of tea using the kettle provided and was so happy! We stopped for about 20mins but by this stage Emma was probably resigned to dropping out in Gargrave (7km up the road). I felt as though I could continue.

It felt a bit like a death march to Gargrave but looking at my splits we did actually manage a couple of sub 13mins/km. Chris popped up by the canal at East Marton but we didn't stop. It was getting pretty warm as we made our way across the fields. I estimated it would take 1h25mins for the 7km to Gargrave and we were pretty close to that, arriving around 3pm. Upon arrival I faffed with my poles & water bottles and then suddenly saw Emma had her tracker removed which meant she pulled out. I was gutted both for her and me as it meant I was now on my own. Harriet & Alex and a few others were in the bus stop, where the Spine Team based themselves, but looked like they were ready to leave. I gave Emma a huge hug and felt a tear in my eye. I wandered off to the Co-Op to get supplies and phoned Mo. I was now a crying mess after telling her about Emma. We spoke for a bit and I said I was carrying onto Malham. This decision was mainly based on logistics, as I knew Mo & Angela were there so it would be easier for me to drop out there. Like Emma I had kind of made up my mind that is where my race would finish. I had a chicken & bacon sandwich, melon & grapes snack pot and an iced coffee from the Co-Op. Harriet had bought a whole cucumber but did not want it all so broke me off a section (it was as refreshing as watermelon so very welcome). A woman from Belgium was sorting out her feet which looked far worse than mine. Actually, since dressing my heel blisters in a mixture of fleecy web & KT tape in Hebden Hey and wearing my older shoes I had no new feet issues. A few racers were in the tea room opposite

the bus stop but the Spine Team were very conscious of ensuring we did not stop for more than 30mins (otherwise we'd need to phone HQ to tell them we were OK as the tracker would be showing us as not moving).



Approaching Malham resigned to pulling out

I set off again after about 20mins but this time alone. The weather had closed in a little which was a bit of a relief as the sun had gone in. This was a new section for me as my recce was only as far as Gargrave. The Spine Team said it followed the river valley so I assumed quite flat. This was not quite true but the elevation was not steep. After an hour or so I saw Harriet & Alex trying to get some sleep by the river at Newfield Bridge. They had also stopped before in Thornton-in-Craven to do the same. I think I would adopt the same strategy if I was to return to the Spine. I had moments of tears down by the river as mentally I was now in my own thoughts and saying to myself this was so hard. I had brought headphones so I could listen to music or podcasts but I never used them as I had spent most of the time with Emma. I met up with a Scottish couple around Airton and we donned our waterproofs as the rain started (but stopped again about 5mins later!). There was a nasty little climb up the road in Hanlith and then a very short time later much to my surprise Mo & Angela appeared. I said I was going to stop. There were a few reasons going through my mind. My knees were sore, I knew there were a few climbs/descents coming up (Malham Cove, Fountains Fell, Pen-y-Ghent & Cam High Road), I estimated it was another 15 hours to get to the finish as I would need a nap and I could see the weather had closed in on the hill tops. Being honest with myself I could get through the knee pain but mentally I just wasn't ready to go through another night especially knowing I had a comfy room and breakfast at The Green Dragon in Hardraw (about 100m from the finish line) waiting for me. I just could not handle the thought of finishing at 8am on Monday morning and the long journey home. So I arrived at the Spine Team by the river in Malham to say I was pulling out. They obviously told me to take a seat and think about it but my mind was made up. I arrived around 5:15pm so the 130km had taken me 33h15min which included the 5h stop at Hebden Hey. There was "only" 50km left so I now have an understanding of why people get so close to the finish but still pull out.

I have learned so much about the event and myself. I have no regrets about not finishing and no immediate plans to return to the Spine. However, that is not to say I might find myself on the start line again at some point but I would do so with a different strategy and be better prepared both physically & mentally. The following day (Tuesday) we had a family holiday in Menorca and just relaxed by the pool. Physically I was actually in pretty good shape and could manage stairs without too many issues. My heel blister on my right foot took a week or so to heal and I am now in training again to support Emma as a pacer on her Centurion North Downs Way 100 miles race on 9th August**!**

(Update: I got her from mile 54 to mile 88 but she didn't have the energy to get to the finish)



Kit (excluding food)



Relaxing in Menorca - Mo only let me put my feet up for two days before we were back out on the trails!!

O2Lux : 20th - 22nd June 2025

by Ian Ditchfield



Time was when I used to try to orienteer in a new country every year. I stopped pushing this a while back, and have been stuck on 32 for a while. Nevertheless, when Ruth waved a flyer for an event in Luxembourg under my nose, I didn't take much persuading. This was a three-day event: a city race, a forest middle-distance and a forest long-distance.

Being an island nation, our frontiers are fixed, and it can come as a surprise how fluid European national borders are. Luxembourg city boasted one of the most formidable medieval castles in Europe, and as such was of great interest to its powerful neighbours. At different times, it has been part of Austrian, Dutch, French, Prussian and German empires. The present independent Grand Duchy of Luxembourg includes the castle city but only part of the historic Luxembourg state, with much of the rest now being in modern Germany and Belgium. Hence the "2" in the O2Lux event title, as it was partly in independent Luxembourg and partly in the eponymous Belgian province.



Had the whole event been in the city, we would have gone by train, but the forest events were unreachable by public transport so we needed a car. Train still played a part however, as we used Le Shuttle between Folkestone and Calais. Less hassle than Eurostar, with no baggage x-rays (unless you are selected for a "random" inspection), Le Shuttle is normally fairly quick. This time, we had a delay of just over an hour, which was nice as we weren't in a hurry and it should mean a full refund of the fare.

We enjoyed a leisurely car journey, largely along back roads (SatNav set to "avoid motorways") with an overnight stop on the way and arrived a massive free car park outside Luxembourg city on Friday afternoon. We then took the free tram to the event. Luxembourg makes it easy to avoid taking the cars into the city, not that you would realise from looking at their streets!

The medieval fortress has largely gone, but the cliffs which made it such a formidable site are still there, along with some of the multi-level ramparts. Throw in an uncrossable (except on bridges) river wandering across the map, and a 60m height difference, and you have scope for some excellent urban legs, which the planner made good use of.

Unfortunately, the printing of the course on my map was so faint that I could hardly see it. This was compounded by the control numbers being in their default positions, rather than shifted to make them more legible against the background map. I took me ages to locate the start on the map, and I frequently lost track of the spidery lines and had to stop mid-leg to rediscover them. And then the legs 4-5-6 ran south, and the number for control 9 was more obvious than the number for 6, so you can guess what happened – fortunately I checked the control code and 9-6 wasn't too far. At least I had no trouble with uncut lines or circles obscuring map detail!



A pristine day 1 Urban Map

The organiser was most apologetic the next day. Apparently the printer had produced a few spare maps of lower quality "just in case", but these had been mistakenly put on top of the other maps in the start boxes. And I had the first start... He gave me a pristine map, correctly printed, and very clear it is too – an excellent map of a very complex area.

The course was very good indeed, with problems right from the start. I opted to approach number 1 from the east, but this involved about 10m of climb which I would have preferred to avoid in a heatwave – even though this was an evening event, the temperature was still nearly 30ºC. I now think a more westerly route, eventually approaching the control from the south would have been better.



Control 2 behind a tree

1-2 was another route choice. Clearly number 1 should be exited eastwards, and then the easiest route to see is the northern one via number 3. I found a shorter route, turning south and dropping further than I would have liked, then left up the steps and left again to 2.

The next few legs were required twisting and turning through narrow streets and alleyways – classic "historic urban" terrain but nothing exceptional. 7 to 8 then required very careful map reading. NE out of 7, down between the SW-most pair of parallel walls, under one bridge, left through a tunnel, and continue down between the NE-pair of parallel walls to 8.

9-10 was a real humdinger of a leg! After much careful study, I now think the best route is to go back past 1, take the route south past the steps I went up on the way to 2, but ignore the steps and follow the road right down to the river bridge, then left to the control.

This is not the way I went however! Firstly, I must have been a little disorientated, as I left 9 westwards, which was not the best start for any plausible route. Having corrected this, and duly gone past 1, and the steps to 2, I then took the next path on the left, and contoured around to the river bridge east of 10.

10-11 was another excellent leg. Any route going reasonably straight involved so much climb that I seriously considered following the river all the way – perhaps five times the purple line distance, but flat! However, my dubious route into 10 had enabled me to appreciate the height of the road bridge on the spur heading east from 3, almost on the 10-11 purple line, or more particularly, that some 15-20m climb could be saved by taking the N/S road under the bridge. (Hard to see this from the map, as you get multiple contour lines disappearing into the same cliff).

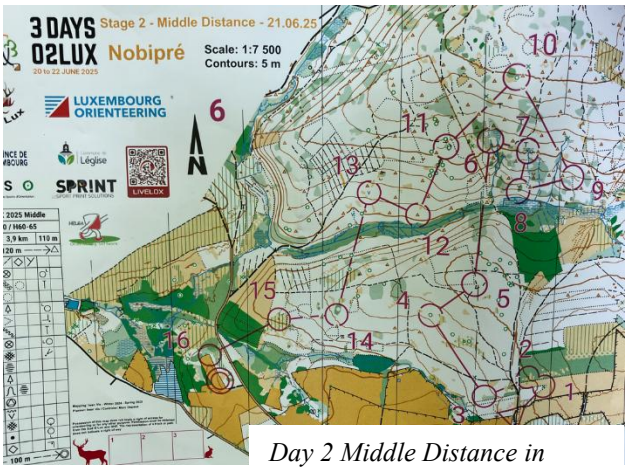
So I retraced my route NE out of 10; over the river bridge and up steps, then left with the path; right onto the road, under the road bridge; right down some steps; over another road and left down a path; and onto the river bridge W of 11. All straightforward, except that the cliff between the steps after the first river crossing and the road had been in the sun all day, and was radiating heat. It was like trying to run in a grill!

The rest of the course was relatively straightforward, nearly flat, and mercifully now in the shade of the higher parts of town. Perhaps the most remarkable part was after the finish. We walked a short way south, then west into an apparent dead end. Then a public lift took us up 60m, back to the level of the start! Incidentally, this is the one error I have spotted on the map, although it had no relevance for our courses. The map says you can walk directly from the covered passage (shelter) at the bottom of the lift to the elevated walkway at the top, but the lift is OOB during competition, so should be shown as an impassable building.



The public lift after the finish

The remaining two days were both forest events, sharing the same finish arena in the Forêt d'Anlier, just north of the village of Louftémont in Belgium's Province de Luxembourg. First up was a middle-distance event; the weather was even hotter, and we had midday starts. Fortunately the whole competition area was wooded, and it was much cooler in the trees than outside.



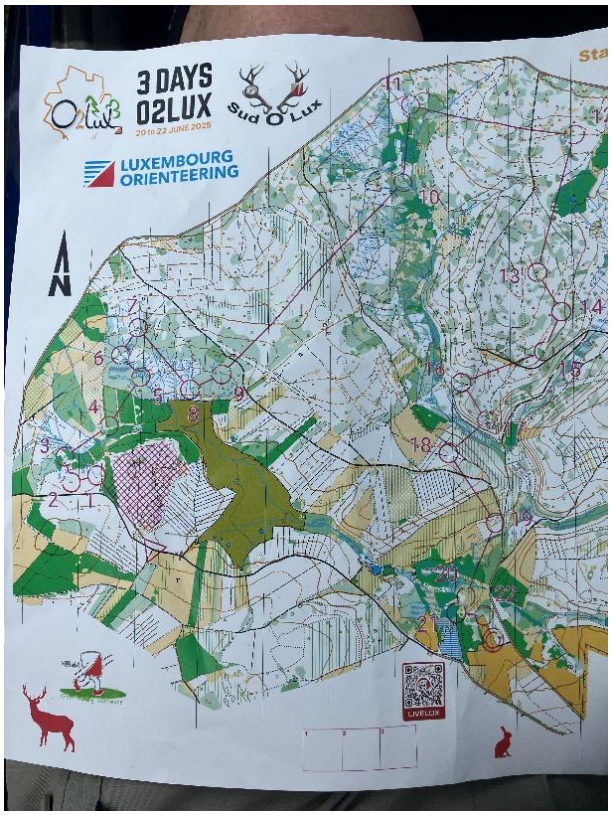
Day 2 Middle Distance in glorious Beechwoods

This part of the Forêt turned out to be a wonderful beechwood, and the relative flatness was also appreciated! Planning was classic middle-distance style, with lots of short legs and changes of directions. Paths and platforms were hard to spot; distinct vegetation boundaries turned out to be clearly defined conifer plantations; the compass got more use than it normally does from me. An immensely enjoyable event, slightly spoilt by the grotty forest defending the event arena. I would have preferred a remote finish in the lovely beeches, but this is obviously a minority view.



Wildboar Wallow (wet pit!)

Back to the same area for the final day, but starting further west and as it turned out, no overlap of area until the last couple of controls. Due to the heat, the organisers had carted water bottles out to selected controls; not marked on the map, but a notice at the start told us which controls had water on each course. This was a long-distance event, and as soon as I saw the notice I knew to expect a long leg from 9 to 10 as both were drinks points!



This was another very pleasant area, albeit with more conifer plantations and less beechwood. It started like another middle-distance, with a lot of short legs, before the anticipated long leg from 9 to 10. I managed this OK, intending to use the fenced enclosure to the west as an attack point, although in the event I recognised the shape of the ditch junction south of the fence and went from there.



Ruth overall D80 champ!

11-12 was my undoing, as I got too far north, missed the control, and had trouble relocating. The rest of the course passed with only small misses, although I was getting a bit hot and tired, and even the grotty area at the end wasn't too bad due to the elephant tracks made the previous day.

Event results are at https://www.orienteering.lu/en/3days-o2lux-2025/startlists-and-results/

These include Livelox, an equivalent of RouteGadget.

You can see my routes by looking at the H65 courses, although on the middle distance day (Saturday) the heading is wrong, so you need to select the shorter of the two H50 courses.

A disadvantage of Livelox compared to RouteGadget is that, so far as I can see, there is no way of correcting a GPS record. This doesn't much matter in the forest, where the trace is pretty accurate, but with buildings and cliffs reflecting the satellite signal, the urban trace is often way out.



Normally when everyone squeezes under a tent, it's raining!!!

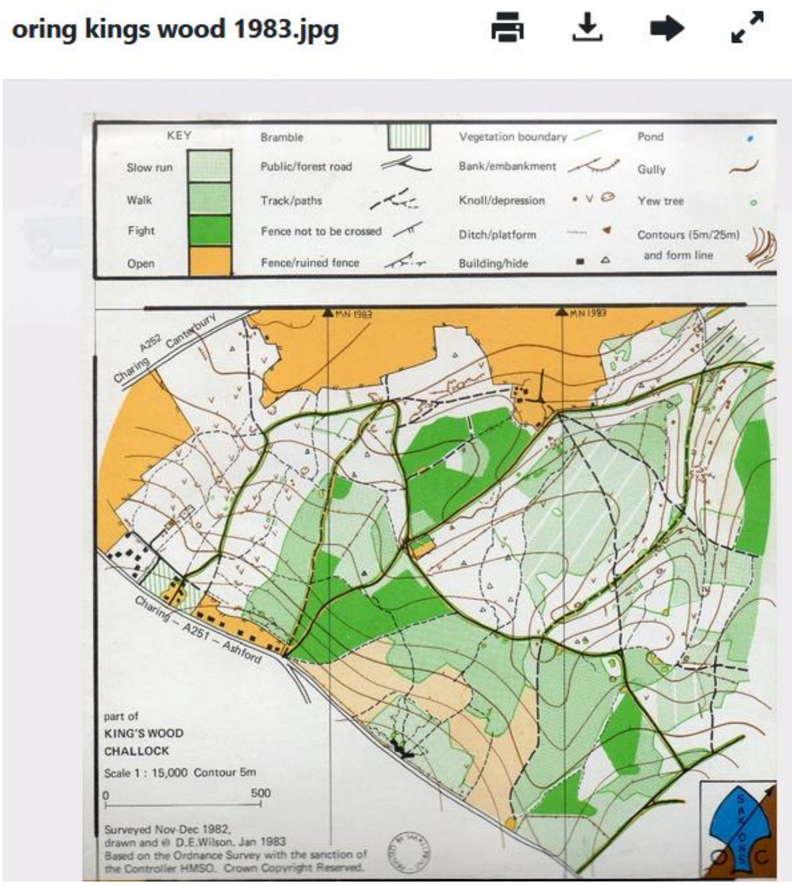
Ruth and I really enjoyed this event. One of the best urban areas I've ever been too, a very nice forest, and well-planned courses. And Belgian beer!

I think the nearest country I haven't orienteered in is now Andorra. Has anybody spotted an event?

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The Harvester by David Wilson

Kings Wood, Challock



This area was first surveyed and the map drawn by David Wilson, now SO but then SAX, in 1983. He remembers that the map was based on an aerial survey of Kent carried out for the Potato Marketing Board in order to assess levies on potato growers at that time. While this raises the entertaining prospect of bootleg potatoes being grown in the depths of the forest, the prosaic truth is that it was probably easier for the aerial survey company just to leave the camera switched on as they did transects of Kent.

The survey was carried out by old-fashioned compass-and-pacing, with no doubt some embedded errors for that reason. It will be interesting to see how LIDAR mapping techniques compare.

SAX managed to get permission for no more than this rather restricted part of Kings Wood because of some spirited opposition from local wildlife groups who were concerned about disturbance to the deer population. There were - or maybe are - fallow deer in the wood carrying a gene for unusually light colouring. I wonder what's happened to them - the conservation groups as well as the deer?
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Sylvester (A Twixmas Adventure) by Ian Ditchfield

(*ed: I know that you're not thinking of this just yet but if you're short of activities for that lull between Christmas and New Year, this might just be the sort of stocking filler you'd like to take part in!)*

Sylvester is an annual 5-day event in the Low Countries between Christmas and New Year. Five clubs, four Belgian and one Dutch each organise an event. Priority is given to finding a warm indoor event centre each day, sometimes at the cost of a considerable walk to and from the forest.



Belgium event catering!

Day One was based in a room in a sports centre, with plenty of changing/socialising space, access to showers, and a cafe selling snacks and a wide range of Belgian beers. It seemed a shame to leave it to trudge through suburbia for a mile to reach the orienteering forest on a rather grey day - overcast and occasionally misty so that everything felt damp even though it wasn't actually raining.

The forest was wooded sand-dunes, mostly subtle (ie nearly flat), but with some short steep bits. Unfortunately, the vegetation, while not hostile (no thorns or brambles) was quite dense, so that it was almost always quicker around the paths than straight. An enjoyable canter, but not very technical.



A downhill finish on Day 1



Afterwards we went into the centre of the nearby town of Herentals, and walked around their "Winter Lights" display.

Day Two was an army training area, reminiscent of Long Valley but flatter. An even longer walk to the start took us all around an old airfield (the full open just peeping out of the logos in the NW of the map). Navigation was challenging. The contour features were very low (2m contour interval), and the tiny knolls didn't show in the long grass. It was wetter than mapped (we had been warned) so the marshes were larger, and I couldn't discern any vegetation change between marsh and not-marsh anyway. I lost time in several places, but no disasters, and all-in-all it was a very pleasant place to run - no really hostile vegetation, some fast forest floor, and no nasty tussocks or deep heather, at least not that I found.



Day 3 sunshine start

After days of greyness, the sun broke through for Day Three. This was back to woodland with a strong path network. A flattish forest, but with a slope around one edge, and some surprisingly steep and deep holes left over from some sort of mining/quarrying activity. Unfortunately some parts had been recently visited by foresters and their machinery, totally changing the runnability and path network in some areas. We were warned that this had happened, but not told where, so it was all a bit bingo. Still any event that supplies sunshine, indoor changing, hot showers and a nice cafe ticks most of the boxes for me.

Day Four was back to overcast skies, but at least it wasn't misty. A very flat forest, with occasional outbreaks of low sand-dunes. The dunes provided mildly tricky control features; in the rest of the forest it was largely a question of choosing whether to go straight or divert around paths.

The last day, our trip to the Netherlands, was the best! Not in terms of weather, which was again dull, not quite raining, but still damp. However, the forest was delightful, mostly trees far enough apart to get between without difficulty and a clear forest floor. Finally, it was usually best to run straight rather than take a longer path route!

Navigation was quite challenging. The contour interval was 2.5m, but still many of the features were only large enough to be shown with form lines. However, there were further undulations which were deemed too small to map at all. I found it hard to tell the difference!



Ruth – 2nd W75+

So, to sum up the five days. Some delightful bits of forest, often separated by fairly green bits, but you could always push through without pain, no thorns or brambles, although the floor sometimes had more fallen branches and other clutter than one would like. Sometimes flat, sometimes some climb, but no long or steep hills. A lot of blasting along paths, some careful interpretation of detailed contours; sometimes both needed on the same leg. Event centres wonderful, although sometimes a fair trek from the forest.

Course maps and lots of routes for all days may be viewed at www.livelox.com – a Scandinavian equivalent of Routegadget. My routes are under H65, but Day 1 is odd as my watch didn't start recording until about control 3.

Sylvester is the same time every year, and in roughly the same area. We probably won't come every year, but we'll certainly be back.

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I bet you've noticed some rather smart looking SO club members over the Summer and wish you could have been so stylish – if so, get your orders in now for Summer 2026!



We have a range of SO vests (£18), singlets (£18) and mesh T shirts (£25) in various sizes that are just right for the sprint season.

Thinking ahead to the Autumn season - there are also the usual long sleeved Club tops and jackets available.

Please get in touch with Ian, our new kit officer, at kit@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk if you are interested or would like more information.
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Let's get SO Quizzical by David Wilson (June) and this edition, Ed Forman

Answer to June's quiz, page **21 – A Grave Problem (set by David Wilson) -** Did Alf make the correct route choice?
Distance around the perimeter of a semicircle = π R where R = radius.
Distance round the outside: 200 π m= 628.32 m, taking π as 3.1416.
Distance across the centre: line sections 360 m + round the tumulus 20 π m= 422.83 m.
Hence difference in distance = 205.49 m

<u>Advanced</u>
Time = Distance/Speed.
If V = normal running speed, time round the outside $T^1 = 628.32/V$
Time round the inside $T^2 = 422.83/(\tfrac{2}{3}V) = 634.25/V$
T^1 is therefore faster.
The % difference based on $T^1 = 100^* (T^2 - T^1)/ T^1 = 100 *(634.25 – 628.32)/628.32 = 0.94\%$. to be more exact, 0.94347%). So, for such a small difference, corresponding perhaps to dodging a dog walker, Alf might as well have chosen at random.

<u>Optional extra answer:</u> Answer: a bit of trial and error with an Excel spreadsheet comes up with the answer of 37.5m

The winner pulled from a number of correct answers is Penny Parker. Congratulations Penny, please contact Neil for your free SOG run.

This edition's question - The killer pit (set by Ed Forman)

The meanest planner in the world selected as a control site a pit near the top of a long steep slope. There was no viable alternative to approaching it from below and no helpful catching features. Being sadistic as well as mean, the planner stationed himself on a nearby platform to enjoy the unfolding spectacle of suffering as groaning runners staggered up the slope. What struck him was how many competitors started looking for the pit too soon, when they were still quite a long way short of it. Can you suggest a *mathematical* reason why this should be so?

All entries to editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk by 17th November please

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Every photo tells a story… Photo Caption Competition



The entries received for June's photo made choosing the winning entry a very tough decision (thank you all who entered). However, the final decision of the panel was that provided by Judith Carder (prize = whistle or bar of chocolate!!)

"Excellent blue course. Now for the hard part: where's the car park?"



September's photo (left)
Come up with a caption for another photo from Rob Lines - Open to all members.

Email your caption to the editor
editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk
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You might be an orienteer if…By Karen Ashworth

(ed. I thought this deserved another outing for those who missed it the first time!)

You have ever looked up the word 'reentrant'

You find yourself thinking of parts of your garden as 'forest fight'

You've looked at the map for catching features even when you are just doing a sunday afternoon stroll along a marked footpath

You've ever been disqualified from a school cross country race for going across country rather than round the defined track

You associate 'thumbing' with maps rather than trying to get a lift home

You catch yourself automatically counting double paces on the way to the shops

You know that the Swedish for club is klubb

You've ever adjusted the countryside to fit a map rather than the other way round

You hear the word 'classic' and just think 'long!'

You think of a dibber as something high tech rather than a pointy piece of wood for planting seedlings

Your jigsaw ability is top notch since you've been practising with EMIT controls

Your mental images of 'flags' and 'kites' are one and the same

Your mental image of a 'butterfly' is not an insect

You've ever asked someone whether the distance they just told you was measured 'as the crow flies'

You happily admitted to being 40 some months before your 40th birthday actually happened

You've felt a strong compulsion to roll up and save 2 foot lengths of used red and white plastic tape.

You've ever taken your child (or parent...) to follow a piece of string round a wood

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SOUTHEAST LEAGUE
Dates for your diaries!

Every member can help add points to keep SO the holders of the SE League trophy!
SE League Events planned for 2025/2026



23 November 2025 Hindleap (SAX)
30 November 2025 Frith and Windmill Hill (SN)
7 December 2025 Epping North (CHIG)
18 January 2026 South Ashdown (DFOK)
8 February 2026 Egypt & Burnham Beeches (HH)
15 February 2026 White Downs & Ranmore (MVOC)
3 May 2026 Winterfold (SLOW)
10 May 2026 Sunny Sussex Weekend (SO)
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Major/Local Events – looking ahead:

ParkO Series

The enjoyable, fast and furious ParkO series that has been running through the Summer concludes with 2 final events, on 6th and 13th September. These are not only great events for experienced orienteers, who can blast around our super local parks, but also for those who have less experience but want to sharpen their skills in more parkland before heading into the woods.

Autumn SOG series

The new SOG series commences on 4th October at Southwick Hill. A good transition for newcomers to still experience some open land, but venture into patches of woodland.

Club nights

With the nights starting to draw in, we hit the Sussex streets for exciting competition set by Euan Marsh and Neil Crickmore. A fun theme is usually included and we all come away having had a great time and learnt something new. These low-key events are a great opportunity of meeting other club members and exercising!

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

KNC – Kent Night Cup

For those who like a little more serious night-time competition SAXONS, with event input from SO/MVOC and DFOK, organise one hour Thursday night adventures into the woods (and sometimes on streets). Check out the SAXONS website for full details. These are very social events with a chance to chat about routes in a nearby pub afterwards. They are very good practise for the upcoming Night Champs!

SE and Southern Night Championships

Both SE Night and Southern Night Champs are to be held in November, actually just a week apart. The SE Nights will be on Puttenham Common, a tricky but great area in the daytime so expect some fun at night! While the Southern Night Champs will be on our own SO territory, spectacular Worthlodge.

If you've never orienteered at night, then give these a go – it certainly sharpens up your daytime orienteering as in the dark you really have to focus on your location and use secure attack points.

With the British Night Champs taking place in Burnham Beeches on 7th February 2026– this could be your year!

SouthEast League (SEL)

This annual competition between the member clubs of the SEOA runs over the autumn/winter/spring season. The league is based on events approved by SEOA and individual runners score points for their runs. **See previous article for 2025/26 diary dates.**

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

The London City Race Weekend

Take part in one, two or three of these great events. This year the main City Race takes place on the Saturday around the streets of Rotherhithe.

Note the date of the November Classic Weekend, this year it's on 11th and 12th October 2025!

A few events at a glance, September to December (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 6th September	SO Sprint (ParkO 7)	Oaklands Park	SO
Sat 6th September	**Urban Regional**	**Hamilton**	**LEI**
Sat 13th September	SO Sprint (ParkO 8)	Goffs Park	SO
Fri 19th September	**City of London Weekend (Day 1 evening) Regional**	**Greenwich Park**	**DFOK**
Sat 20th September	**City of London Weekend (Day 2) National SEOUL/CRET**	**Rotherhithe**	**SLOW**
Sun 21st September	**City of London Weekend (Day 3) Regional**	**Hampstead Heath**	**LOK**
Sat 27th September	**Urban Regional SEOUL**	**Wantage**	**TVOC**
Sun 28th September	**Urban Regional UKUL**	**Castle Vale**	**HOC**
Sun 28th September	**Regional**	**Epping Forest South**	**HAVOC**
Sat 4th October	**Purbeck Weekend Day 1 Regional**	**Studland Dunes**	**WSX**
Sat 4th October	SOG (A1)	Southwick Hill	SO
Sun 5th October	**Purbeck Weekend Day 2 Regional**	**Swanage Town & Durlston Country Park**	**WSX**
Sun 5th October	**Regional**	**Knole Park**	**SAX**
Thurs 9th October	KNC – evening score (KNC1)	Kings Wood	SAX
Sat 11th October YES this is correct!	**November Classic Weekend Regional SEOUL/UKUL**	**Chichester**	**SO**
Sun 12th October	**November Classic National UKOL**	**Burley West**	**SOC**
Thurs 16th October	KNC – evening score (KNC2)	Angley Woods	SAX
Sat 18th October	SOG (A2)	TBC	SO
Sat 18th October	**Caddihoe Weekend Day 1 Regional/UKOL**	**Holne Moor**	**DEVON**
Sun 19th October	**Caddihoe Weekend Day 2 (middle) Regional/UKOL**	**Holne Moor**	**DEVON**
Thurs 23th October	KNC – evening score (KNC3)	TBC	SO
Sat 25th October	**Urban Regional/SEOUL/UKUL**	**Hertford**	**WAOC**
Sun 26th October	**Urban Regional/SEOUL/UKUL**	**St Albans**	**HH**
Thurs 30th October	KNC – evening score (KNC4)	Trosley Country Park	SAX
Sat 1st November	**Regional**	**Cambridge City Race**	**CUOC**
Sat 1st November	SOG (A3)	Abbots Wood	SO
Sun 2nd November	**SE Middle Champs**	**TBC**	**SLOW**
Sun 9th November	**Urban Regional/UKUL**	**Rugeley (Ethchinghill)**	**WCH**
Sat 15th November	SOG (A4)	Slindon Wood	SO
Sat 15th November	**SE Night Champs**	**Puttenham Common**	**GO**
Sun 16th November	**Regional**	**Puttenham Common**	**GO**
Sat 22nd November	**Southern Night Champs**	**Worthlodge Forest**	**SO**
Sun 23rd November	**National/SEIL/SEL**	**Hindleap**	**SAX**
Sat 29th November	SOG (A5)	Rivers Wood	SO
Sun 30th November	**National/SEIL/SEL**	**Frith & Windmill Hill**	**SN**

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