The Southdowner

December 2026 No. 219



- Remembering SO's involvement in "The Tough One"
- Mapping: Woody Issues
- Junior Camp; report and photos

www.southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

Southdowns Orienteers

Rogues Gallery - Know Your Club Representatives



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Chairman's Chat – Liam Marsh



What a busy few months it has been since our last Southdowner! It's great to be back in my favourite time of the year, with the SOG series well underway and hundreds of happy faces charging around the forests of Sussex, as well as the regional events returning to the woods of the South East.

As a club, we've had an incredibly successful start to the season, with fantastic results in both the Peter Palmer relays (2nd on the main relay and 3rd in the daybreak bowl) and the Compass Sport Cup final (4th place). A huge congratulations to all involved in both of these triumphs. The CSC was particularly wonderful to see as chairman, with 84 (if I've counted correctly) club members representing us on the slopes of Pippingford Park - a true team effort.

I'm writing this having just returned home after the Tilgate Middle Distance event and finally finished drying. This weekend I think has been a fantastic demonstration of what we can achieve as a club - a brilliant new map created by Neil, excellent courses from Euan in both night and day which really made people think, and an abundance of different faces helping out across the two events to ensure everything ran as smoothly as possible despite the freezing, then soaking, weather conditions. So many different roles played so brilliantly, with at least 10 people still around and helping out at both events when the course closing time came around. It is always lovely to be a part of such things, and a delight seeing such a range of different people doing their best to help out in whatever way they could.

With that in mind, I would just like to take a moment to recommend planning an event. My own event last month was postponed, but while planning it, the amount of support and advice given by others to help ensure it could be a pleasant and successful experience was astounding. Whilst it may feel like a daunting task - particularly as a first time planner - we are incredibly lucky as a club to have many experienced planners who can help you through the process, an incredible SI team who are able to resolve any issue you can create, and a wealth of friendly faces who are willing to stand outside in the cold and wet to take a job off your hands.

We are members of a fantastic club, and I can't wait to enjoy the rest of the season with you all as it unfolds!

Editorial – Jane Lambert

As another year draws to a close, thank you to everyone who has contributed articles to Southdowner. Whether you're writing about adventures at home or abroad or sharing a discovery that could help or interest others, please send me your thoughts.

Congratulations(!) to everyone moving up an age class in January. A new class needn't slow you down, and if the map is becoming a little blurry, read the article on sight issues and the choice of glasses for orienteering on page 20.

Age is no barrier in orienteering. Elizabeth Brown, the club's star in its early years, was still a champion in her 80s and 90s, and we remember her at the annual Elizabeth Brown Memorial Score Event, this year at North Ashdown on 27th December, our final event of 2026.

Looking ahead, we have the SO 50th Anniversary event at Stanmer Park in January to celebrate, so I hope to see plenty of you there. In the meantime, I wish you all a very happy Christmas and a great start to 2027.

Note that the deadline for content for the next Southdowner edition (March 2027) is 15th February
Please send your contributions and competition entries to editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

Welcome to our New Members



Gibson – Club Membership

A HUGE and very WARM welcome to our new club members

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!

New members:	Mark Hitchin M50	Nicola Hyatt W55	Molly Hardman W12
Returning member:	Derek Spalding M70		

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

Committee Corner: What's Happening Across Southdowns Orienteers by Clive Hawkes (Secretary)



A busy summer and autumn have brought significant updates behind the scenes across fixtures, junior achievements, club kit, and digital services.

- **Website:** With the club's long-time web host retiring, the club commissioned a rebuild of the SO website on a like-for-like basis using an updated, fully editable content management system. Following extensive testing, the new platform is officially live.

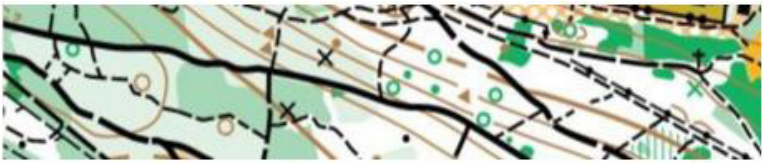
- **50th Anniversary Celebrations (1977–2027):** SO is gearing up for its golden jubilee. A special anniversary technical O-top - designed in blue and yellow with a subtle watermark contour pattern and historic Stanmer map logo is nearing production with new supplier ESK (see page 8). Celebrations will centre on an anniversary event at Stanmer Park in January 2027, possibly featuring retro course touches.

- **Junior Triumphs & Camps:** SO juniors delivered outstanding results at the Peter Palmer Relays at Broadstone Warren, finishing second overall to lift the trophy for younger competitors, while the Daybreak team took third. On the representative front, congratulations go to Emma Chapman on her selection for the GB Talent South Squad, Heather High for the Junior European Cup, and James Curtis for representing the club at the European Trail Orienteering Championships.

- **2027 Membership & Entry Fees:** To offset major essential outlays (including the website rebuild, mapping software licences, and kit upgrades) while maintaining prudent reserves, the committee approved targeted fee updates taking effect on 1 January 2027. Full annual SO membership remains frozen at £10 for adults, £7.50 for young adults, and £4.50 for juniors (with SO juniors continuing to run free at club events). Local SOG, KNC, regional, and national entries will see a modest 50p adjustment, alongside a £3 non-member surcharge designed to encourage regular attendees to take up club membership.

- **Upcoming Fixtures to Note:** Look out for the annual North Ashdown Christmas Score, alongside a packed 2027 spring calendar leading toward the British Sprint Championships at Brighton University.

LAND PERMISSIONS by Steve Blount



- Whilst public footpaths/bridleways provide us with a right of way along which to pass on foot, they do not allow us to stray on to surrounding land.
- As orienteering courses seldom stick to rights of way, permission needs to be sought from the relevant landowner(s) before an event can go ahead.
- Southdowns Orienteers stage 30+ events each year, all of which require land permission to be sought. Permissions are either sought by an individual club member who has agreed to be the point of contact with a certain landowner or by the Land Permissions Coordinator.
- The Land Permissions Coordinator is appointed by the club committee and is responsible for ensuring that permission is sought from all the relevant landowners prior to an event taking place. As the current incumbent I will be stepping down from the role on the 5th June 2027.
- If you are interested in taking on the role, please contact me: Steve Blount (permissions@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk).

WANTED

LAND PERMISSIONS COORDINATOR



REWARD: A PLACE ON THE CLUB COMMITTEE

Anyone interested should contact Steve Blount
permissions@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

Know your Club Member – Marky Saunders



Marky at Houghton April 2026, one of many events he has planned

How did you get into orienteering, how long have you been involved?
I had bad asthma as a kid. I usually couldn't manage the lap of the playing field that we had to do as a warm-up at the start of PE lessons, but I'd watch the London marathon on the telly in awe and vowed that I'd do it one day. At thirteen, I joined the Air Cadets and that really helped my fitness and endurance as well as fostering a love of maps and navigation. I went to university and joined the orienteering club unsure of exactly what I was letting myself in for, however everyone, including the club's elite athletes, were friendly and willing to give guidance and encouragement, even to a newcomer who wasn't the best runner. I later found out that is perfectly normal for an orienteering club! My university studies only lasted a year (oops), but I was orienteering most weekends and loved it. I did the first of many marathons the following year and have never used nor carried an inhaler since. I then had many years away from orienteering due to work etc but came back to SO a few years ago and really wish I'd done so sooner.

Do you take part in any other sports or activities outside orienteering?
If I'm not lost in the woods at the weekend, then I'm probably marshalling at a motorsport event somewhere or at a classic car show. Many people don't realise that the majority of motorsports only happens because of volunteers and that almost anyone can get involved very easily. I spend a lot of time at Goodwood, but also get involved with events as diverse as 'grass-roots' autotests & autosolos, right up to helping set up Rally GB.

I've always owned cheap, but unusual cars and maintained them myself. My daily runabout is currently a 45 year old Datsun that's very reliable, costs £150 a year to insure, is tax, MOT and ULEZ exempt and gives excellent fuel economy. The fleet is currently 14 cars, although some need full restoration and progress has been extremely slow in recent years due to major issues with my sleep patterns.

Which moments from your orienteering experiences stand out most?
In my first year of orienteering I participated in the British Championships… show me another sport in which a complete amateur can compete against the very best, on the same courses, at the same time. The same year I received a lovely letter from BOF congratulating me on becoming the British Night Champion, however I'd walked around the B-course due to an injured ankle and I believe someone with the same name had won outright.

What type of orienteering do you enjoy most?
I really enjoy the urban events - finding the best route through streets and alleyways is great fun, and suits my 'steady' running ability. Don't get me wrong, I love the challenge of the woods too, but I'm a bit too slow through the undergrowth and uneven terrain.

You've planned several events now. What do you enjoy about planning, and has it helped improve your own orienteering?
So many events only happen because people volunteer their free-time and expertise, not just in SO and orienteering, but in the majority of clubs and organisations. Often it's just a few who commit, but our club seems to have a fair proportion who regularly contribute, and I definitely want to 'do my bit' to help others get out and enjoy themselves, whether it's helping in the car park, collecting controls or even planning the

whole event. Planning the first event was a great experience, with so much help and guidance available from experienced club members. It took some time and methodical thinking, but was extremely satisfying. I try to explore the area so I know it inside-out, which is great fun and it really helped me to study the maps more closely and think about route choices.

Do you have a pre-race routine?
a banana before the start… that's all.

Do you use Routegadget to review your runs and those of other competitors?
Oh yes, it's brilliant! As a complete technophobe I plot my route onto Routegadget with a mouse (none of this new-fangled GPS stuff thank you) which makes me concentrate on where I've actually been, even when I've gone astray. I also like a statistic or two, so it's fantastic to see which legs I've lost time on and where others did, and the analysis is so accurate. The ability to play back each leg individually as a 'mass start' is a great feature too. If I've planned an event I study each course to see the route choices that were made as well as which legs caused problems, so it's a really useful tool for a planner to de-brief too.



Marky "at a GreenPower event, in which school and college students build and race battery-powered vehicles. Some are very quick, others less so, but a great introduction to engineering and teamwork for the students none-the-less"

Which Orienteering skills would you most like to improve?
I think I have all the required skills… it's just remembering to use them simultaneously that I need to improve! One day I'll completely forget to use my compass; the next I'll remember the compass but forget distances and catching features; another time I'll forget that I'm faster around paths than through undergrowth. I do need to improve focussing on my map, rather than what other runners are doing - many of my mistakes are due to that one!

What advice would you give someone new to orienteering?
Persevere. It's a bloomin' hard sport. You WILL make mistakes, but so will pretty much everyone else around you. The important thing is to gradually improve and make the mistakes less noticeable. Begin with the easier courses and get good at them before progressing to harder ones. Remember walking in the right direction is quicker than sprinting aimlessly and that the winner gets the worst value-for-money (o:

FIRST AID TRAINING
Free to SO Members
Saturday 2nd January 2027 at Ringmer, near Lewes. 0900hrs – 1700hrs

DON'T MISS OUT
SIGN UP NOW
ONLY A COUPLE OF PLACES LEFT



The course is free of charge to SO members.
Tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided, please bring a packed lunch.

To book your place contact Steve Blount
(permissions@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk)

Ho, Ho, Ho! Do you need new top for O? – Kit news from Ian Curtis

OK, that's never going to win marketing slogan of the year, but we have refreshed our supplies of adult short and long sleeve tops, and SO junior squad short sleeved. Do get you orders or queries into Ian, our kit officer on kit@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk, before supplies run low.

Prices are as follows:

Vest	18
Singlet	18
Mesh T	25
Winter T	32
Long sleeved T	38
Jacket	38

The Junior short sleeved tops (design 3 below) remain £25





50 year anniversary top

Thank you to those who ordered the SO 50 anniversary top. These have gone into manufacture and should be being distributed in December. A lot of work went into this project over 2026, including multiple weeks of getting the contours right (special thanks to Chris H and Ben Kyd).

There was a discount available to a lucky winner who guessed the correct SO venue from which the contours were replicated . The winner was Anna Chapman who correctly stated that the contours were from Worth Lodge. Anna was ably assisted by Emma who had been studying those contours for our December SOG. We seem to be safe from Ai for a while longer as Co-pilot thought the contours were from Devil's Dyke… Ian reckons he knows why it thinks that, so ask him why at an event sometime…





For anyone who didn't make the deadline and may be looking for a SO50 top they can be purchased individually here for £35 plus postage. Southdowns Orienteers – ESK

Know Your Map, by Chris Hooker

Part 9

Holes everywhere!



Some orienteering areas are dominated by holes in the ground, man-made and natural, and I guess they fall into 3 categories; depressions, pits and quarries. I'm going to leave quarries out of this discussion as they are generally large with very steep rocky sides and may contain several other mappable features within them. Which leaves us with pits and depressions.

And now we get subjective again! Let's look at the specification definitions.
A depression isn't defined but is a hollow in the ground that can be drawn to scale using contours and tag lines. A small depression is a hollow without steep sides that is too small to be shown using contours and has a minimum width of 2m and minimum depth of 1m.



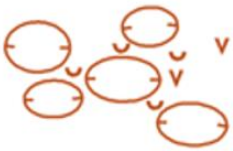
A pit is a hole with steep sides which cannot be shown to scale using the earth bank symbol and has a minimum width of 1m and minimum depth of 1m. A pit larger than 5m x 5m should be exaggerated and drawn with the earth bank symbol.

The spec says that the minimum sizes should be respected but also that it is not necessary to map every feature that is of the minimum size. There is also some guidance that allows minimum sizes to be reduced if your area doesn't have features of the minimum size. However, all features mapped must be clear and obvious.

I suspect that now you have read the above the subjectivity of the mapping decisions comes to the fore! What is a steep side? Have very small features been mapped? Have all the suitable features been mapped or have some been left off? A pre-survey walk of the area will inform the mapper about the sizes of features allowing a decision to be made about what to include. As for the pit or depression question, I tend to go with gut feeling. Whether to include all pits and depressions of a suitable size will depend on relative sizes and spacing. For example, if there was an area with a lot of large depressions close together then it would probably make sense not to map the small depressions unless map clarity can be maintained.

Hopefully the following diagrams add some clarity.

Consider this piece of mapping:



Legibility would be improved if you omitted some of the small depressions:



Club Night Training *(photos Rob Lines)*



In early September, with the Peter Palmer Relay approaching, Rob Lines, assisted by Ed, organised two evening training sessions on different parts of Chailey Common. The aim was to help members practise navigating difficult terrain as darkness fell. Each session featured two mass-start exercises: a 15-minute score course at twilight, followed by a choice of line course taking place in complete darkness. The resident cows seemed surprised by the headtorches crossing their grazing area but happily shared the Common. Although billed as training, everyone gave it their all! There was time to compare route choices afterwards. Many thanks to Rob for two excellent evenings of skill-building and fun with club friends.











(The photos above are from the September Night Training sessions on warm nights! In November ahead of the SE Night Championships Rob organised yet another Night Training Session on Chailey North Common. This time the weather wasn't so kind but still around twenty SO members took part and from the post event discussion, it seems we all learnt a lot! – Huge thanks to Rob!)

Junior Section: Southdowns Junior Squad Report
From Anna Chapman (Junior Team Manager)



Its' been great to see a number of our juniors going along to Regional and National competitions both within our region and outside of our region. This is a great way to improve and experience different terrain. It's also a great opportunity to meet juniors from other clubs.

South East Night Champs
Just recently SO hosted the SE Night Champs at Tilgate. Night Orienteering is a great way to improve orienteering technique and we are lucky that Rob Lines puts on so many brilliant night training sessions. SO juniors claimed top spot in three of the age categories:
Gold W16 Emily Waters **Gold** W20-40 Emma Chapman **Gold** M18 James Curtis

Peter Palmer Relay
We were delighted to field two junior teams at the National Peter Palmer Junior team relay this year. This relay is the highlight of the junior calendar and is a chance for lots of juniors to camp overnight and take part in one of two relays that start at either 5am in the dark or 6am at daybreak.
Even though our teams were fairly inexperienced they both managed to run to podium positions. The key to this event is consistency and getting around without mispunching. The seven-person PP team took 2nd place and the five-person daybreak team took 3rd place. Our junior teams ranged from age 10 to 18 and included seven newcomers to this event.

SO Peter Palmer Team:
1 Red James Curtis M18 (night)
2 Red Emma Chapman W16 (night)
3 Light Green Emily Water W16
4 Orange Mark Johnson M12
5 Yellow Oliver Johnson M12 & Christopher Warner M14
6 Green Ben Chapman M18

SO Daybreak Team:
1 Red Daniel Duncan M18
2 Orange Lucas Waters M12
3 Yellow Erin Barter W12 & Harriet Nichols W14
4 Red Rowan Sillet M14

SEOA Cloth Badges



Working towards the SEOA cloth badges is one of the best ways for juniors to see progress. These are awarded for colour coded courses between white and black. You must complete three courses per colour within 150% of the winning time or in the top 50% of competitors. It's been great to see our juniors achieving their badges this term. If you haven't received your badge yet, do get in contact with Anna Chapman (juniorteam@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk) who will have them available to collect.
Blue badge winner:
Emily Waters
Brown badge winner:
James Curtis

Selections and Invitations
Heather High (currently in the GBR Development Squad) represented Great Britain at the Junior World Orienteering Champs in Sweden over the Summer. You can catch Heather on the SHUOC (Sheffield Unis Orienteering and Fell Running Club) social media as she is their publicity officer and regularly posts on Facebook and Instagram. **Emma Chapman** has been invited to join the GBR Talent South programme and has already been on her first Talent South Camp. This is the next stage up from regional development squad and provides a pathway towards development and performance squads.

SO & MV Junior Development Camp, 7- 8 November 2026 by Camp Organiser Bea Waters



Seventeen juniors from SO and MV Orienteering Clubs came together for a fantastic weekend of orienteering, adventure and friendship on 7–8 November 2026. The junior camp was held at Beacon Hill Horsham Scout Campsite, near Colgate, providing the perfect setting for a weekend of learning, challenges and fun.



The Scout hall, known as "Gummys", was our base for the weekend. It provided a warm and safe space for activities and sleeping, as well as a kitchen to prepare and cook our meals.

Developing Skills and Building Confidence

Training got underway on Saturday lunchtime with a safety briefing, followed by sessions led by SO and MV coaches. Karen worked with the younger juniors, while Sarah took the older and more experienced group. With 36 acres of grassland and woodland at Beacon Hill campsite, there was plenty of space to practise and develop orienteering skills.

After an afternoon of training, everyone enjoyed well-earned snacks. There was plenty of cake to go around, thanks to everyone who had brought something to share! Pasta bolognese followed for dinner, providing plenty of energy for the evening's adventures.



Rob-O-Wars and Night-O Adventures!
As darkness fell, Head Coach Rob took charge of the evening's night orienteering activities. But first, there was some important preparation to do!

The evening began with a robot-themed activity inside the hall. Being methodical is an essential skill for successful night orienteering, so the juniors split into teams and set about transforming one of their teammates into a fighting robot. The resulting Rob-O-Wars were fiercely contested, with Moo, Alien, Mrs Orange and Tin Man all battling it out!

Once the robots had been suitably tested, it was time to head outside. The Night-O session began with a pacing exercise before moving on to several line courses, each increasing in length and difficulty. A great opportunity for the juniors to put their skills to the test and build confidence navigating in the dark.








The evening finished in the best possible way, gathered around a campfire expertly set up by Pete. S'mores and hot chocolate provided the perfect ending to a busy day, before lights out at 10pm!

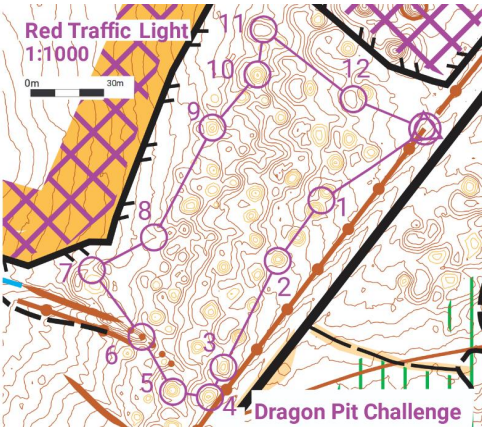




Sunday: Dragons, Relays and More Orienteering!

Sunday morning brought another opportunity to develop those navigation skills. Anna led the morning's "Dragon Pits" training session in St Leonard's Forest, where the juniors tackled contour challenges around pits and knolls.

After returning to Gummys for lunch, it was back into St Leonard's Forest for the final activity of the weekend. Emma had planned and set up an exciting relay competition and a head-to-head peg race to bring the camp to a close. The relays provided a fantastic opportunity to put everything learned over the weekend into practice, while enjoying some friendly competition and teamwork.







A Big Thank You!

All 17 juniors had a brilliant time, making new friends, enjoying the challenges and, most importantly, improving their orienteering skills and stamina. It was wonderful to see everyone getting involved, supporting one another and growing in confidence throughout the weekend.

A camp like this simply wouldn't be possible without the fantastic team of coaches and adult helpers who gave their time, energy and enthusiasm to make it happen.

A huge thank you to:

- Coaches and adult helpers: Anna (Camp sub-organiser), Rob (coach & map printing), Sarah, Karen (coach & safety), Kasia, Ian C., Pete, Ian J., Ed and Emma.
- Welfare: Clare L.
- Permissions: Steve B. and Andy H.
- Equipment: Neil.
-

Thank you also to the Horsham Scouts Beacon Hill campsite team for welcoming us and allowing us to use the hall and campsite. We are also very grateful to Mole Valley Orienteering Club for the use of the St Leonard's Forest map, and to Matt for updating the map, mapping the campsite and cooking the meat and veggie bolognese.

Most of all, well done to all 17 juniors for throwing themselves into every activity, embracing the challenges and making the weekend such a success!

Here's to more adventures, friendships and orienteering fun ahead!

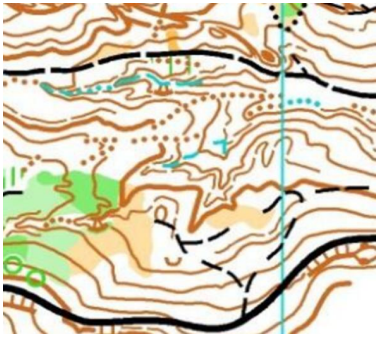
Bea
Camp Organiser

Orient- touring with the Chapmans
Hungária Kupa 19-23 August 2026 (Reported by Peter Chapman)

As the younger element of the Chapman family are now of an age where parents don't necessarily decide where they go during holidays, we had a diverse set of domestic arrangements this summer, as each of us had our own agenda for the main summer school holiday period. This all started with non-orienteering adventures as Ben departed to Tanzania for a mix of community work, scuba diving and sightseeing. Closely followed by Emma off to Scotland for the Deeside orienteering training camp. Immediately on return (following day) Emma (and Anna this time) went off to the Netherlands for an Explorer Scout camp. After this initial flurry of travel, we then had a brief interlude of about a week where we were all at home before Ben headed off to the airport again, this time to participate in the Stockholm orienteering camp.

We had been hoping to have a family holiday (abroad, as we stayed in the UK in 2025), but that was not going to be practical for all of us this summer. Emma also had a yearning to extend her international orienteering experience and spotted a multi-day event in Hungary coinciding with the first week of Ben's two week Swedish adventure. Anna once had a 20-something inter-railing stop in Budapest but, other than that, none of us had been to Hungary before, so our family summer adventure started to take shape. The plan turned into a ten day tour with three centres: Mecseknadasd (a grape growing area in the rural south, near to the orienteering at Bonyhad); Keszthely in the west, at the western end of "Bucket-and-Spade" Lake Balaton); and Budapest (Urban delights of the capital city in north central Hungary). We flew between Gatwick and Budapest and hired a car for the first eight days of the trip.

Anna and I had enjoyed a number of overseas orienteering trips before Emma had been born (Portugal, Spain, France, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Brazil(!)), so were looking forward to seeing how things worked in Hungary. Pre-event details were relatively brief, though the organisers made much use of social media (Instagram and facebook) to encourage people to enter. The overall 5-day programme was extensive, with the main events (2x forest middle, 2x forest (shortened) long and 1x urban sprint) supplemented with a host of supporting events. There were 4 days with Pre-O (Trail-O), A microsprint, Mobile (Phone) -O, Flex-O, and a Beer/Wine Relay. The event organisation even offered a selection of budget friendly accommodation options. The forest events took place in Sötétvölgy and Váralja.



Váralja Map Extract

We were selective on our choices of add-on events, as we wanted to give ourselves time to experience the non-orienteering aspects of the region (it was also our main holiday, after all). The Trail-O was appealing, but would've resulted in us being in "O-mode" for all of each day and, In the end, we just signed up to the Mobile-O. I had looked at the details for the Wine/Beer relay, but it was far too hard core boozing for us (and would've been exclusive of Emma). The mobile-O was a pairs event (which didn't fit our group size very well). Emma was keen to participate and decided to take part with Anna.

The two forested areas that were used for the middle and long distance events were generally very runnable, though featured lots of climb, and vegetation runnability was sometimes vague. The climb, compounded by the heat, made the apparently short courses physically challenging.

The urban sprint was in a very compact (300m x 500m!) area of the centre of the attractive small town of Szekszárd. Plenty of room for spectating but seemed to cover the same ground several times whilst out on the course.

The Mobile-O was a few hours later based from the same town centre but heading off in a different direction to the sprint. The object of this was for a runner to be in phone contact with their partner at base with a map of their part of the course. The runner was thus talked round their course remotely. At the completion of the first loop, the roles swapped over. It proved to be very handy for the runner to have a headset/earphones, but definitely no "Google Maps" (or tracking) allowed! Emma and Anna were very successful with their first experience of Mobile-O and came 4th out of 20 teams in their class.



Emma and Anna Hungarian Mobile-O

Final details (including start times) were only published a few days before the first event. An interesting aspect of the start times was that they were presented as a number of minutes after a base time. This gave the organisers the option to bring the event forward by an hour if the following days temperatures were forecast to get excessive. We're not sure what temperature/comfort threshold they had in mind to activate that plan. They didn't and we still had running temperatures in excess of 35C. Our personal solution to this was to carry extra water. The two forested areas were similar, although the second area had greater climb. There seemed to be a huge number of different courses: almost one for each different competition class. What this meant was that all starts were typically within 90 minutes of the base time (unlike JK or Scottish six-days, where the start window could extend over 4 or more hours). This aspect made the events more family/group friendly. The demographic across the event was different to what we are used to: lots of mid-teens and younger in family groups and not so many older teen/early 20s participants (typified by Uni-club groups in the UK). There were the older age groups, but much less of a bias towards the mass of 55-75s that we often see at events in the UK.

The main events featured daily yellow tee-shirt prizes for class winners and an overall prize giving for the best three in each class, with every day to count. Unfortunately, although I may've otherwise been in with a fair chance of the 2nd or 3rd place overall (no chance of first due to a rather athletic Swedish M60, who was consistently in the top three and won overall), I missed a control on the second day. My overall attempt already invalidated before we were even half way through! Of the three of us, Anna seemed to finish in the best overall position (5th?). Emma (in the bottom year of her age class, and picking up an injury along the way) was philosophical about her overall result just under halfway down.



Anna, Peter and Emma at the Hungaria Cup 2026

The whole trip was very pleasant. The Hungarians were pretty laid back about things and it made for a relatively relaxing (given that we went to run around!) holiday.

The Hungária Kupa is staged every year. In 2027 it runs over the period 9-14 August and provides the public races to support the World Championships. These are in the Karst limestone terrain north of Lake Balaton and look like they could offer some tricky and interesting orienteering.

The Tough One – The Three Forts Marathon, and 10 mile run – 21st June 1981



Ken Lawton has very kindly provided a very interesting booklet and photos of these two events which took place over the Downs in June 1981. Steve Jarvis and Vince Joyce have been helpful in providing more details about the TFM and how Southdowns Orienteers came to run the event.

Steve: "One of the main reasons the club ran the event was because we had so little money - producing O maps in those days was really expensive and accounted for a significant part of event costings. By holding an event where we didn't have to pay for a map it meant there was money to be made more easily, and for a few years it was a significant contributor to club funds. Plus it got our name out into the general running community."

Both events started and finished at Portslade Sport Centre, Chalky Road, and road closures were in place during the start. The marathon route headed along the roads and up to the top of Southwick Hill, followed by Thundersbarrow Hill before turning up to Beeding Hill. Then it was down and over the river Adur to do a big loop taking in Cissbury and Chantonbury Rings before heading back up to Beeding Hill and continuing along the top of the Downs past Truleigh Hill, Edburton Hill, Perching Hill & Fulking Hill to reach the final bend on the Devils Dyke road (by Devils Dyke Farm) where it then headed almost due south along the spur towards Benfield Hill, turning right down through New Barn Farm and up into Foredown Hill. A final descent from there to enter the Sports centre grounds and a final loop of the playing fields to finish. The Southdowns 10 was exactly the same except it never descended down and across the Adur - took a sharp right at Beeding Hill on the road towards Truleigh Hill.

The Race Directors for the events in 1981 were Dave Thompson (our SO Club President) and Roger Maher. The course planner was Pat Maher. Several current SO members took part, some were members of other Orienteering clubs at the time. Ken mentions: "I still find the organiser's comments interesting reading, very laid-back, and honest about some "quirks"! And the "young" Steve Jarvis was already faster than me in the "Southdowns Ten". Below are the race director's comments:

THE THREE FORTS MARATHON

'THE TOUGH ONE'

21st June 1981

COMMENTS

There can be no doubt that this year's event was a success from our point of view and it appears that most of you agreed by the comments on the day and letters received since. Your expression of appreciation made all the effort worthwhile – thank you.

We had initially decided to hold only the Marathon event and discontinue the '10'. However, due mainly to the promptings of Hilary Bloor, the '10' was reinstated and in retrospect this was a sound decision because we were able to cope and it created a ready-made audience for the start and finish of the Marathon.

The only aspect that marred the event from our point of view was the misdirection of Horsham Blue Star's Paul Marten between RP.8 and 9 after he had led the race from the start. We had placed no marshalls on this section of the route as it followed the South Downs Way from Truleigh Hill Y.H. to Devil's Dyke in roughly a straight line. Route marker boards indicated that one continued straight on at junctions. Unfortunately Paul asked a group of hikers the way and was directed 'right'. This was obviously most upsetting for all concerned and shows up one of the flaws of our organisation – i.e. although marshalls wore armbands (admittedly sometimes on the leg!) they were not very distinctive. Next year marshalls will probably wear a bright orange sash similar to that worn by motorcyclists. By turning to the page with split times one can see that Paul (No. 90) had a good lead up to the point where he made his error – our commiserations.

Congratulations to John Watkins of South London Harriers in winning the race in a time of 2hr.49m31sec which knocked 40 minutes off Adrian Belton's record created last year! However, it should be noted that the leading men probably ran an extra mile last year having gone wrong at one point and the course was altered slightly avoiding the steep climb to the top of Cissbury Ring. There can still be no doubt that this was a very impressive time for such a demanding course. We were also interested to see how orienteers fared against athletes and were pleasantly surprised, with two orienteers, Andrew Addis and Tim Watkins, breaking 3 hours, being placed respectively 4th and 5th, and many others being well placed. To be honest, we had not expected Saxons O.C. to retain the team trophy, minus Adrian Belton, and fancied Sam Lambourne's Tag Sports International, who must have started as favourites. However, the Saxons team packed well and deservedly retained the trophy - congratulations. Congratulations also to Avril Lewis in being the first lady home and to all of you who defeated the course - well done!

Those of you who take Athletics Weekly will know that the event was not run under AAA's rules. There were obvious advantages in this, in so much as it allowed youngsters such as Tracey Howard and Jamie Dickson to run. The obvious disadvantage is that it must have deterred some athletes from competing. We are undecided at this stage whether or not to run next year's race under AAA's rules. Please let us know your feelings if you feel strongly one way or the other.

The Marathon will now be an annual event, taking place on the third Sunday in June. Next year's event will take place on the 20th June - make a note in your diary now. Entry forms will be sent to all who entered this year in early February, two weeks before they become available to other interested parties. It is our intention to limit entries to 500 for both events and we will

Steve has the results from the 1980 race (22nd June) and mentions " 57 started the marathon (48 completed) and 46 on the 10 mile race (but only 31 finishers as 12 went the wrong way coming back from the Devils Dyke. A few of us ran the race a few days earlier (because we were marshalling on the day) and our times were included separately in the results booklet."

Steve continues "By 1982 it had become quite big - 300 finished the marathon and 447 the Southdowns 10. Note there was a marathon frenzy at that time - the first London Marathon was in 1981, which was mainly why the numbers suddenly grew exponentially, 1983 had 251 & 668 finishers respectfully."

The final 3 Forts Marathon was held in June 1984, but by then the numbers doing that race had fallen considerably and the event had turned from a cash cow into a drain on club funds.

The March 1985 Southdowner explained why the event would no longer take place – we had a terrible year financially in 1984, losing almost £700 (almost £3000 in today's money) and only had £130 left in the bank, which left us unable to produce any new maps (bear in a typical print run of 500-1000 maps at that times would have cost at least double what we had in the bank). As a result, we went through a phase of using black and white photocopied maps for several years - competitors then coloured in their own maps with the main green & yellow areas before starting their course!

Steve: "The 1985 Southdowns 10 did take place, but I don't have the results. I think that was the year when irate landowners up near Truleigh Hill were endangering runners by driving their 4-wheel drive vehicles recklessly towards runners and after that no-one wanted to organise the event."
If anyone would like an electronic copy of the 1981 results, please email editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk and I'll get one sent out to you – it is really interesting.



Nowadays there's an event called the Three Forts Challenge, a marathon, half marathon and 5 mile trail race which I believe is run on a commercial basis and starts at Lancing Manor Leisure Centre.

A clearer view: continuing the search for the right orienteering glasses by Jane Lambert



Steve in his RILEY Ready Reader Sports Style Glasses

As mentioned by Ian Johnson in September Southdowner, needing some form of glasses/contact lenses to see either the map and/or the terrain comes to most of us at some point.

Yes, the map scale increases as you work your way up the age classes, but most of us still find that we need some form of additional support with reading the map, finding those smaller paths, checking the terrain or checking whether there really is a gap to get through in an urban race.

So, what do you do? I've tried one contact lens which worked extremely well for both reading the map and checking the actual terrain. A huge plus was that this works in bad weather too, however getting the lens in and out proved too tricky for me, so I've reverted to glasses – but what type are available to try…

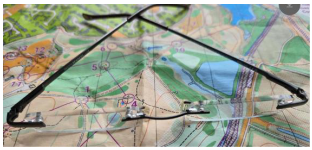


Andy Hannaford in halfmoon style O

Various as it happens, the special O ones with the cut-out section in the middle (that make any normal person look twice at you), those and the small half glasses specifically designed for Orienteering, both felt good for reading the map but if the ground sloped, or there were steps I felt very precarious.

The normal cheap reading glasses that you can pick up in a supermarket, were good for map reading but again not seeing the ground around my feet. I know several club members who use vari-focals but as I only need glasses for map reading, these seemed an expensive route to follow.

My favourite to date are from a popular bookshop – Skinny Readers (tiny reading glasses) £9.99



I tried these after recommendation by another orienteer and for me they are perfect! The main benefit is that I can see both under and over the lenses and they are very lightweight. Looking underneath, I can see steps, tree roots, and other hazards close to my feet. Looking over the top, I can read the terrain ahead. I use the lenses themselves only for reading the map and planning my route. One of my orienteering rivals now uses them too and also recommends them to others.

I'm unsure I'd recommend them in the rain, but they might work well in combination with a cap. **Postnote:** I have lost three pairs because they fell off in terrain, and once they are on the ground they are so small that they are hard/impossible to find. Adding elastic is strongly recommended!

Jill's glasses of choice: For orienteering I now find my reading prescription in a half frame works best for me. It enables me to see the map in detail and I look over the top of the frame for everything else. I tend not to steam up so much either. The head band stops the glasses bouncing about.



Jill's half-frame glasses

Steve's choice: Several years ago, after a few near misses with tree branches, I started to wear clear safety glasses to protect my eyes. I now wear a pair of RILEY Ready Reader Sports Style Glasses with a +1.00 Lens. This helps me pick out the fine detail on the map whilst still protecting my eyes.

If **you've** found something that works for you, please share this with us in The Southdowner.
Email to editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk

IF YOU GO DOWN IN THE WOODS TODAY...

By Karen Ashworth (SO Safety Officer)



Mapping, planning, controlling and setting up coaching all often involve working alone in forest areas. Here are some suggestions for things you can do to minimise risks and maximise the chance of being able to summon help in an emergency.

Things to do NOW in readiness for future visits to the forest

- Register your mobile phone with the UK 999 text service (it is often possible to get a text message through even when reception is too poor to support a voice call). Text 'register' to 999. You will get a reply with instructions to follow. More information is here https://www.emergencysms.net/
- Download the What3Words app to your phone so that you could tell the emergency services your position to within a 3m square. More information is here https://what3words.com/about-us/
- Download the ordnance survey OS Maps app (there is a free version which includes a 'locate me' function that gives your current position as a grid reference or latitude/longitude in order to tell the emergency services.
- Set up the ICE number and emergency details on your phone.

Have you checked in advance of your visit?

- Permission from the land owner (where relevant)?
- No clash with other activities such as shooting or forestry work?
- Likely weather conditions?
- Sunset time?
- Known hazards in the area?
- Are the planned activities well within your physical capability?
- Can hazardous activities be avoided whilst you are working alone?

Would someone know if you were missing?

- Does someone know where you are?
- Do they know how long you are expected to be?
- Do they have a means to communicate with you and you with them?
- Could you give them your exact location in an emergency?
    - Do they also have the What3Words app / OS Maps App?
    - Do they have a copy of the map marked up with exactly where you are working?
    - Could you enable location tracking on your phone so they can trace you more precisely?
- Do they have contact numbers for people who could be called in to help? (e.g. event officials or other experienced orienteers)
- If working for a prolonged period, could you set up a failsafe system where you call in regularly to report you are safe?

Could you get help in an emergency?

- Are you carrying a mobile phone with contact numbers?
- Have you exchanged mobile numbers with any others working at the same time?
- Are you carrying a whistle to use to summon help?

Are you adequately equipped?

- Suitably clothed for conditions? (including footwear, full body cover against ticks...)
- High vis clothing if working in an area where shooting ever happens (we've had several cases where landowner communication has been less than ideal)
- Compass, waterproof copy of map?
- Small first aid kit?
- Watch?
- Are you carrying some form of ID together with emergency contact details and any medical details such as allergies etc. that you would like someone to be aware of if they found you unconscious?

December's Let's get SO Quizzical Problem by David Wilson
Navigate your way round Sussex



This is Wordsearch for Orienteers! To find the words you have to use a compass. There are 18 Sussex placenames hidden in the square. They are all on 'A' roads – no backwoods villages – apart from a place on a well-used 'B' road and two well-known seaside locations not on an 'A' road. The easy ones are around the edge to get you started!

You can start your journey in any direction, but when you come to an 'N' (or S,E,W) you must turn north i.e to the top of the grid, and similarly for the other directions. Turns only occur when directed by a compass bearing.

			S
		R	T
	U		
H			

Thus, if 'HURST' were included, it might look like this. Notice the southward turn when 'S' is reached. All words in the puzzle have <u>at least</u> one change of direction. One place name is two words, and the space between has been omitted when inserting it in the grid.

F	E	L	D	L	Y	R	G	S	E	D	E
P	I	K	B	E	R	I	N	S	E	R	K
H	F	O	M	M	H	E	I	E	L	S	B
E	N	L	T	G	E	S	C	A	P	E	Y
T	A	S	A	N	R	T	N	A	B	E	Y
F	E	T	L	I	O	R	L	U	P	N	C
E	R	E	Y	N	F	O	R	A	L	G	E
M	O	A	T	S	A	W	R	O	P	E	R
G	R	I	N	H	E	R	B	E	L	B	N
N	I	R	R	D	U	P	U	D	C	M	O
L	L	S	O	O	G	L	Y	N	O	A	M
B	O	G	N	W	D	L	O	F	W	C	E

There are 18 placenames in total. As it's nearly Christmas you have been given the gift of 10 place names to get you started. Find these 10:
Angmering, Ashdown, Brede, Burwash, Camber, Falmer, Forest Row, Frant, Glynde, Selsey
<u>Then find 8 more yourself!</u>

All entries to <u>editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk</u> by 15th February please. The competition is open to everyone. An adult winner will receive a free run at a SOG event, or if a junior wins, they'll get a bar of yummy chocolate.

September's Let's get SO Quizzical Problem ANSWER

HIDDEN FEATURES

The 14 features that were hidden were:
"We should be **well** there by now", grumbled Alf. "Yes", agreed Betty "If you hadn't taken an early turn-off down that b**road** street, Sammy, we would have been sure to ar**rive r**ight on time". They pulled up at the entrance to the camp site, and the warden collected the fee "**For est**ate maintenance" he said, as Betty stooped to **pat h**is dog. They drove on to the site. "A good place to sto**p**, **I t**hink" said Alf, turning **round**. "It's a couple of st**ride**s from the **fence**, for shelter, and it has a view of the sea." "I suppose we'll have to take a chance on a passing **gull** – **y**our sandwiches could be at risk!" said Betty.After a snack, the friends settled down for an evening game of Monopoly. "Your tents are quite safe here", said Sammy. You can leave your **wall**ets and **bank** cards there. After all, it's only a game, you won't **owe r**eal money". But it soon got dark, the stars came out, and there was a good view of **Mars h**igh in the sky.
Well/Road/River/Forest/Path/Pit/Ground/Ride/Fence/Gully/Wall/Bank/Tower/Marsh
The winner who found all the correct answers is: **Robin Wilson**. Well done Robin, please contact Neil for your free run at a SOG.

Major/Local Events – looking ahead:

Elizabeth Brown Memorial Score – 27th December

The final SO event of 2026 remembers Elizabeth Brown. Elizabeth was a top-class Orienteer, in the early years of SO. Elizabeth was the club's undisputed star; she helped put SO on the map. She regularly won the British Championship and the JK throughout her Orienteering career and twice won gold at the World Masters Championships. Come along to North Ashdown for a lovely festive event which may include mulled wine and mince pies!

SO 50th Anniversary Southdown Orienteers - SOG 17th January Stanmer Park

Come along to help celebrate the 50th Anniversary of SO in the same location as the first ever SO event. The map has been updated by Neil Crickmore but you should be able to view the first map used, which will look totally alien to the fabulous maps we now run on.

British Night Champs 2027

Definitely something to try at least once in your O career! The dunes of Broughton Burrows, on The Gower, is the location for the Night Champs on February 13th 2027. This is twinned with the Welsh 2027 Championships the following day, which are at Kenfig Burrows – so a double dose of fabulous sand dunes!!

Southern Championships Weekend 2027

With sand dunes still in mind and looking to April but **NOTE Entries open on 1st January and there is an entry limit of 400!** This is a weekend of O starting gently on Saturday 10th April with an urban race in Taunton, with the Long Distance Champs taking place at Braunton Burrows (sand dunes) on Sunday 11th April.

Club nights

Do think about joining us on Tuesday evenings at 6.30pm, for fun around the streets of Mid-Sussex. You can run on your own or join one of our very friendly small walking or running groups to take on one of the many interesting challenges set by Neil, Euan, Robin and Ben. We usually use MapRun to collect "beeps" rather than controls, but we've all found that beeps are just as much fun.
Details can be found on the club website, but if you're unsure, or would like more information, drop an email to editor@southdowns-orienteers.org.uk, or find me (Jane) at an event.

Kent Night Cup

The Kent Night Cup Series runs on Thursday evenings during the winter months, with events organised by Saxons (SAX), Dartford Orienteers (DFOK), Southdowns Orienteers (SO) and Mole Valley (MV). A list of fixtures can be found here: https://www.saxons-oc.org/info/kent-night-cup-2026-27

SouthEast League (SEL)

Can we retain our amazing winning streak into the 2026/27 season? This is the interclub competition where every member can contribute to the overall result for the SE League Trophy, which SO currently hold.
Event dates for the Autumn/Spring season 26/27 – get them into your diary now!

22nd November 2026	SN	Mytchett
29th November 2026	SAX	Bedgebury
6th December 2026	CHIG	Epping
3rd January 2027	DFOK	South Ashdown
14th February 2027	LOK	Holmbury
21st February 2027	GO	Waggoners Wells
25th April 2027	SLOW	Leith Hill
9th May 2027	SO	Oldhouse Warren

A few events, at a glance, September to December

(please check club websites to confirm details and for more information
See BO website for a full list of many more events)

Date	Event Type	Location	Organising Club
Saturday 5th Dec	SOG	Worthlodge Forest	SO
Saturday 5th Dec	**Sheffield Steel City Weekend Indoor O Regional**	**Sheffield University Student Union building**	**ShUOC**
Saturday 5th Dec	**Sheffield Steel City Weekend Afternoon Sprint Regional**	**Burngreave**	**ShUOC**
Saturday 5th Dec	**Southern Night Championships Regional**	**Studland Downs**	**WSX**
Sunday 6th Dec	**Sheffield Steel City Weekend National**	**Baslow & Curbar Edges & Big Moor**	**SYO**
Sunday 6th Dec	**Michael Mitre National/SEIL/SEL**	**Epping Forest NW**	**CHIG**
Sunday 13th Dec	**MV Festive Event Regional**	**The Nower**	**MVOC**
Tuesday 15th Dec	Evening Street O	Ashtead	MVOC
Saturday 19th Dec	SOG	Friston Forest West	SO
Sunday 27th Dec	Elizabeth Brown Memorial Score	North Ashdown	SO
Wed 30th Dec	**Regional**	**Wellington College**	**SN**
Saturday 9th Jan	SOG	Chailey Common South	SO
Sunday 10th Jan	**Regional**	**Belmont School**	**SLOW**
Saturday 16th Jan	SO 50th Anniversary event	Stanmer Park	SO
Sunday 17th Jan	**National/SEIL/SEL**	**Holmbury Hill**	**LOK**
Tuesday 19th Jan	Street O Score	Chessington	MVOC
Friday 22nd Jan	EUOC Big Weekend Evening Indoor	Kings Buildings	EUOC
Saturday 23rd Jan	**EUOC Big Weekend sprints**	**Central Edinburgh**	**EUOC**
Sunday 24th Jan	**EUOC Big Weekend Day 3**	**Arthur's Seat**	**EUOC**
Saturday 30th Jan	SOG	Waterhall	SO
Saturday 30th Jan	**Concorde Chase Urban Regional/SEOUL/UKUL**	**Arborfield Green**	**BKO**
Sunday 31st Jan	**Concorde Chase National**	**Hawley**	**BKO**
Sunday 7th Feb	**CompassSport Heat**	**Chawton Park Woods**	**SOC**
Saturday 13th Feb	SOG	Chiddinglye Estate	SO
Saturday 13th Feb	**British Night Championships Major/UKOL**	**Broughton Burrows**	**SBOC**
Sunday 14th Feb	**SWOC Welsh Championships**	**Kenfig Burrows**	**SWOC**
Tuesday 16th Feb	Street O Score	Ewell	MVOC
Saturday 20th Feb	SOG	Coates Common	SO
Sunday 21st Feb	**Urban Regional**	**Cambridge**	**CUOC**
Sunday 21st Feb	**National/SEIL/SEL**	**Waggoners Wells**	**GO**
Thursday 25th Feb	KNC Night Score	North Ashdown	SO
Sunday 28th Feb	**National/SEIL/SEL**	**Holmbush & Buchan Country Park**	**MVOC**



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