



Club report for 2024-2025 (Sept 2025)

Introduction – Ben Bardsley, Club Chair

2024-25 has been another packed year for the club with many noteworthy activities. Firstly of course, our events. The club has run a full Saturday Series, in no small measure down to the persistence and tenacity of Neil as Events Coordinator, who has tirelessly and relentlessly worked to organise the series, including the introduction of a new location at Haileybury. Outside of Haileybury, there were returns to Ellenbrook and Moneyhole after a few years away. In addition, we have also run our two big events of the year, the Ace and Jack of Herts at Ashridge and Whippendell, respectively. Ashridge was run from a new event centre giving a different Start location, whilst Whippendell represented a return to this excellent location for the first time in almost 10 years. Finally, as I write this, we've just come to the end of an excellent and well-attended Street-O series run with almost exclusively excellent weather, excellently organised by David.

To make all the above happen has needed Organisers, Planners, Controllers, Mappers and Volunteers, as well as much other behind-the-scenes activity from other club and committee members and a huge **Thank You** to everyone who falls into any of those categories for helping to make all of these events happen. October 2025 sees the club ready to host half of a national Urban weekend, followed in February 2026 by the honour of hosting the British Night Championships which we're all looking forward to and for which plans are already well advanced.

As well as our events, Alex and team have put on an excellent schedule of training events, coupled to the Saturday Series venues and this has helped develop our club orienteers. A big thank you to Alex and all his team who have put these training events on.

Whilst we have not had a sit-down Club dinner this year we have recently had not one but two club socials with the fiendish Quest-O event at Fairlands and the informal gathering at the well-attended Scottish 6-Days where Tom was able to present Alan Rosen with his well-deserved trophy for services to the club after more than 50 years' service - Congratulations Alan!

In terms of achievements, I'd also like to give a big 'Well done' to the club Juniors, led by Jennie, for a superb second place finish in this year's National Yvette Baker Trophy final. This was all the more remarkable due to only a limited team being available on the day, but with consistent performances all round a great result was achieved.

Finally, to all the Club Officers, Hedley, Hugh, Tom, Neil, along with the rest of the committee, helpers and others who help to run the club in all ways, a big **Thank You** to all of you too.

Looking forward to an excellent and important year for the club as we host those British Championships in February!



Hertfordshire Orienteering Club

informally known as Happy Herts

Membership – Susan Marsden, Membership Secretary and Hedley Calderbank, Secretary

While senior membership has stayed approximately stable, there has been a marked reduction in junior membership. While we are still a large club in the orienteering world, the committee has decided to concentrate on understanding the reasons and take any actions needed to improve recruitment and reduce turnover which has been running at over 10% per year.

New members	Senior	Junior	Total
2025*	8	4	12
2024	16	7	23
2023	8	8	16
2022	16	11	27
2021	31	21	52
2020	21	19	40
2019	38	53	91
2018	23	33	56
Total members	Senior	Junior	Total
2025*	139	56	195
2024	140	70	210
2023	141	68	209
2022	148	69	217
2021	161	89	250
2020	158	92	250
2019	153	115	268
2018	137	102	239
2017	130	107	237
Lapsed members	Senior	Junior	Total
2024#	16	15	31
2023	18	10	28
2022	12	15	27
2021	29	31	60
2020	28	24	52
2019	16	42	58
2018	22	40	62
2017	16	38	64

*Figures up to August 2025

2024 Lapsed members are those who failed to renew in January 2025.



Events summary – Neil Gostick, Event Co-ordinator

As Ben has said we have had another busy year, which is a credit to all those in the club who have enabled a vibrant series of activities for us all to enjoy.

We have a deep set of expertise in the club, from Simon for mapping, Mike for helpers, Mike and Dave for entries and the website, Kevin for everything SI, David for Street O from software to mapping and organisers in between, and then whole teams of volunteers to run each event.

It makes the process of organising events a lot easier, when you can rely on a broad team that you can trust. So many thanks to everyone who has made it a successful year.

Notable events were the Ace of Herts at Ashridge with the novelty of a new car park, and a new area at Haileybury College and grounds. I am keen to keep adding new areas and refresh old ones to keep things alive. Though about one of each, every year seems to be what we can cope with.

It's also important to support large events, to push the boundaries of the experiences we can offer to our members and the wider orienteering community. So next year we host the British Night Championships. It should prove to be a memorable experience enabling elite orienteering on a hopefully starlit night in February

For non-elites a series of good Saturday series events is really important to provide a fun Saturday morning once a month and to enable members and non-members to have enjoyable exercise and the orienteering experience. I think we have done that this year. Numbers have averaged 111 across the Saturday series, which is a little bit down on the average of 120 for the previous 2 years, but we didn't have any really big Saturday events this year. A lesson probably to make sure we keep the events fresh and attractive

Also, really good this year has been the Street O series, almost every week we have had circa 40 people out on mostly sunny evenings having a great and energetic time, even myself walking fast round, now. Many Thanks to everyone who has invested time and care in planning and organising them.

So, Many Thanks to everyone for a successful year, and onto next year, with the Urban in Sta Alban's, British Nights and Ace of Herts in Egypt, a full range of Saturday series and Tuesday summer Street O and winter social runs across the year, plus all Alex and Jennie's training events.

Look out for me at sunny events in the car park when you are feeling full of the orienteering spirit and wanting to volunteer to help. We will provide guidance and support if you are new and there is a full wiki on the website to guide you through step by step. Or you can email me, events@herts-orienteering.club or jngostick@ntlworld.com



Hertfordshire Orienteering Club

informally known as Happy Herts

2024-25 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Competitors</u>
21/09/2024	D	Saturday	Panshanger	84
05/10/2024	D	Saturday	Verulamium	116
02/11/2024	D	Saturday	Fairlands	115
17/11/2024	C	Jack of Herts	Whippendell	216
07/12/2024	D	Saturday	Stanborough (cancelled)	
26/12/2024		Score	Trent Park	92
04/01/2025	D	Saturday	Sherrards	132
01/02/2025	D	Saturday	Mardley	112
02/03/2025	B	Ace of Herts	Ashridge East	326
08/03/2025	D	Saturday	Stanborough	119
05/04/2025	D	Saturday	Nomansland	123
03/05/2025	D	Saturday	Ellenbrook	107
07/06/2025	D	Saturday	Moneyhole	91
05/07/2025	D	Saturday	Haileybury / GLOSS	114

Club performance at Regional and National level – Tom Cochrane, Club Captain

This part of the club report is where we celebrate our individual and - particularly - our team competitive endeavours. On that note, thanks to everyone who turned out to represent HH in the various team competitions this year.

The Compass Sport Cup heat was a highlight. In my time as captain I think the 61 runners we managed to put out is a record – well done everyone! I was especially pleased that we had representation in every one of the courses, which is a sign of a healthy club membership. Winning the heat though is a tough ask, and we were just short of SLOW's winning score.

By the time of the AGM we'll have taken part in all of the UK championship relay competitions:

- Turnout at the JK on 21 April was not helped by the Easter holiday being late this year but we fielded seven teams. Our Ultraveteran team of Alan Rosen, Janet Rosen and Simon Errington managed to take the win – well done!
- The British Championships in May were an immense physical and technical challenge at Bigland. Our four teams acquitted themselves well, with the highest placing being 2nd place on the M/W70 class. A shoutout as well for our M14 team of Theo Marsden, Tunde Farago and Csongor Farago who came together to compete against teams of mostly (much) older runners – well done for challenging yourselves!
- Despite being hampered by injuries we've nine teams entered for the British Sprint Relay Championships on 31 August. At the time of writing this has yet to happen, but perhaps there will be something to celebrate at the AGM... This event is harder to manage from an



Hertfordshire Orienteering Club

informally known as Happy Herts

entries point of view as the restrictions on competitive teams are tricky to work around. Every team must contain a female runner to be competitive, but we usually have (many) more male participants. So if you are a woman or girl wondering about putting yourself forward, please know that you'll be worth your weight in gold!

After an absence from the UK O calendar, we also had the chance this year to run in the Harvester. This is the UK's answer to Jukola (Finland) or Tio Mila (Sweden), the famous overnight relay competitions. Our entry generated a very creditable 4th place on the B course for Laura Parkes, Simon Errington, Dawn Figg, Ian Byford and Daniel Figg, and a very enjoyable write-up in the newsletter from Dawn.

In terms of individual championship results:

- In the first championship of the season, Theo Marsden (M12) and Janet Rosen (W70) each came 3rd in the British Middle Championships.
- Both Becky Raftery (W40L) and Janet Rosen (W70L) made the JK podium, coming 3rd overall. Janet went one better on the Sprint day, finishing 2nd.
- Lots of us found the going tough at the British Championships at Grizedale in the Lake District. Bucking the trend was Alan Rosen with an excellent 2nd in M70, with Janet Rosen coming 3rd in W70.

Lots of you who made the long journey to the SW for the Southern Championships were rewarded with podium positions – seven overall. Janet Rosen led the way, winning W70. Rory Nesbit was 2nd on M18E as was Helen Marsden on W45. In 3rd place we had Theo Marsden (M12), Mick Smith (M75), Sian Mitchell (W45) and Hannah Nesbit (W50).

The round-up has been focused on the team and championship results. But to finish off, I would also like to celebrate all of our own, more personal goals and achievements. I know that lots of us in the club have been working towards the things that are important to us - whether that is challenging ourselves to step up to more challenging courses or bigger competitions; competing across the Saturday Series or Street O events; or perhaps putting in the hard yards to come back from an injury or setback. So whatever was important to you this year, well done if you made it, and if you think there is still more to come, well there is always next year!

Junior development – Jennie Soulsby, Junior Coordinator

Thank you to everyone who has helped with the Juniors (coaches and parents) this year. The juniors have had a good year making it to the Final of the Yvette Baker where we came second. We had a smaller team this year due to distance / timing (12 runners which was half of last year's number). I have not heard anything about the Peter Palmer Relays but have sent some emails out to see if we could possibly take part.

In terms of progression and development we had continued success in getting younger juniors to take on harder courses and to run without a parent shadowing. At regional level we have 8 members in the SEJS squad (down from 10 as two will be going to University). We have had no new additions this year as we have a gap at the relevant age group. Nationally Issy Hawks was in both the Talent South and the overall Talent Squads. Congratulations Issy.



We trialled having junior club captains but the role never really expanded beyond helping with team selection and course choices so I was planning on not doing this for the year. Unless anyone would like it to continue?

Thank you to Maggie Soulsby and Oliver Bardsley for their support.

My main concern is getting more youngsters involved in the sport. Projects for the coming year include,

- Identify juniors who may want to join SEJS in the next year intake and talk through what they need to do for selection.
- Use the ideas and designs (thank you Darrio) from the juniors to print up a new Squad Hoodie. (This is a carry over as is harder than I originally thought)
- Juniors to get involved with running the club social media (Tik Tok) - Alice has started this but more work needs to be done.
- To reach out to schools and scout clubs in the area to increase the number of juniors entering - ongoing and any ideas welcome.
- Running a child specific Score Event around Easter in a central location coupled with Easter Eggs to engage younger runners? Possibly with a moving target of an Easter Bunny? Like the Christmas O events?

Training – Alex Soulsby, Training Officer

Firstly, a big thank you to all of the coaches and helpers who have led and supported training for HH this year. Thank you Becky, Emese, Ian, Jennie, Kevin P, Laura, Tom R and Tom C, Ant, Oliver M and anyone else I may have forgotten.

This year we have continued to offer a regular, monthly training session for both juniors and adults with seven sessions over the year plus offering *ad hoc* training at Saturday events plus assisting schools and scout groups. We have used a range of HH forest and parkland areas which allow us to deliver more technical skills in areas like the complex terrain of Mardley Heath and also focus on practicing core skills such as compass work at a location like Ellenbrook. We had slightly fewer sessions this year as the big events like the YBT heats, British champs and the JK fell in a big block during the spring.

Our most popular training sessions were at Whippendell Woods and Sherrardspark Woods despite being in the depths of winter. As Whippendell hadn't been used for events recently it attracted a few more experienced runners who had enjoyed the Saturday series event a few weeks before.

With the British Night Champs in HH territory next year we are hoping to put on a night training session. This might be instead of, or in addition to, the regular monthly sessions. Keep your eyes open.

This autumn we are running a first aid course and we also ran a planning course in the summer of 2025. Thanks to Hedley and Simon for running this. We are considering a few ideas for other training activities. If there are any other queries or requests then let me know and I will see if I can help.