



Happy Herts Newsletter 279

February 2021

Note from the Editor

This month we have information about how you can keep running while we wait for the return of events. We continue to support our orienteering community with ideas for keeping fit and the Tuesday evening Social Zoom call, so do renew your membership.

The Editor is grateful to several members for articles this month, including an eye-opening article on the Hertsway route, and a prizewinner. All contributions welcome.

Sascha (newsletter@herts-orienteering.club)

Reminder to renew Membership

It is that time of year again, when membership needs renewing.

Log into the British Orienteering website for full details and [the link to renew](#). Go to 'My Account' then 'Renew my membership'.

The club agreed at the AGM to halve the club element of subscriptions for 2021, as we recognise that we haven't been able to do all we wanted to do this year.

Supporting HH members via Groups.IO email

The club continues to send messages to HH members, now using Groups.IO. Some of you receive the newsletter via email. If you read it via the website, why not subscribe to Groups.IO and get the newsletter straight to your inbox each month?

David (Dixon) is currently sending weekly messages about the DIY Street-O, and we plan to share courses for DIY Park-O soon too.

Supporting HH members with future events

For obvious reasons, the committee has cancelled all events up to Easter, including Ace of Herts at Ashridge. That said, we are in a strong position to restart Saturday events as soon as the Government (and BOF) allows - we already have 4 on the stocks, ready to quickly implement.

The WGC Urban event on 30 May remains in the calendar. We'll make a Go / No Go decision before end of February, but it must be said that it is sadly more likely to be No Go than Go. Currently there is a Covid testing site in the middle of the area we were planning for junior courses.

To sum up the club position: we'll put on as many events as we sensibly can just as soon as we can do so responsibly.



So what has happened in lockdown?

There's a surprising amount going on:

- We've continued to run DIY Street-Os throughout the year. There are now over 30 you can run at any time. Most people in HH should have one close enough to count as their daily exercise - of course as restrictions are lifted you can try more of them. Reading the news tonight, maybe not Cuffley just yet.
- We cut the HH element of your subs by 50% this year. Which reminds me, do check that you have re-joined British Orienteering. Your Chairman thought he had until Susan Marsden mentioned it during a phone call on another subject.
- We put on 2 Saturday events in between lockdowns. Covid-19 meant quite a lot of changes to our procedures, most of which seem to have worked. There are 4 more events where controlling is complete and in some cases maps have been printed, so they're ready for use. It shouldn't take long to resurrect the permissions, most landowners have been really understanding.
- Most of WGC has been mapped to ISSprOM 2019 standard, thanks to Simon Errington. We have also agreed to go ahead with professional mapping for Ashridge S&E because a lot has changed there recently.
- You get this newsletter every month!
- The Tuesday evening Zoom calls are fun. We could always do with more people at these. Even if you haven't run any of the DIY-Os this week, or joined in Mark's challenge, we also talk about how we've been keeping active. It's only a 40-minute Zoom so it's pacy, welcoming and light-hearted.
- [Tuesdays at 8pm on this link](#). See you there!

The Cathedrals quiz – winner announced

The Christmas Cathedrals challenge proved popular - a number of you wrote to thank David for his efforts to challenge your brain cells – one of you exclaimed “brilliant, and satisfyingly difficult, thank you!”

“ I hope you all enjoyed testing your urban knowledge with my Street-O quiz:

https://www.herts-orienteeing.club/uploads/misc/StreetO2020/Cathedral_quiz.pdf

There was a good number of correct entries, some of whom even want the Garmin! The winner of the tie-breaker and the Garmin was **Mick Smith** – well done Mick!

The order of locations was from East to West, and answers were as follows:

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Norwich | 5. Durham | 9. Liverpool |
| 2. Canterbury | 6. Newcastle upon Tyne | 10. Bangor |
| 3. Southwark, London | 7. Lichfield | 11. St Davids |
| 4. Coventry | 8. Bristol | 12. Oban (OK, not a city!) |

David (street-o@herts-orienteeing.club)



There and Back on the Hertsway

With thanks to Helen & Simon Errington

Back in September 2020, Helen decided that she needed something to fill in the gaps in the week created by the end of Wednesday Army Orienteering events and Sunday orienteering events being a little thin on the ground. The original plan in Helen's head was to walk the Hertfordshire Way by driving to a start point, walking 5km and then walking back – taking as long as it takes to complete with that plan.

Somewhere between having that idea and ordering the book (Helen subsequently found another copy on the bookshelf some months later during a dusting frenzy), and later buying all the new versions of the OS maps for the whole route, Simon decided that he might fancy coming along too and maybe each leg could be a little further and faster.

Thus on Wednesday 7th October 2020 Helen and Simon started at the Roy Stone in Royston (be honest, did you know that was even a thing?) and set off towards a lap of the county.

The theory is simple: drive to the start, run in an anti-clockwise direction along the Hertfordshire Way for an hour or two, run back to the car along whatever convenient route is available. Repeat as necessary until Royston appears again.



Our pattern has become one of:

- check the weather – neither of us intends to run when rain is forecast, we prefer sun but have had to settle for grey and misty on occasion.
- Check the work and meeting diary to see if we can fit in a four or five hour slot to drive, park, change shoes, run, have a snack and get home and shower ready for the next Teams/Zoom meeting.
- Grab the running sack, pack a snack, water, binoculars, camera (& sim card & spare battery!), waterproofs, book & map and off we go.

We have usually checked out the next parking place on the previous run or if not then Google Earth does a good job of finding a place to park. We plan a route of about 20 kilometres – we did one of 27km once and that was a little too far for Helen to find enjoyable. The route out is always the Hertfordshire Way, while the route back tries to avoid any repetition of the route out.



It has been fascinating to see places you would never have contemplated visiting and things you never expected. You soon realise that Hertfordshire is a county of countryside, large estates and parkland, farms, agriculture and wildlife, scattered with towns and villages full of historic interest. We have followed rivers, canals, railways and motorways. We have seen more churches than you would believe possible, many with characteristic Hertfordshire features such as flint, brick and puddingstone used for construction, plus a narrow spire known as a Hertfordshire spike. We spent a day in the middle of the sugar beet harvest near Stevenage.

Unfortunately from an orienteering point of view, you discover lots of woodland but mostly in quite small blocks. The only really large wooded areas we have gone through are Ashridge and Broxbourne, although Heartwood Forest is interesting. We have passed through many mapped areas, and plenty more if you count the Tuesday evening DIY Street-O events.

A key attraction for Simon was always going to be the birdlife - it has certainly been varied. We have seen red kites on every leg but one, so they have clearly managed the move east from the Chilterns. Buzzards have been nearly as common; kestrels turn up on about half the legs.

We spotted a little egret in Berkhamsted that had been ringed near Hoddesdon.

There have been large flocks of yellowhammers redwings, ring-necked parakeets and red-legged partridge. We have found two stonechats, a raven and a very loud Cetti's warbler. And then at Stanstead Abbots we found a black swan on the River Lee Navigation.



Animals have been nearly as varied. For a long time, the third most common large mammal we had seen was alpaca, turning up on four or five farms. Horses are everywhere, many with very posh facilities, while sheep also feature strongly, often feeding on winter turnip crops.

We have seen fallow deer and a solitary muntjac, and are still arguing about whether we can count the dead fox by the side of the New River in Broxbourne. Undoubtedly the most surprising sighting were the two white wallabies in a wood near Essendon.



One thing we have seen most is mud. Maybe the winter wasn't the best time to try this, but we have had days where every step of the 20km seems to involve your foot sliding as you put it down. The only thing that hides the mud is the water, and we have waded through quite a lot of that as well. We have been quite selective in the days we go so the weather on each leg has been mostly OK, with only two days where we got properly wet. Several days have been very cold, and the leg from Potters Bar to Newgate Street was mainly in fog.



As of the end of January we have run 23 legs and made it from Royston to Waterford just north of Hertford, as well as managing the extra loop on the alternative route from Cuffley to Hertford. We have run around 460km in around 70 hours with over 5000 metres of climb. We reckon there are seven legs left so we are aiming to finish by the end of March by which time we should have covered around 600km.

For a full write-up with maps, photos and statistics for each leg see:
www.maprunner.co.uk/hertsway/





“Run, Forrest, Run”

During lockdown we offer the following options:

1. (Re)run your local DIY-O.

<https://www.herts-orienteeing.club/fixtures/diy-street-o/>

We have recently published two additional courses:

- **Letchworth Central** - planned by Kevin, Penny & Laura Parkes, and

- **Hatfield West** - planned by Hedley Calderbank.

If either is local to you give it a go. A few more courses are under preparation.

2. Have a(nother) go at Post-O. Can you beat your Spring performance?

A. Use OpenOrienteeringMap to zoom in to your place of residence, and click to generate a map.

<https://oomap.co.uk/gb/#/new/streeto/11/-0.2666/51.7402/>

Use the ‘Add Postboxes’ button. Suggest using default 1:10,000 scale; move centre around or flip between landscape/portrait as sensible, and add your start/finish point. For a walk-through, visit this short video:

https://herts-orienteeing.club/uploads/misc/Postbox_map_generation.mp4

B. Print out a copy of the map ("Save & get PDF map", button top-right). Plan a route if you wish!

C. Starting from the edge of your property, run/walk past as many postboxes as possible and get back home in 45 mins.

3. Plan a local Street-O.

Help me out and plan your own local course for us to use when restrictions are lifted. Start with the OpenOrienteeringMap instructions above, then add more controls as necessary. Send me the PDF and we'll go from there. **Updated guidance** at

<https://sites.google.com/view/hh-know-how/street-o/diy-street-o-planning>

Please join the club social whether or not you've run - 8pm each Tues:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82873760412?pwd=QTNrMFBPdU9CRFdEWWZ2OWVicjhyUT09>

You shouldn't need the password (it's in the link) but if asked it's **4fDm2h**



Route planning challenge

Courtesy of Mark Adams:

"We've set up some route-choice fun to discuss on Tuesday nights. Let's see if we can agree on whose route is best. Draw your optimum route for the long leg in Burnham/Egypt, shown here: <https://www.run-herts.routegadget.co.uk/rg2/#13>

In case you haven't drawn a Routegadget route before, here's how:

- Select the "Draw" tab
- Select "Course 1"
- Enter a name (it doesn't have to be your real name)
- Enter a time (any time, e.g. 00:01)
- Click on the map at the bends in your route (don't include the start), and finally click on the finish.
- Click "Save"

Mark, publicity@herts-orienteeing.club

[ends]