



Contents

Editor's Spur.....	1
Forthcoming HH events.....	2
Chair's Chat.....	3
British Orienteering Incentive Awards	4
Reminder: Volunteers for British Night Champs/Ace of Herts 7/8 Feb 2026.....	5
Meet the committee - Tom Cochrane, Club Captain	6
Honeymoon photo.....	7
Indoor Orienteering	8
SE Junior Squad Training Weekend.....	10
SE Night and Middle Champs 15 & 16 November	12
Southern Night Champs, Worth Lodge, 22 November	12
2025 Club Championships	13
Major Events 2026 – dates for your diaries.....	13
Know Your Event: The OMM (and other Mountain Marathons).....	15
Original Mountain Marathon 2025	18
Fairlands Valley 1 November photos	26
Future Events	27

Editor's Spur

Alan Rosen newsletter@herts-orienteeing.club

Thanks to Neil for the photo above – a reminder to look up and around from time to time to appreciate the lovely places we get to when orienteeing..

A quick nudge to enter Black Park for the 2025 Club Champs **on Sunday 14 December**, see p2025 Club Championships13, and also to keep **Sunday 22 February** free as that's the regional round of the 2026 Compass Sport Cup – it's about time we qualified for the final again!



Forthcoming HH events

Date	Event	More Info
Sat 6 Dec 25 10:30 - 13:15	Panshanger Saturday Series Beginners and experienced orienteers welcome	Event Details Location
Sat 13 Dec 25 10:00 - 12:00	Club Training – Whippendell Suitable for all	Event Details Location
Fri 26 Dec 25 11:00 - 12:00	LOK / HH Boxing Day Score All welcome. Suitable for beginners & experienced orienteers alike.	Event Details Location
Sat 3 Jan 26 10:00 - 12:45	Sherrardspark Wood Saturday Series Beginners and experienced orienteers welcome	Event Details Location
Sat 17 Jan 26 10:00 - 12:00	Club Training – Sherrardspark Wood Suitable for all	Event Details Location
Sat 31 Jan 26 10:00 - 12:45	Nomansland Saturday Series	Event Details Location
Sat 7 Feb 26 18:15 - 22:00	BNOC 2026 Egypt Woods British Night Championships	Event Details Location
Sun 8 Feb 26 10:30 - 12:30	Ace of Herts 2026 Egypt Woods National event with courses for all including beginners	Event Details Location
Sat 7 Mar 26 10:00 - 12:45	Whippendell Woods Saturday Series	Event Details Location TBC
Sat 11 Apr 26 13:00 - 14:00	Moneyhole Park Saturday Series	Event Details Location TBC

For the most up-to-date fixtures, go to <https://www.herts-orienteering.club/fixtures/>

Newsletter Articles Wanted

We are always on the look-out for contributions to this newsletter. Please consider submitting anything orienteering-related, for example reports from events you've attended, orienteering tips & tricks, photos, equipment reviews...

Please send material to Alan newsletter@herts-orienteering.club. Copy dates are typically a few days before the end of the month; for the **January** edition it is by the end of **Friday 26 December**.



Chair's Chat

Ben Bardsley

What does professional football refereeing have in common with orienteering?

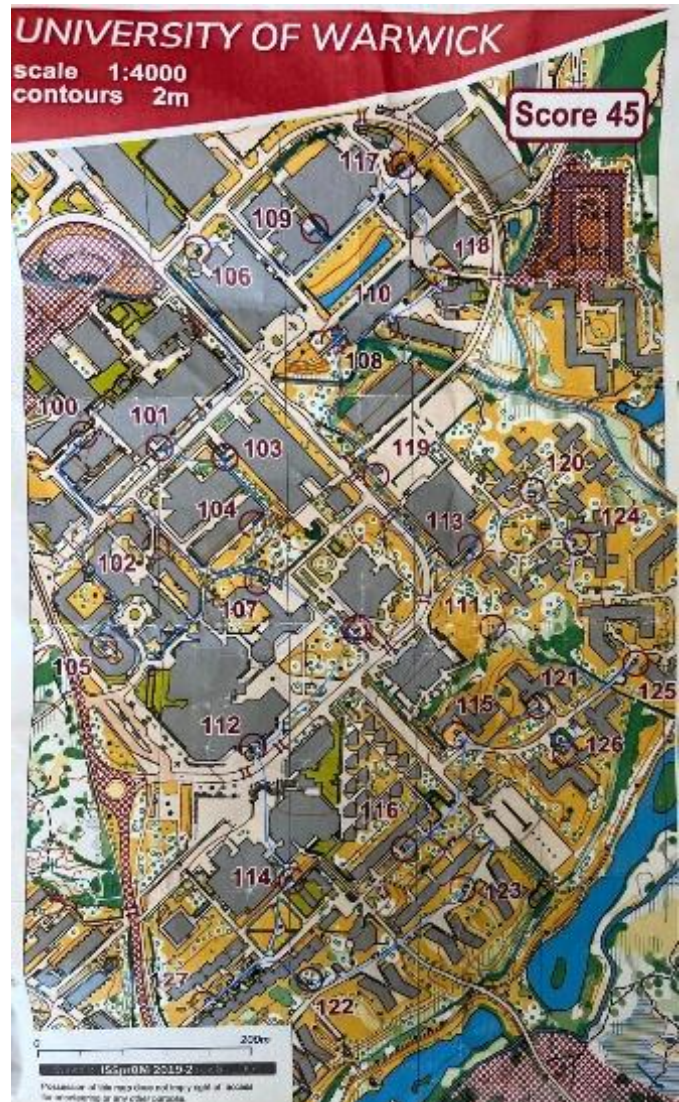


The answer to that lies partly in the feature of orienteering that attracts many people to it in the first place – the fact that going for a run on its own may not be the most palatable or interesting way to keep fit – all that focus on the pain and nothing to keep your mind occupied.

In orienteering of course, with the constant navigational challenge, it's enough to keep your mind off the worst of the physical strain. The same skills are needed in professional refereeing, namely the ability to concentrate when tired, think on the go, and make rational decisions, often when they are 50:50 calls.

Therefore PGMOL, the organisation which oversees professional football referees, recently took on an orienteering challenge at Warwick University campus as a training exercise to give EFL referees the chance to practice these skills in a different environment. Octavian Droobers (the local club) prepared a 45-minute score course using the map from the 2024 British Sprint Championships. As you'll see from the attached article, the referees didn't do badly, with a best time of just over 32 minutes.

https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/blog/95/pgmol_swap_whistles_for_maps_at_local_orienteering_event



Elsewhere in this newsletter, there is a piece about the Original Mountain Marathon (OMM) which I completed with Oliver at the end of October. Whilst I'm not the fastest orienteer, it is good fun to challenge yourself on a different style of event like this and I was pleasantly surprised with our result, achieved without really running(!) but just keeping going for the full time period, coupled with some good navigation (the benefit of a regular orienteering background and doing it as a team with a good partner 😊).

It was also good to know that we weren't the only HHers taking part with Tom Raftery going further than us by taking on the Long Score (an extra hour each day compared to our course) and completing a very impressive 37 miles plus lots of climb across his 2 days. Congratulations Tom – a superb effort...



British Orienteering Incentive Awards

Certificate of Achievement

CONGRATULATIONS!

BRITISH ORIENTEERING

YOU HAVE ACHIEVED GOLD STANDARD ON THE
BRITISH ORIENTEERING RACING CHALLENGE.

★★★★★

The Navigation Challenge

Members are eligible for a Navigation Challenge certificate after successfully completing 3 colour coded courses at the same Technical Difficulty (TD) standard. The certificates are 'star' based e.g. 1 star for TD 1 up to 5 Star for TD 5.

Congratulations to the following club members who have gained new British Orienteering Incentive Awards recently.

Certificate of Achievement

CONGRATULATIONS!

BRITISH ORIENTEERING

YOU HAVE ACHIEVED ★★★★★ STANDARD ON THE
BRITISH ORIENTEERING NAVIGATION CHALLENGE.

The Racing Challenge

Members are eligible for a Racing Challenge certificate after successfully completing 3 colour coded courses (of the same TD) within the following times:

- Gold Award. Participants time < Course Length (KM) x 12.5mins
- Silver Award. Participants time < Course Length (KM) x 15mins
- Bronze Award. Participants time < Course Length (KM) x 20mins

These certificates are also 'star' based e.g. 1 star for TD 1 up to 5 Star for TD 5 as above.

Member	Certificates	Awarded
Anne Stockley	Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★	03/11/2025
Darrio Tam	Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★★★★★	10/11/2025
	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★★★★	10/11/2025
	Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★★★★	10/11/2025
	Navigation Challenge ★★★★★	10/11/2025
Frank Tully	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★★★★	03/11/2025
Gary Jenkins	Navigation Challenge ★★★★★	04/11/2025
Jolie Pui Yan Wong	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★	03/11/2025
Lily Cochrane	Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★	03/11/2025
Molico Pui Yiu Wong	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★	03/11/2025
	Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★	03/11/2025
Ralph Dadswell	Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★★★★★	03/11/2025
	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★★★★	03/11/2025
Simon Wightman	Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★★★★★	03/11/2025
	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★★★★	03/11/2025
	Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★★★★	03/11/2025
	Navigation Challenge ★★★★★	03/11/2025
William Lyle	Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★	03/11/2025
	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★	03/11/2025



Reminder: Volunteers for British Night Champs/Ace of Herts 7/8 Feb 2026

Preparations for our big weekend are going well. You may have seen our postcards or spotted the advert in CompassSport (the magazine went to the printers on 21 November so should be dropping through your letterbox quite soon if you haven't received it yet). Thanks to Matthew and Brad for the publicity materials

Simon has done a detailed re-map of the area, Helen and Alan are working on courses now that the vegetation is improving and team leaders are working out how to organise their teams – starts, download, control hanging and collecting, parking, road crossing, prize giving, GPS tracking etc - so now we need to organise a large team of volunteers to run the two events. You may remember that in the last newsletter we asked you to spend a couple of minutes filling in a form to express your preferences.

Thanks to all who have filled in the Google form but we're still rather short of the numbers we will need, so now's the time!

[Here](#) is the link - please fill in one for each potential helper, as soon as possible.

We've tried to phrase it so that you can express your own preferences eg 'happy to help at one but if you need I can do both'. If you need to be creative with the use of free form text, please do so. This is an expression of intent rather than a full commitment - if you need to change your response you can edit your form at any time. We'll come back to you with a proposal.

And don't forget to enter both events!

Go to <https://www.britishnightchamps.org.uk/> for more details





Meet the committee - Tom Cochrane, Club Captain

This is my second stint as captain. The main job is organising entries for the various team competitions, including the big relays and the Compass Sport Cup. Even though it is sometimes impossible to keep everyone completely happy I do enjoy the chess game of matching up runners to teams in the best way possible. It is almost exhilarating when I find out that the number of people interested is a multiple of three and we have no empty teams or runners left over!

My biggest fear is that people will think those competitions aren't for them. Sometimes it might seem like you have to be extra keen or super-competitive - which is not the case at all. The truth is that it is much, much more fun to have a club tent full of people cheering each other on, so when I say 'the more the merrier' I do mean it. Plus, in general people (myself included) fall into the trap of trying a bit too hard on relay day and making more mistakes than usual. So actually an 'average' run will usually turn out very nicely indeed.

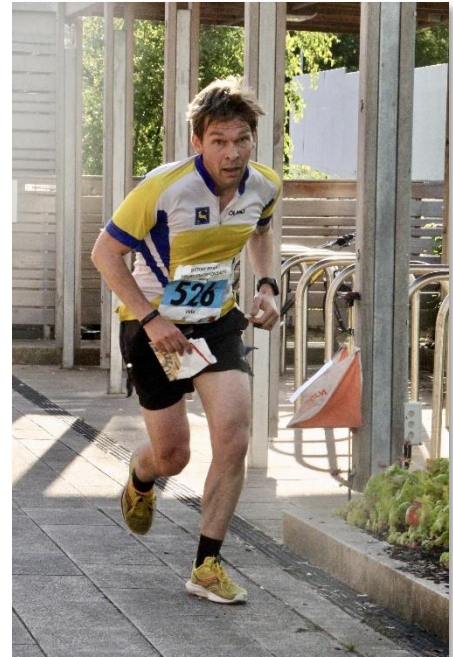
Since I've already done one 'meet the committee' article that focused on my orienteering life, this time I thought I'd mention some other things. Though as you'll see, orienteering as a hobby tends to creep into other areas of your life too.

For a job I work as an economist in London. For me this means working on particular industries or projects ('microeconomics') rather than say forecasting interest rates ('macroeconomics'). Someone once told me that you can put all companies on a spectrum from 'geezer' to 'geek'. I once did a presentation to my team on how you can use economics supply and demand graphs to think about the challenge of orienteering, so we all know where my company sits on that spectrum.

It suits me to work mostly in the UK now, but I love to travel and I used to be a bit more adventurous with my work. There were a few years where I did most of my work on irrigation schemes in Zambia (definitely one of my favourite countries) and Tanzania. Although I never did manage any orienteering in either place, I do like trying out different terrain and maps around the world. Latvia might be my favourite but on my bucket list is a trip to South Africa for the 'Big 5 O week'.

I do have some other hobbies. One is cooking. I like to make Thai food but do have to brace myself for robust feedback from the kids from time to time. I reckon over the years I have cracked the recipe for "Wilf's chilli2 - Wilf's being the catering van that used to come to O events from its base in Kendal in the 90s and early 2000s. If you ask me nicely I will share that recipe.

Finally perhaps a more unexpected hobby - I love to play snooker. During my misspent youth we would often sneak off to the local snooker hall during free periods at school. (Where does that form of bad behaviour sit on the 'geezer'/'geek' spectrum I wonder...?!) I play less often now, and from a low base my ability level has dropped considerably, but it's still fun. And at last I've found something about myself that I couldn't somehow relate back to orienteering so I'll leave it there!





Honeymoon photo

Mike Bennett

Becky Shelford and Gary Flynn, both recently members of HH, were married at the end of October and spent their honeymoon in NZ. Here they are at Punakaiki Rocks.

The dialogue went something as follows, staring through binoculars:

B: Is that a Caspian Tern or a White-fronted Tern?

M: All the terns I've seen so far have turned out to be Red-billed Gulls.

B: That one on the nest just popping its head up from behind the rock ...
Oh my god, it's you!



(Yes, it was a white-fronted tern.)

They're both really enjoying life near Brisbane. Becky is teaching there with Gary working mostly from home. They are members of the splendidly-named Sunshine Coast Orienteers, although as orienteers are spread far and wide there are many fewer events. Gary said that he didn't realise how good HH Saturday Series events were until he found that not many clubs can sustain something like that.

I leave it to the statisticians in the club to work out the probability of a current HH member meeting them during the 3 weeks they were in the country. OK, most tourists on that coast stop at Punakaiki for maybe an hour because the rocks are spectacular and at the right state of wind and tide there are big blowholes.





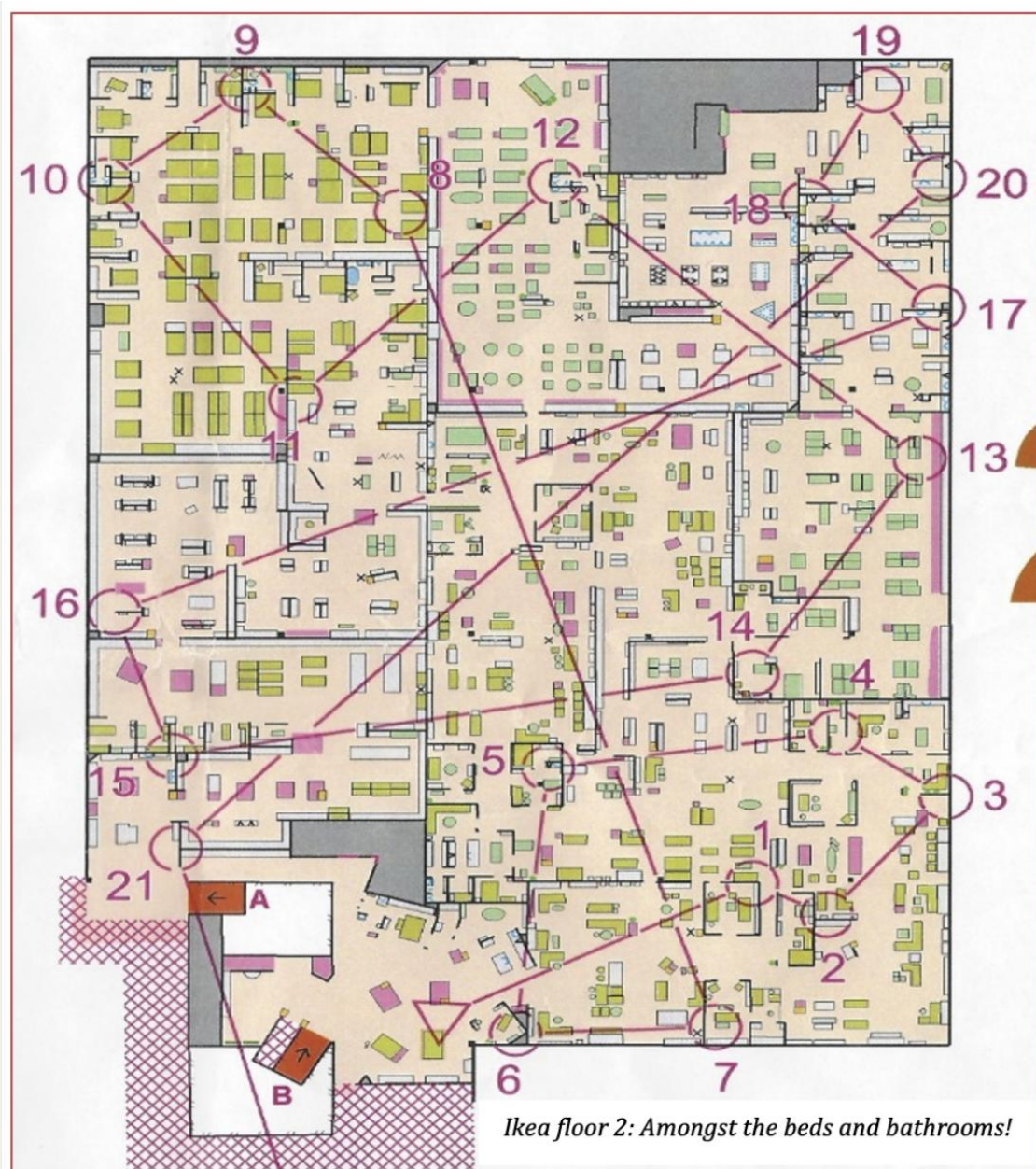
Indoor Orienteering

At the moment there are world-wide specifications for four different types of o-map:

- 'Traditional' Orienteering (ISOM)
- Sprint Orienteering (ISSprOM)
- Mountain Bike Orienteering (ISMTBOM)
- Ski Orienteering (ISSkiOM)

Now they are about to be joined by a new version with the inelegant acronym of **ISInOM** – the [International Specification for Indoor Orienteering Maps](#), currently in draft form.

There aren't many indoor o-events but, if you get the chance, have a go – you'll probably spend more time standing still and scratching your head than in an outdoor race... In the last couple of years, HH members have enjoyed events in Glasgow and Edinburgh and there's one coming up in March in Warsaw! Here's part of a course in IKEA, Uppsala, in 2022 – can you work out your route round the course?



Ikea floor 2: Amongst the beds and bathrooms!



And one from the 2025 Stockholm Indoor Cup showing the challenge of multiple levels:

Stockholm Indoor Cup 2025

2:a februari



Ettapp 2, del 1: Internationella Engelska Skolan Liljeholmen

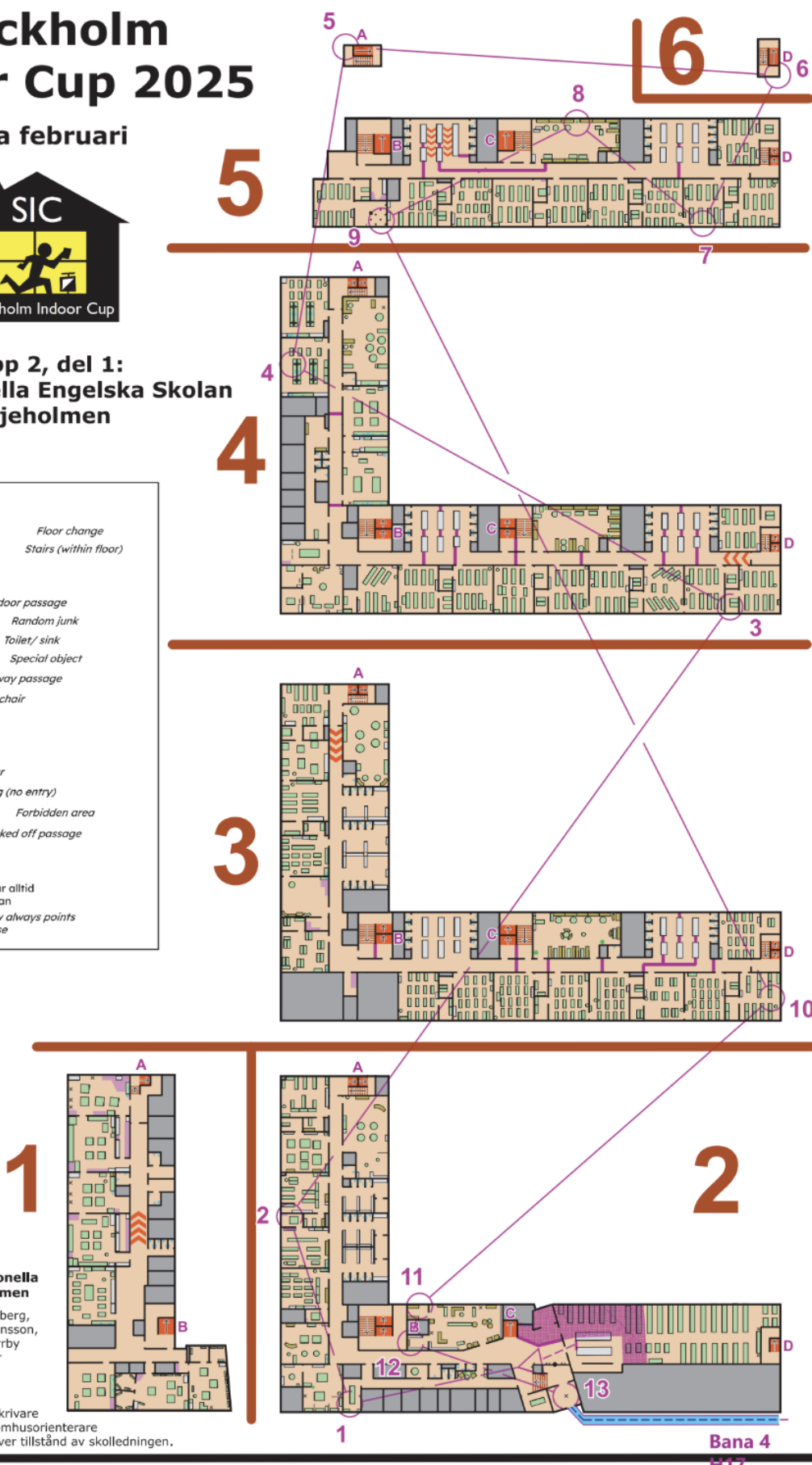
Teckenförklaring

	Trappa (våningsbyte)	Floor change
	Trappa (höjdkurva)	Stairs (within floor)
	Ramp	
	Golv	Floor area
	Utepassage	Outdoor passage
	Bråte (Förbjudet)	Random junk
	Toalett/Handfat	Toilet/ sink
	Speciellt Föremål	Special object
	Enkelriktat	One-way passage
	Soffa	Sofa/ large chair
	Bord	Table
	Skåp	Shelf
	Växt	Plant
	Pelare	Large pillar
	Byggnad	Building (no entry)
	Förbjudet område	Forbidden area
	Avspärrning	Blocked off passage
	Staket	Fence
	Trapp-pilen går alltid upp för trappan The stair arrow always points up the staircase	



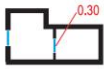
Inomhuskarta Internationella Engelska Skolan Liljeholmen

Ritad jan 2025 av Oskar Forsberg,
Assar Hellström, Fredric Johansson,
Jonas Rinnbäck, Katarina Norrby
Grundmaterial: Byggritningar
Skala: 1:650
Banläggare: Assar Hellström
Utskrift: (BL-idrottsservice)
Sveriges bästa inomhuskartskrivare
Upphovsrätt: Stockholms Inomhusorienterare
All användning av kartan kräver tillstånd av skolledningen.





So what is on an indoor map that you wouldn't normally see outdoors? Here's some examples...



1112 Automatically closing doors (L)

This symbol represents doors that are passable to runners, but may close automatically due to electronic control. Runners are allowed to open door to pass.



1202 Stage edge or steep stairway (L)

Use this symbol to mark edge of stage or steep stairway. Tags indicate falling direction.



1302 Toilet (P)

Toilet accessible to runners.



1303 Shower (P)

Shower accessible to runners.



1305 Prominent water feature (P)

Prominent water feature not owning a separate symbol.



1407 Untidy area (A)

This symbol may be used in a room where furniture may be moved and thus making it hard to map exactly, e.g. desks in a classroom or apparatus in a gym.

Control description



7.119 Pillar (P)



7.132 Toilet (P)



7.133 Shower (P)



7.134 Sink (P)



7.141 Table (P)

Maybe you could draw an indoor o-map of your house and plan a course???

SE Junior Squad Training Weekend

Henry Lane

I participated in South East Junior Squad training weekend in South Wales along with other Happy Herts members Bors, Csongor, Darrio, Niamh, Rory and Theo, plus Sian and Helen as coaches. Day one at Merthyr Mawr was part of the Orienteering Federation's training day; we trained on sand dunes followed by a brutal sprint up and down the big dipper sand dune and then had a night orienteering race near Port Talbot at Briton Ferry Woods. The second day we all took part in the Welsh League race at Kenfig Burrows nature reserve which included very interesting terrain.



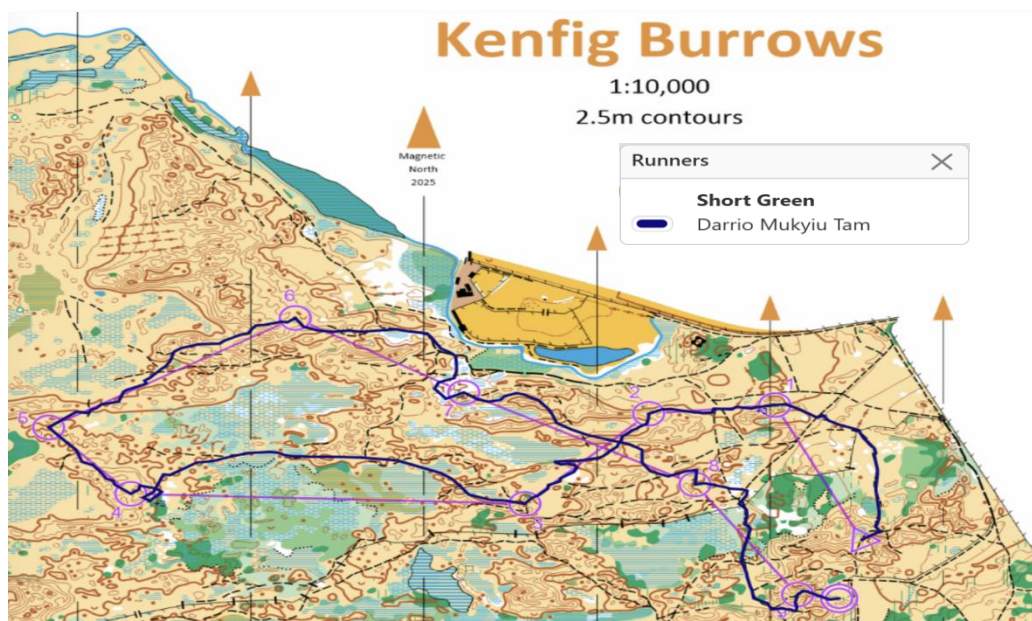
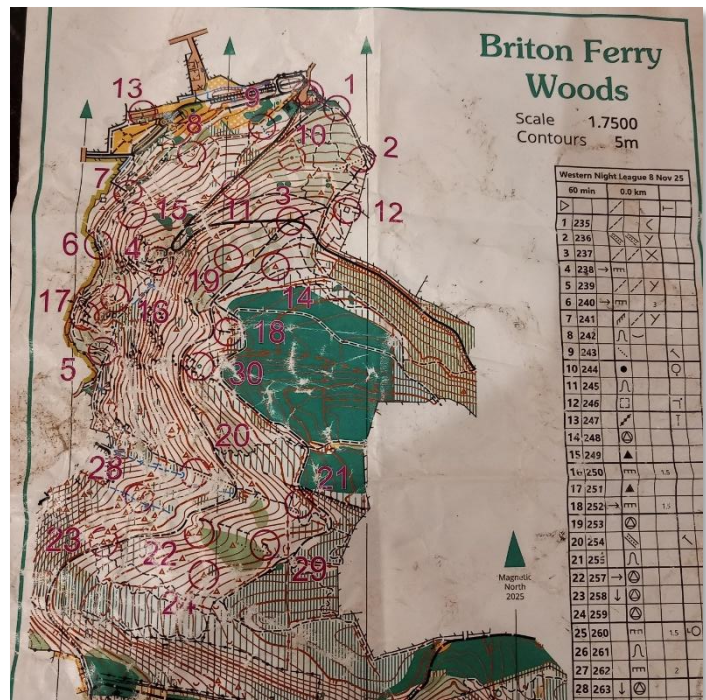


Helen Marsden

I haven't been on a SEJS trip for a VERY long time – the last time would have been at least 13 years ago, well before Theo was born. But now that Theo is starting to go to SEJS himself, I've been brushing up on my coaching skills and tagging along.

The joy of coaching with SEJS is seeing the juniors gain confidence (in themselves as well as in their orienteering skills) and build friendships that will last for years, and this weekend was no exception. For several of the (younger) members, the South Wales trip was full of new experiences: orienteering on the sand dunes of Merthyr Mawr and in the darkness of night, sleeping like sardines on the floor of a scout hut, preparing meals for everyone, long journeys in minibuses, and the like. Juniors learnt, or practiced their fine navigation, simplification, visualisation, route choice and relocation skills. They worked together or competed against each other. Some even ran up (and down again) the second largest sand dune in Europe; for fun...

But my favourite part was the atmosphere across the whole weekend, which was one of camaraderie between the newbies, older juniors, and coaches. I was delighted to find the mutual support of junior squads that I remember from my youth is alive and well, and I am very much looking forward to seeing Theo and his friends develop with that same support over the next 5+ years.





SE Night and Middle Champs 15 & 16 November

A lot of silver medals at Bitty and Brinton Woods!

M65-75 - SE Nights (excluding ineligible) - 3.5km 110m

Pos	Name	Club	Age Class	SE Nights	Time
2nd	Alan Rosen	HH	M70	Y	35:26

M14 - SE Mid (excluding ineligible) - 2.5km 95m

Pos	Name	Club	Age Class	SE Mid	Time
2nd	Theo Marsden	HH	M12	Y	24:37

W45-50 - SE Mid (excluding ineligible) - 3.9km 90m

Pos	Name	Club	Age Class	SE Mid	Time
2nd	Helen Marsden	HH	W45	Y	34:18

W65-75 - SE Mid (excluding ineligible) - 2.7km 70m

Pos	Name	Club	Age Class	SE Mid	Time
2nd	Alison Saunders	HH	W65	Y	36:03



Short Green at the SE Middle Champs

Southern Night Champs, Worth Lodge, 22 November

M60 3.8km 80m

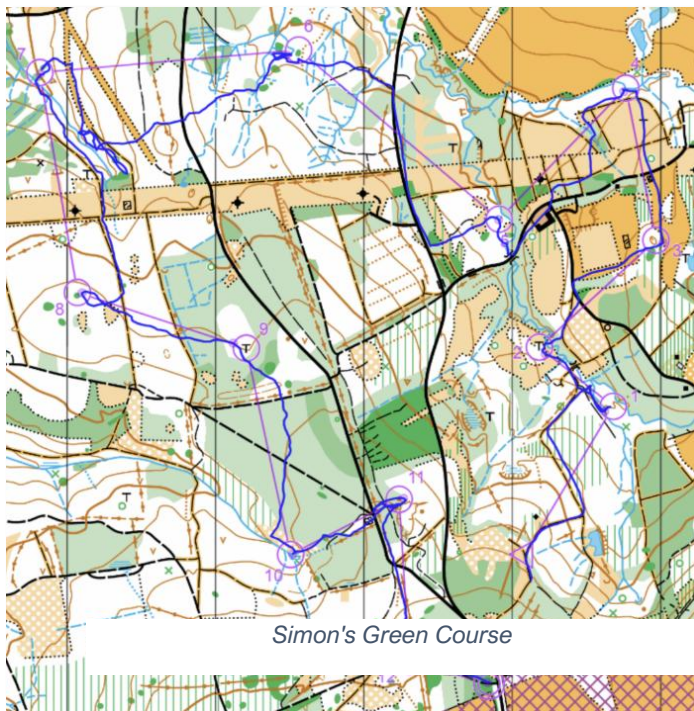
1st	Simon Errington	M60	41:53
-----	-----------------	-----	-------

M65 3.8km 80m

3rd	Ian Byford	M65	61:18
-----	------------	-----	-------

M70 2.8km 60m

1st	Alan Rosen	M70	30:42
-----	------------	-----	-------



Simon's Green Course

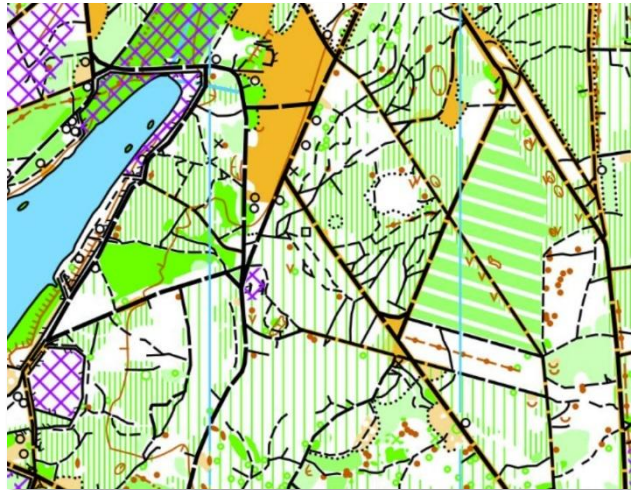


2025 Club Championships

This year we will hold the HH Club Championships at BKO's event at **Black Park** on **Sunday 14 December**. As always, the more the merrier!

Entries are now open at <https://racesignup.co.uk/black-park-regional>.

As a reminder, to be competitive in a class of the Club Champs, all you need to do is complete the appropriate course for your age group:



Open (M, W)	Blue 7.4km 45m climb
Veteran (M60+, W45+)	Green 5.1km 20m climb
Intermediate Boys (M14 & M16) Intermediate Girls (W14 & W16)	Light Green 3.6km 15m climb
Junior (M/W12 and below)	Orange 3.1km 10m climb

In addition, there are two handicap competitions across the Open and Veteran categories (M&W amalgamated). Results for these are calculated based on your performance relative to your own [BOF ranking points](#).

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Major Events 2026 – dates for your diaries


You may or may not have your 2026 Calendar on the wall yet, but it's time to start planning and booking accommodation at least for the events up to and including Easter.

As you can see from the map, six of the ten events are in the southern half of the UK, so more accessible than sometimes.

The JK weekend in Scotland is a long way north but should be a great weekend.





Sat 7 Feb 2026	British Night Championships (UKOL) HH Egypt and Hangings Woods
Sat 28 Feb 2026	British Orienteering Championships SBOC including Welsh Championships (UKOL) Carreg Goch – open Welsh moorland
	
Sun 1 Mar 2026	British Relay Championships SWOC Margam Country Park
<p>Here's the British Champs and Relays website – lots of details for the Individual Champs, Relay Champs still to come.</p> <p>Watch out for emails from Tom asking who wants to run in HH teams at the Relays Champs (and at the JK Relays as well).</p>	
	
Fri 3 Apr 2026	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Sprint (UKOL) SOA Perth City Centre
Sat 4 Apr 2026	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Middle (UKOL) SOA Rannoch
Sun 5 Apr 2026	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Long (UKOL) SOA Rannoch
Mon 6 Apr 2026	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival – Relay SOA Tullochroisk
Sat 18 Apr 2026	British Middle Championships (UKOL) HOC Brown Clee
Sat 27 Jun 2026	British Sprint Championships (UKOL) BOK University of Bath
Sun 28 Jun 2026	British Sprint Relay Championships BOK University of the West of England
Sun 18 Oct 2026	CompassSport Cup Final MV Pippingford Park



Know Your Event: The OMM (and other Mountain Marathons)...

Ben Bardsley

What is a Mountain Marathon and how does it differ from 'standard' orienteering? Well, the clue is in the name. Firstly, Mountain Marathons are considerably longer than your average orienteering event, including even the longest Black courses you might come across. Secondly, they are held in the mountains. That second aspect is no different from some standard events, but coupling a long event with mountainous terrain is, of course, extending the challenge and marking events such as these as significant endurance events. In essence though, it is an orienteering event...



The Original Mountain Marathon (OMM – <https://theomm.com/the-omm>) is always held in the last weekend of October (the weekend the clocks go back) and, in the words of the event itself, it is “held annually in remote parts of the UK in October to guarantee bad weather”. The basic format is a 2-day event, for teams of 2 (or 3, although most are 2), with a mandatory campsite overnight away from the event centre. All competitors have to be entirely self-sufficient for the 2 days

– carrying all their food, tent, sleeping gear, clothing, stove, etc. There is a mandatory kit list which must be strictly adhered to (and is checked) to ensure safety.

The location will change every year, but will be in one of the mountainous and/or remote areas of the UK which will challenge you physically. Typical locations include the Lake District, Scotland (various areas), Wales, including the National Parks. A full list is available on the OMM website (under Results).

There are options for either Linear courses, or Score courses. Most beginners tackle the Score courses, so that they have some control over the length of time they are out on course and the distance they cover. There are three options for each type of course:

LINEAR

ELITE COURSE Day 1: 47km/2200m [Example map](#) Day 2: 38km/1800m [Example map](#)

A COURSE Day 1: 36km/1650m [Example map](#) Day 2: 29km/1350m [Example map](#)

B COURSE Day 1: 25km/1100m [Example map](#) Day 2: 20km/900m [Example map](#)

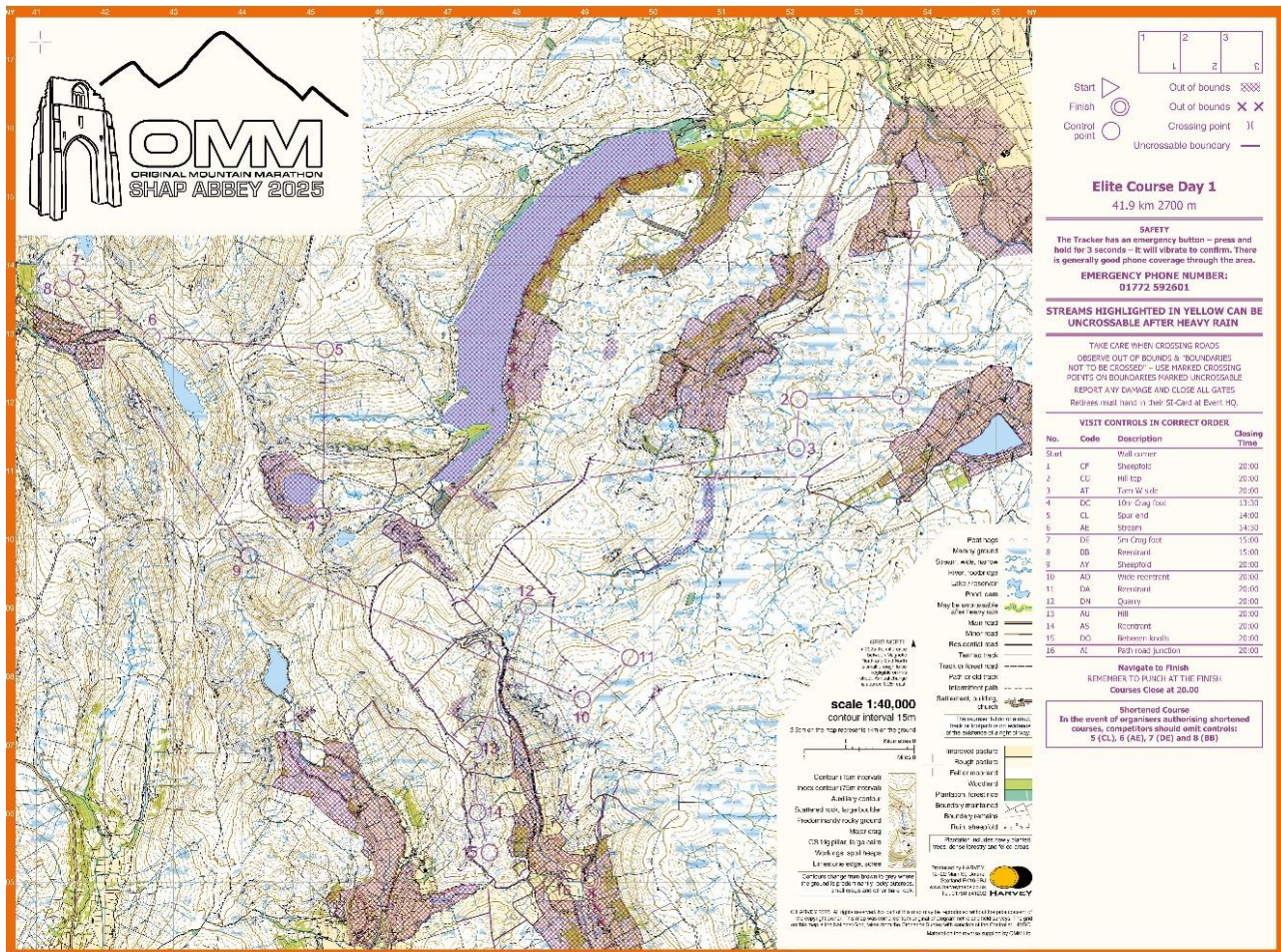
SCORE

LONG SCORE Day 1: 7 hours [Example map](#) Day 2: 6 hours [Example map](#)

MEDIUM SCORE Day 1: 6 hours [Example map](#) Day 2: 5 hours [Example map](#)

SHORT SCORE Day 1: 5 hours [Example map](#) Day 2: 4 hours [Example map](#)

The Linear courses are a significant challenge. The distances given here are straight-line distances. In 2025, the winners of the Elite Course (Day 1 map below) covered a mind-boggling ~90 km including >4000 m of climb in approximately 12 hours total over 2 days! Not for the faint-hearted...



Maps are provided at the start and given the length of the courses, teams can spend some time planning their routes.

Those maps are not standard orienteering maps though. The areas covered are too large for that and the OMM uses 1:40,000 Harvey maps which are very good for highlighting topography. Purple overprint is just as with standard O maps though.



One key challenge to expect is low cloud when the weather is poor, making good navigation skills critical. Conversely though, if the skies are clear and the cloud is up, it can be possible to visualise where you're heading from over a mile away, especially given the number of competitors heading for the control points.

The overnight element brings with it the major challenge that may put people off doing an event like this, namely the requirement to carry all your kit, to camp, cook, etc, all at a very challenging time of year.

There is no doubt that having the lightest equipment helps when climbing up or down a steep mountain, but that comes at a cost, both financial and in comfort overnight, so competitors can make their own choices depending on what matters most to them.



Nutrition, feeding and hydration are important too. A day in the mountains, trying to push it for the full length of a score event takes a lot of calories, so carrying sufficient snacks and other food to keep you going and not getting hungry takes planning too.

It is really helpful to have a rucksack or other carrying device for food snacks which is immediately to hand so that you don't need to keep removing and resetting your pack every time.

If all the above sounds a bit much for you, there are of course other Mountain Marathons that you can try which are perhaps not quite as hardcore as the OMM.

Firstly, there is the **Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon** (<https://slmm.org.uk/>) which has a similar format to OMM, except that it is always in the Lake District and also is held early in July so will generally have significantly better weather.

Secondly, OMM organise a simpler option, the **OMM Lite** (<https://lakedistrictrunningfestival.com/>). On the surface, this event has similarities to the OMM/SLMM (two days, range of courses, etc), however, since the campsite is at the event centre, there is no requirement to carry your tent and as much gear and there is less emphasis on self-sufficiency. Also, competitors are required to stick to paths marked on the maps, so this event may be of less interest to those who enjoy taking bearings and off-pathing.

There are many other events of these types and this is just intended as a quick overview. There is no doubt that any Mountain Marathon is a serious undertaking, and it is really important to be prepared for the challenge and to have your contingency options to hand so that you can keep going and make it through the two days.

The next article in this newsletter from Oliver gives you a more detailed account of our experience this year in the Eastern Lake District. We are already planning ahead to the 2026 event which is being hosted in Scotland, with rumours being that the Galloway area is the likely location.



Original Mountain Marathon 2025

Oliver Bardsley

After our trip to Eryri in 2023, Ben and I were keen to enter the OMM again and with Glen Artney in 2024, this was the next opportunity within a reasonable driving range. The Shap Fells in the Far East of the Lake District are not visited often and almost all of the area was new to us.



View towards the start (shown) from the event centre

Saturday morning brought some cold, windy (but thankfully dry) weather and a breakfast of porridge and bacon rolls.

We headed to the start line for our 9:45 – 10:00 slot and after some delaying and lace-tying, waited the three minutes or so it took for our watches to find the GPS then entered the 'medium score' box, crossed the start line, punched the start box and opened the maps handed to us joining the 20 or so teams crouched on the ground huddled over their maps.

Our Day 1 Medium Score Harvey Map (1:40 000, 15m contours) showed the full course from the start near Shap Abbey to the finish in Longsleddale (both marked). The first thing we noticed was how poor the purple overprint was but it was light enough for it not to matter.

The second half of the course had options to visit the steeper fells like Mardale Ill Bell but was mostly over the two sides of the Gatescarth Pass from Harter Fell down to the Finish.

The first half of our course was clearly split into two portions by some large OOB fields: there was a choice to make.

Adding up the points on both routes:

Northern route: $30+30+20+50+30+40 = 230$.

Southern route: $20+20+40+30+30+20 = 160$.

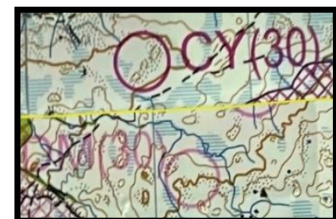
In addition to the 70-point difference, the controls to the North were laid out in a clear progression whereas the Southern ones were further apart. We made our choice and set off quickly from the start without further dawdling. As we began, it was clear that something didn't feel right. There was no fence to our right, and we weren't on a well-defined path. We found our first O kite on a fence corner and realised we had walked 600m to the start *kite* from the start *line* (see arrow on



Looking at OS Maps, we could see it would be a stark contrast to the steep slopes of the Carneddau from 2023; instead most of the area is lower and flatter (this being a relative term). We drove up on the Friday evening as soon as my Uni lectures finished arriving with 20 minutes to get some hot food from the event centre. We opted again to sleep in the car instead of a tent in case of rain and brought the back seats down to be a bit more comfortable and warmer.



Teams planning routes at the Saturday start line



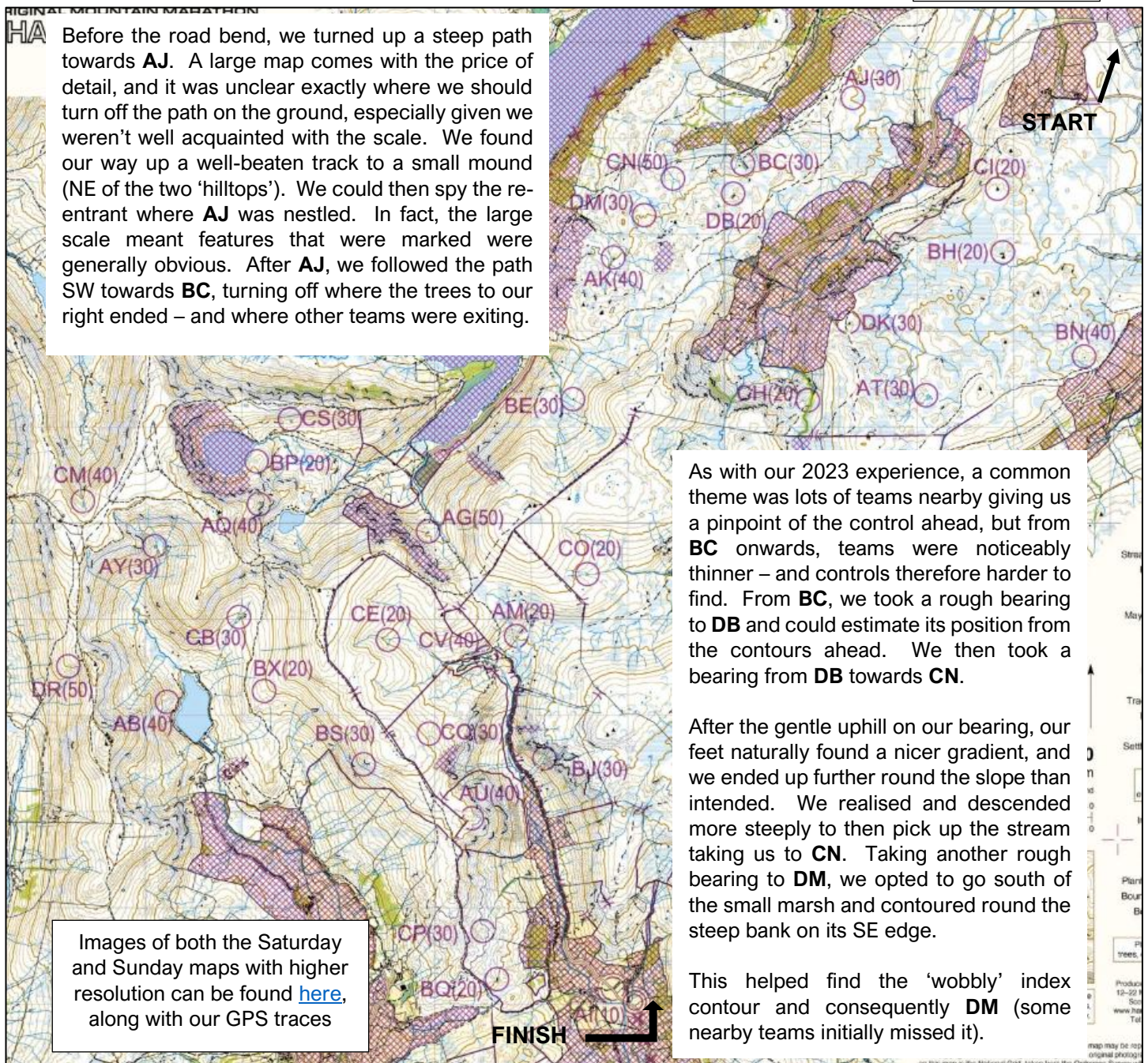
Comparison of purple overprint on Sunday map (top) and Saturday



map). Everyone had been confused by the 'taped route to start kite' at an O-event at some point. Confusion cleared, we joined the procession of teams heading towards what we thought was **CI** but was actually **BV** (not on our course).

This was a reminder of the large scale despite the detailed contours, which had confused our orienteering-oriented brains. Given both **BV** and **CI** were on 'cairns', it was clear which way to go. After **CI**, we turned towards **AJ** and descended steeply to the entry point to the OOB (marked). This took us through a stream, where our feet had their first (but most certainly not last) soaking – the waterproof socks holding up well though!

Day 1 Map





From **DM**, the route to **AK** was clear as the stream network carved out a large bowl with the control up the main re-entrant; not to mention a now very long line of brightly coloured ants filing along it. After punching **AK**, we chose to stop and plan ahead a little further (see map on previous page and GPS Trace above and to the right): The elephant on the map was **AG** (50 pts) but bagging it involved an extra descent/ascent. As we had only taken 2h 11m by this point with over 3.5 hours left, we decided **AG** was worth it and we would reassess there, so we set off to **BE**. This was well-trodden and boggy as it funnelled teams to the second half of the course. After **BE**, we headed up towards the top of what is 'Artlecrag Pike' although 'the steep hill' felt like a more accurate name and indeed, it was very tiring climbing it. We spotted the river down to **AG** as a viable route so made to cut off from the ascent towards it. We then had a very steep descent down to **AG**.

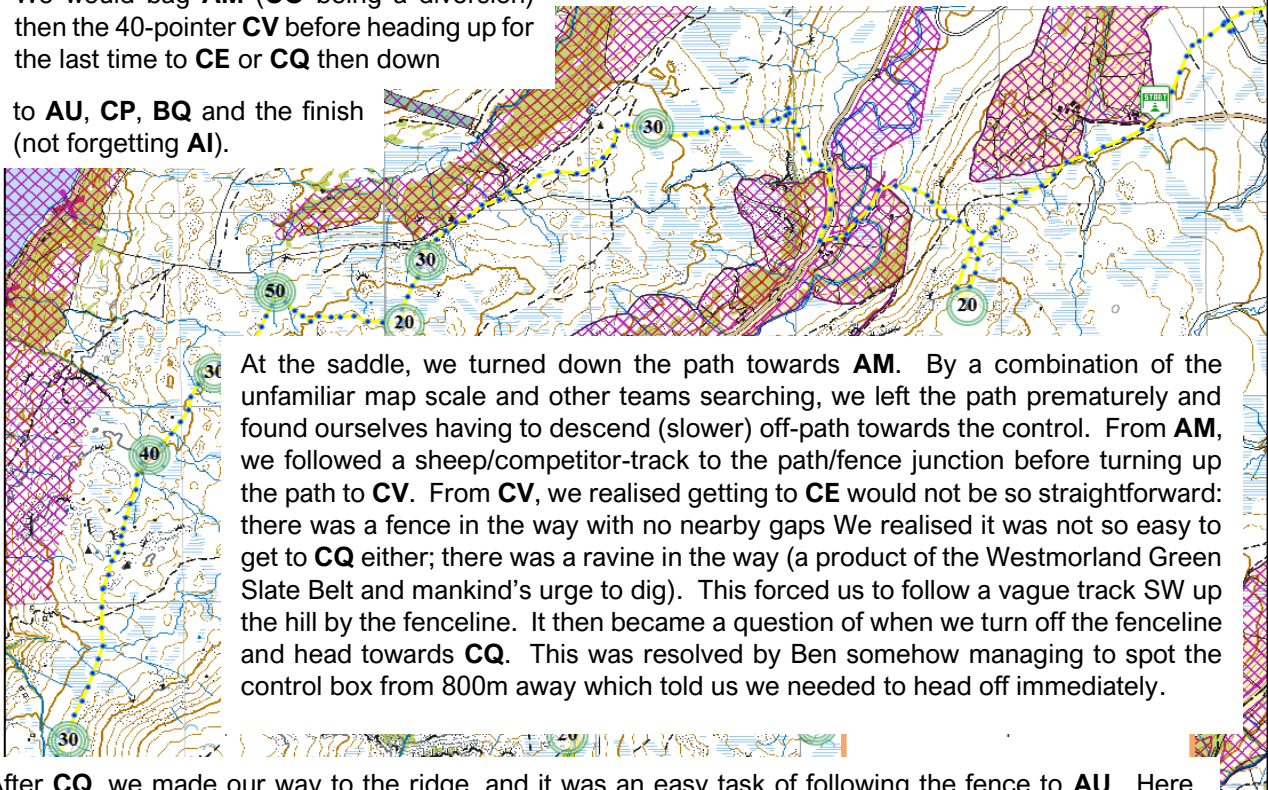


View across to the valley containing **AG**
Looking approximately SE

Earlier, I had my eye on the set **CS**, **BP**, **AQ**, but we decided, given the 3.5-hour mark, this was not feasible and that we should head to **CV**. The uphill out of **AG** was rather demoralising given we had just descended the same height and more. However, we used the time to plan the rest of the route.

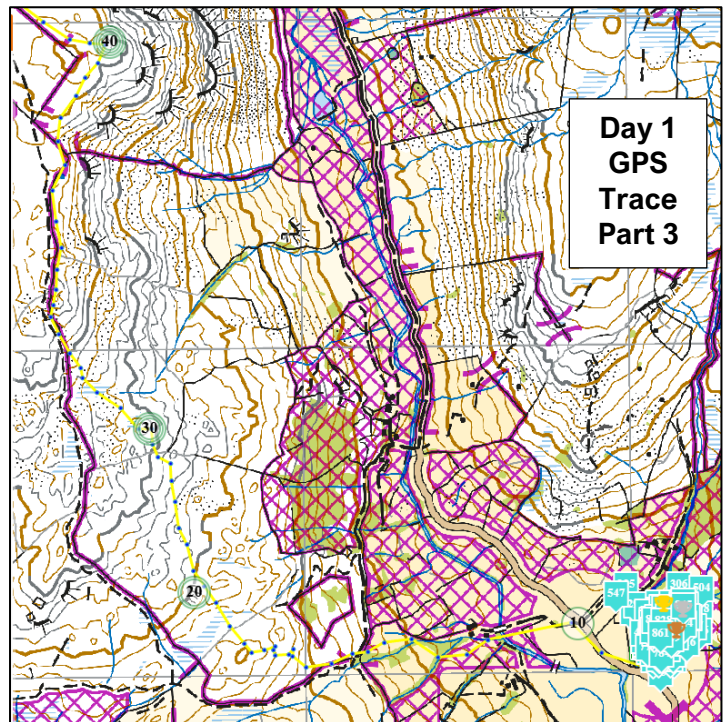
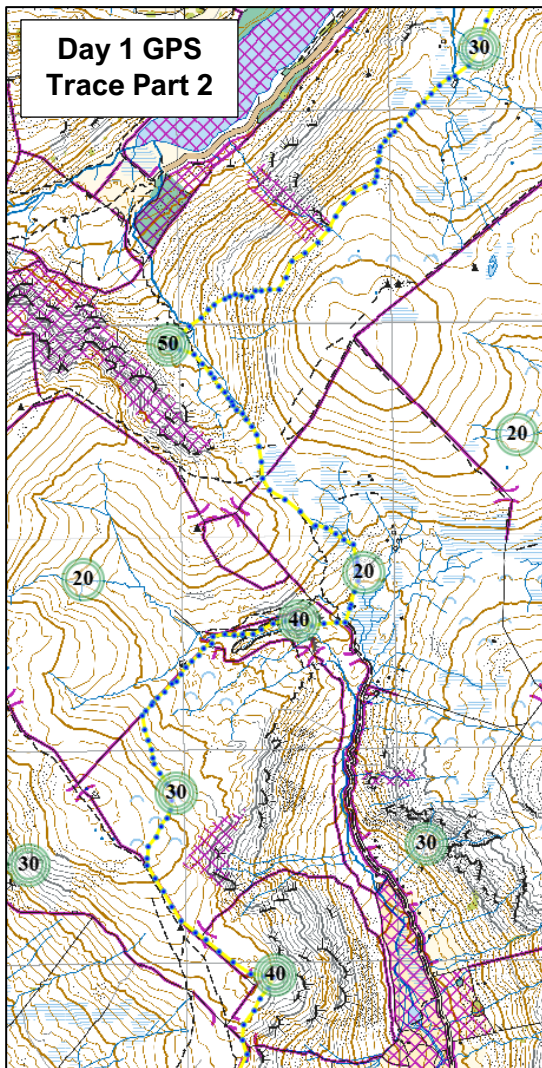
We would bag **AM** (**CO** being a diversion) then the 40-pointer **CV** before heading up for the last time to **CE** or **CQ** then down

to **AU**, **CP**, **BQ** and the finish (not forgetting **AI**).



At the saddle, we turned down the path towards **AM**. By a combination of the unfamiliar map scale and other teams searching, we left the path prematurely and found ourselves having to descend (slower) off-path towards the control. From **AM**, we followed a sheep/competitor-track to the path/fence junction before turning up the path to **CV**. From **CV**, we realised getting to **CE** would not be so straightforward: there was a fence in the way with no nearby gaps. We realised it was not so easy to get to **CQ** either; there was a ravine in the way (a product of the Westmorland Green Slate Belt and mankind's urge to dig). This forced us to follow a vague track SW up the hill by the fenceline. It then became a question of when we turn off the fenceline and head towards **CQ**. This was resolved by Ben somehow managing to spot the control box from 800m away which told us we needed to head off immediately.

After **CQ**, we made our way to the ridge, and it was an easy task of following the fence to **AU**. Here, there were a lot more teams on both sides of the fence as we neared the end. After **AU**, we followed the fenceline along the ridge and on the descent, it was easy to spot the coloured ants swarming towards **CP**. After **CP**, we took a rough bearing towards **BQ** but picking our descent through trip-hazard-heavy rocky ground (denoted by grey contours on a Harvey Map), this was ignored. The result was us losing map contact and opting to follow other teams – a cardinal mistake. By chance, we passed close-by the control but were oblivious to it (see the GPS trace below). We followed teams to a large mound finding the wrong control **AP**. Thinking we might have been on the ring contour WNW of **BQ**, we headed E. After some searching round some steep drops, we cut our losses given we had little time remaining. From then, we joined the main path through a gate and the route to the finish was taped. Not forgetting to punch **AI** for the 10 points, we jogged along the road to finish day 1 with a satisfactory time of 5:59:00.



View down to the campsite looking
SW from Sleddale Fell

Medium Score - All

34 controls, limit 6 hours, 1030 points

Pos	Name	Score	Time
1st	Nick Barrable/Darrell High	740	05:58:09
2nd	Sam Bennett/Alex Reed	684	06:12:10
3rd	Andrew Stimson/Doug Stimson	658	06:00:46
4th	Pat Bartlett/Ben Stansfield	654	06:22:38
5th	Natalie Hawkrigg/Rose Singleton	640	05:52:07
26th	Grant Kennedy/Ben McDonnell	510	05:53:45
27th	John Wootton/Liz Wootton	500	05:42:57
28th	Gavin Brigstocke/Ben Bingham	500	06:09:54
29th	David Wainwright/Sam Wainwright	490	05:10:47
30th	Charles Baillie/Mark Ruscoe	490	05:16:02
31st	Darren Fisher/James Rhodes	490	05:20:20
32nd	Darran Williams/Sam Burston	490	05:33:51
33rd	Patrick Blythe/Toby Blythe	490	05:34:40
34th	Giles Bailey/Jim Harris	490	05:37:49
35th	Louise Beestlstone/Karen McIntyre	490	05:41:18
36th	Paul Beltridge/Michael Jones	490	05:41:40
37th	Colin Birtwistle/Ben Birtwistle	490	05:44:26
38th	Nathan Garnham/Jack Davy	490	05:51:39
39th	Martyn Pegg/John Hayes	480	05:36:50
40th	David Molloy/David Armstrong	480	06:04:03
41st	Alexander Beaven/Steven Beaven	470	05:32:50
42nd	Michael Smith/David Lidstone	470	05:34:12
43rd	Bill Breckenridge/Myrtle Breckenridge	470	05:35:21
44th	Ben Adams/Charlie Whewell	470	05:38:00
45th	Alistair Keillar/Mark Diamond	470	05:39:27
46th	James Anderson/Ciron Edwards	470	05:42:22
47th	Jess Atkinson/Joe Westwood/Jess Cancelled	470	05:44:12
48th	James Tate/Matthew Hinton/Adam Hartley	470	05:46:41
49th	Luke Williams/Sarah Stoye	470	05:46:56
50th	Bruce Willoughby/Sam Oddie	470	05:48:33
51st	Allan Hodgkinson/Craig Cairns	470	05:48:51
52nd	David Meads/Andrew Oliver	470	05:49:23
53rd	Lucy Wiegand/Richard Sullivan	470	05:51:55
54th	Benjamin Harries/Charles Turner	470	05:56:30
55th	Ben Bardsley/Oliver Bardsley	470	05:59:00

The overnight campsite field (containing only a lot of Portaloos and some water barrels filled from the river) was mostly full given our later start time and we slotted ourselves into the left-hand mass of tents and set up our beds thankful for the lack of rain both then and throughout the whole day.

Dinner came from some add-boiling-water-and-eat-out-of-the-bag pouches. The water being from the river, we were glad to have the purification tablets and didn't have to boil it to refill our empty bottles.

As it got dark and the final few teams arrived, the scoreboard was posted and showed that most people had done similar routes.



We were 55th though compared to 120th last time and apart from **BQ**, we were very pleased with the effort we put in getting a decent number of points and not tiring ourselves out too much for the second day. We settled down to sleep by 21:00 or so and despite the cold temperatures, a fortunate lack of rain meant we slept fairly well, the BST → GMT clock change giving us an extra hour.

We were awakened at 6:00 by the soft gentle sound of some very loud bagpipes. The Sunday weather forecast showcased rain from 10:00 onwards and our initial start time was 9:04 – it looked to be a rough day.

However, at around 6:15, after checking the start list (your Sunday start time can be changed the night before if you finish late or are amongst the seeded starters), we found our start time had been moved to 7:02: we would be having 2 fewer hours of rain on the course!



Bagpiper happily rousing everyone at 6:00 sharp



The Sunday start line (our heads are the ones in front of the shark in the middle at the back)

After cooking, eating breakfast and packing up the tent in about 45 minutes, we hurried to the start and were given our map before punching the start box being held by an inflatable shark.

The map from Sunday was similar to Saturday, covering the same area backwards but it didn't include any controls on the Western side of the valley and included nothing further North or West than the Gatescarth Pass (map on next page).

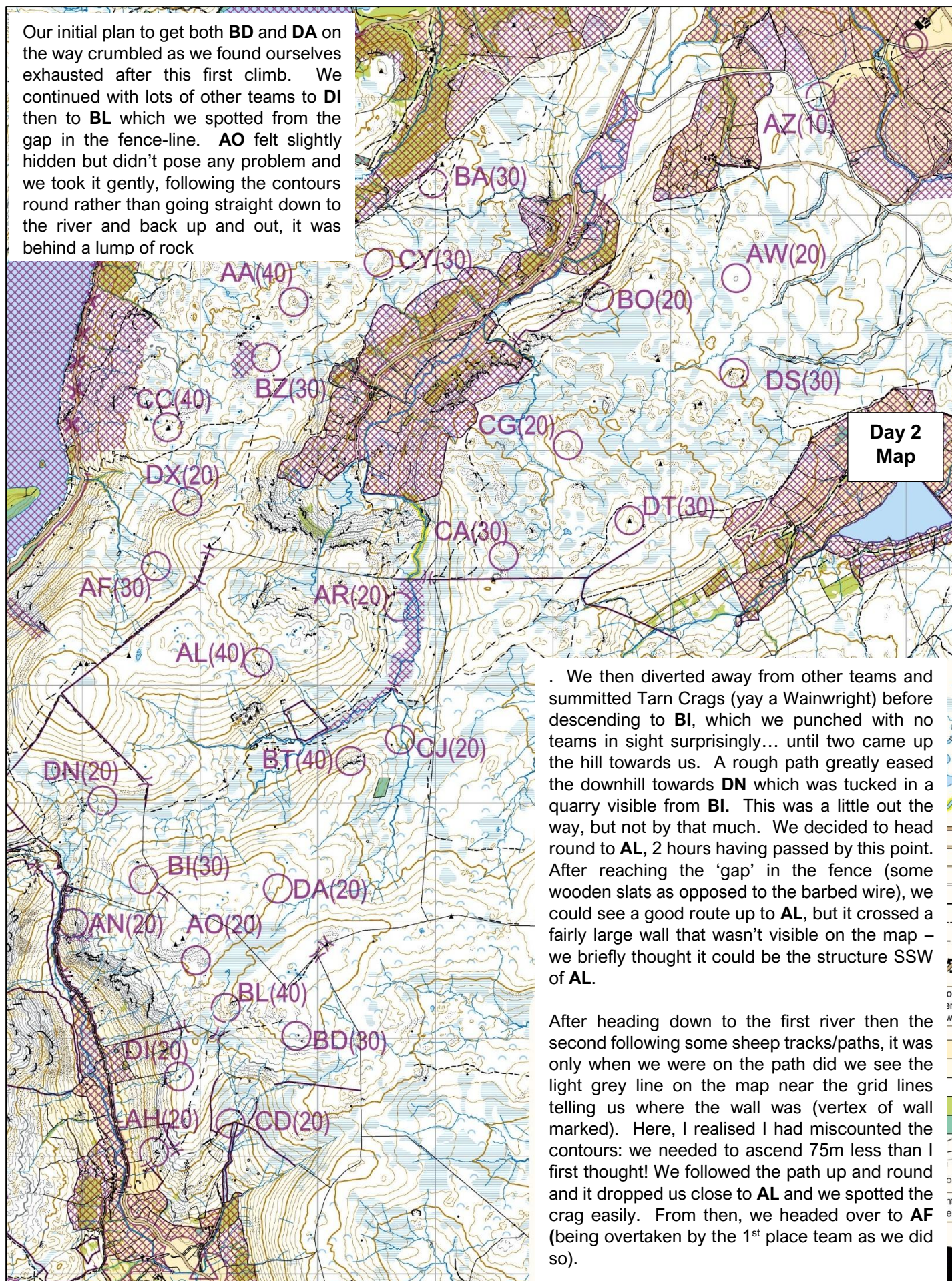
This meant a lot of the overall route choice was determined but we knew that with one hour less, and given our 'well-timed' route on Saturday, we would probably not be able to get anything on that side of the valley anyway. We chose to go to **AH** first instead of **CD** on the basis that we would go to **DI** afterwards so it would then definitely be shorter. Before starting the climb up to **AH**, we sensibly stopped to de-layer and saw again a Top/Bottom split in the later half of the course with a 50-point advantage to the Northern route this time. The climb up to **AH** and beyond was extremely steep. It felt exactly like climbing out of the Ogwen Valley on the Sunday 2 years prior, that also had a sharp unavoidable climb from a road.



View of DI looking across the valley



Our initial plan to get both **BD** and **DA** on the way crumbled as we found ourselves exhausted after this first climb. We continued with lots of other teams to **DI** then to **BL** which we spotted from the gap in the fence-line. **AO** felt slightly hidden but didn't pose any problem and we took it gently, following the contours round rather than going straight down to the river and back up and out, it was behind a lump of rock



. We then diverted away from other teams and summited Tarn Crag (yay a Wainwright) before descending to **BI**, which we punched with no teams in sight surprisingly... until two came up the hill towards us. A rough path greatly eased the downhill towards **DN** which was tucked in a quarry visible from **BI**. This was a little out the way, but not by that much. We decided to head round to **AL**, 2 hours having passed by this point. After reaching the 'gap' in the fence (some wooden slats as opposed to the barbed wire), we could see a good route up to **AL**, but it crossed a fairly large wall that wasn't visible on the map – we briefly thought it could be the structure SSW of **AL**.

After heading down to the first river then the second following some sheep tracks/paths, it was only when we were on the path did we see the light grey line on the map near the grid lines telling us where the wall was (vertex of wall marked). Here, I realised I had miscounted the contours: we needed to ascend 75m less than I first thought! We followed the path up and round and it dropped us close to **AL** and we spotted the crag easily. From then, we headed over to **AF** (being overtaken by the 1st place team as we did so).



Dropping down from the saddle, both the river and other nearby teams made finding **AF** and following the fell round to **DX** quite obvious. From here, **CC** was clearly visible being on the cairn. We headed to the path and continued down it, heading off to **BZ** as others did so, and then spotting the contour features that made the control easy to find. **BZ** to **AA** was straightforward on a bearing due to the big marsh in the middle and the visible small mound the control was on. **AA** to **CY** was less straightforward as the map scale meant I was thinking we had passed it, but Ben knew otherwise. We continued and the three mounds became clear.

From **CY** to **BA**, we checked the time and made for the quicker path given we only had 1h 12m left by now and around 7km to cover. From **BA**, it was a long walk back and this initially deterred us from the NW route, but we realised we could follow the path round the top so as not to lose too much height and move quicker on easier ground, thereby saving time. We took the left path (walking past the first sheep of the whole weekend) and as it bent away from the fenceline, we continued on and down to the bridge over the river.

We walked quickly from here till the end, jogging in a few places, not forgetting to punch **AZ**. After the nasty climb up from the Abbey to the event centre, we finished Day 2 with another satisfying time of 4:56:37 and a free hot meal and cup of tea waiting for us. We were again very pleased with our score and route finishing just within the time whilst picking up a fair few of the high-scoring points available. We felt much better on the second day compared to 2023 after managing our food better and getting a better night's sleep (although the lack of rain certainly helped in that regard).

The final results showed us climbing a few places to 45th out of 235, a marked improvement on the 124th from last time and we had come 1st out of 9 in the Family Generation Competition, leapfrogging the team in second who were ahead of us after the Saturday. What's more, the single sore point of missing **BQ** on the Saturday would only have moved us up to 42nd, not something to lose sleep over.

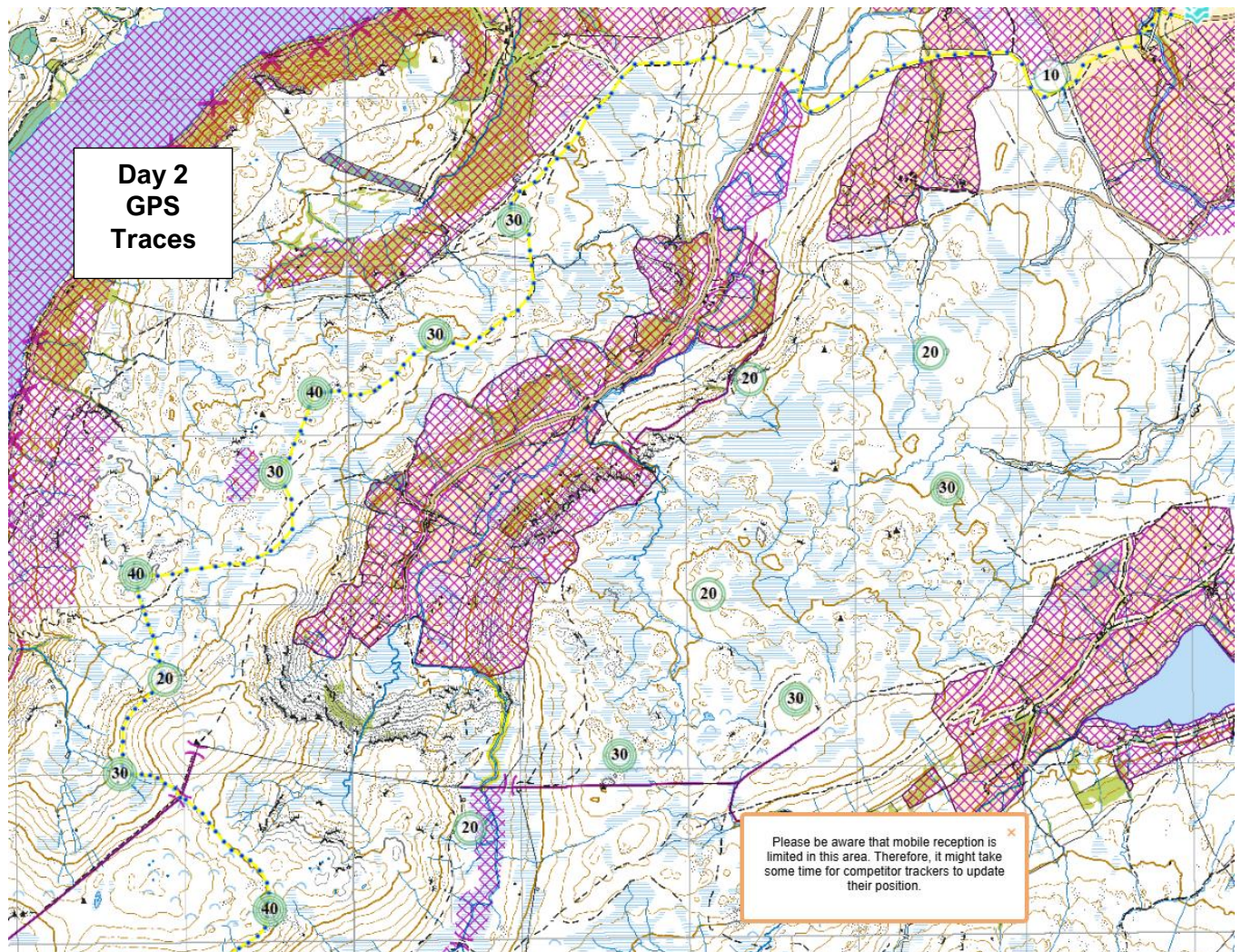
Nick Barrable (SYO) and Darrel High maintained their overall first place on the Medium Score, but only by 12 points, the second-place team visiting 70 more points, but their being overtime costing them.

On the Long score, HH'er Tom Raftery partnering with sister-in-law Sarah Scarbrough finished 80th after moving up 14 places on the Sunday!

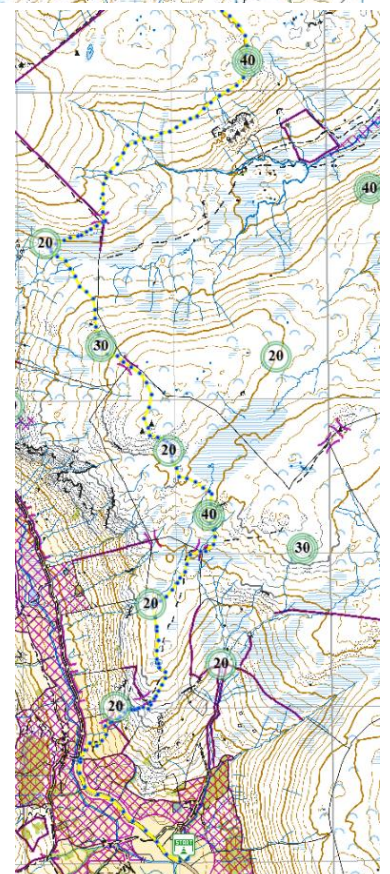
Overall, we had learnt from our experience in 2023, packing everything into a 30L bag instead of a 65L bag, wearing trail shoes rather than walking boots, making sure we didn't go hungry, and not overdoing it on day 1. We never really ran any of it, instead maintaining a constant walking speed, not stopping much, but we still finished in the top 50 by picking score efficient routes and not overdoing it or trying to do more than we could manage. In general, we made very few navigation mistakes, despite the controls being noticeably harder than last time, but our lesson this year is to remember to stay in contact with the map at all times over the full 5/6 hours, whether or not it seems an easy route or you're just walking straight on a bearing.

We'll hopefully be taking these lessons to Scotland for the 2026 OMM, maybe trying a linear course instead; it would be great to see others from HH there!

Pos	Score	Name	Team	Gender	Day 1	Day 2	Total	Time
45th	825	Ben Bardsley/Oliver Bardsley	Team Bardsley	Male	470 55th	420 47th	890	10:55:37
46th	775	Alistair Keller/Mark Diamond	The Heather Huddlers	Male	470 45th	410 50th	880	10:26:22



Ben and Oliver crossing the Finish Line





Fairlands Valley 1 November photos

Thanks to Neil Gostick for the photos





Future Events

Here is a provisional list of events from HH and nearby clubs, plus some regional and national competitions that may be of interest.

<i>[fixture lists]</i>	
British Orienteering	you can filter by region and club
WorldofO	international fixtures
Mole Valley	user-friendly and includes local & international events
British Army OC	for Wednesday Military League South events
Ofixtures	filter in several ways
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <i>[entry systems]</i> www.fabian4.co.uk https://www.sientries.co.uk/ https://racesignup.co.uk/ </div>	
UK Urban League	
Southern England Orienteering Urban League	
UK Orienteering League	

Here is a provisional list of events from HH and nearby clubs, plus some regional and national competitions that may be of interest.

Date	Event	Area	Club	Level
Sat 06 December	HH Saturday Series	Panshanger Park	HH	Local
Sun 07 December	SOS Colour Coded	Highwoods Country Park	SOS	Regional
Sat 13 December	TVOC Saturday Series (TBC)	Brill Common	TVOC	Local
Sat 13 December	HH / SEJS Training	Whippendell Woods	HH	Local
Sun 14 December	MV Festive Event	Buchan Country Park	MV	Regional
Sun 14 December	SCOL01 and BKO Winter Regional	Black Park	BKO	Regional
Sat 20 December	SO Brighton City Weekend Urban	Brighton city centre	SO	National
Sat 20 December	SO Brighton City Weekend Morning Sprint	Preston Park	SO	Regional
Sun 21 December	SO Brighton City Weekend	Stanmer Park	SO	Regional
Fri 26 December	LOK Boxing Day Score	Trent Park	LOK	Local
Tue 30 December	SCOL02 and SN level C event	Alice Holt	SN	Regional
Sat 03 January	HH Saturday Series	Sherrardspark Wood	HH	Local
Sun 04 January	CHIG Mitre (SE League and SWELL)	Epping N	CHIG	Regional
Sun 04 January	SCOL03 and TVOC Regional Event	Penn Street	TVOC	Regional
Sat 10 January	Park-O	Wandlebury Country Park Stables	WAOC	Local
Sun 11 January	HAVOC Regional & SWELL event	Langdon Hills Country Park	HAVOC	Regional
Tue 13 January	London Street-O Series	Waterloo	SLOW	Local
Sat 17 January	TVOC Saturday Series	Kings Wood	TVOC	Local
Sun 18 January	DFOK SE League event	South Ashdown	DFOK	National
Sat 24 January	Concorde Chase Urban	Woosehill?	BKO	Regional



Date	Event	Area	Club	Level
Sun 25 January	Concorde Chase & Southern Championships	Star Posts	BKO	National
Tue 27 January	SLOW Night-O Series	Barnes Common	SLOW	Local
Sat 31 January	HH Saturday Series	Nomansland	HH	Local
Sun 01 February	LOK SE Middle Champs	Scratchwood	LOK	Regional
Tue 03 February	SLOW Night-O Series	Battersea Park	SLOW	Local
Sat 07 February	British Night Championships (UKOL)	Egypt and Hangings Woods	HH	Major
Sun 08 February	HH Ace of Herts (UKOL)	Egypt & Hangings Woods	HH	National
Tue 10 February	LOK London Street-O	Southgate	LOK	Local
Sun 15 February	MV National	White Downs and West Ranmore	MV	National
Sun 15 February	East Midlands Championships 2026	Longshaw	DVO	National
Sun 15 February	Maulden Wood Regional Event	Maulden Wood	WAOC	Regional
Sat 21 February	TVOC Saturday Series	Park Wood, Bradenham	TVOC	Local
Sun 22 February	CompassSport Cup Heat	Chobham Common	GO	National
Sun 22 February	CompassSport Cup Heat	Sutton Park	OD	National
Sun 22 February	CompassSport Cup Heat	Brandon Park	–	National
Sun 22 February	CompassSport Cup Heat	Clouds Hill	WIM	National
Tue 24 February	SLOW Night-O Series	Brockwell Park	SLOW	Local
Sat 28 February	British Long Distance Champs	Carreg Goch, Bannau Brycheiniog	SBOC	Major
Sun 1 March	British Relay Champs	Margam Country Park	SWOC	Major

Confused by all the orienteering acronyms: SEOUL, UKOL, GLOSS etc? Go to Mole Valley's jargon buster at www.mvoc.org.