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## Editor's Spur

Alan Rosen [newsletter@herts-orienteering.club](mailto:newsletter@herts-orienteering.club)

Remember 2025? By the time you read this, the 31 events that HH put on are fading into history and plans are well underway to kick off 2026 at Sherrardspark Woods next Saturday – will we get to 31 or more this year?

Orienteering events are unusual compared with many sports in being run for orienteers by orienteers so do consider what you might be able to do this year to help at events and even take on one of the key roles – as Lord Kitchener famously didn't quite say, "Your club needs you" [Google it if that made no sense...]

Thanks to everyone who helped with all of those events in 2025 and thank you to everyone who is getting ready to make 2026 just as memorable and enjoyable.

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## Forthcoming HH events

<b>Sat 3 Jan</b> 10:00 - 12:45	Sherrardspark Wood Beginners and experienced orienteers welcome	<a href="#">Event Details</a> <a href="#">Location</a>
<b>Sat 17 Jan</b> 10:00 - 12:00	Club Training – Sherrardspark Wood Suitable for all	<a href="#">Event Details</a> <a href="#">Location</a>
<b>Sat 31 Jan</b> 10:00 - 12:45	Nomansland	<a href="#">Event Details</a> <a href="#">Location</a>
<b>Sat 7 Feb</b> 18:15 - 22:00	British Night Championships 2026 Egypt Woods	<a href="#">Event Details</a> <a href="#">Location</a>
<b>Sun 8 Feb</b> 10:30 - 12:30	Ace of Herts 2026 Egypt Woods National event with courses for all including beginners	<a href="#">Event Details</a> <a href="#">Location</a>
<b>Sat 7 Mar</b> 10:00 - 12:45	Whippendell Woods	<a href="#">Event Details</a> Location TBC
<b>Sat 11 Apr</b> 13:00 - 14:00	Moneyhole Park	<a href="#">Event Details</a> Location TBC
<b>Sat 4 Jul</b> 10:00 - 12:45	Croxley Moor	<a href="#">Event Details</a> Location TBC

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

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## 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](mailto:newsletter@herts-orienteering.club). Copy dates are typically a few days before the end of the month; for the **February** edition it is by the end of **Wednesday 28 January**.



## Congratulations to our 2025 HH club champions!

<b>Women's Open</b>	Becky Raftery	<b>Men's Open</b>	Tom Cochrane
<b>Women's Vets</b>	Sian Mitchell	<b>Men's Vets</b>	Alan Rosen
<b>Intermediate Girls</b>	Niamh Mitchell	<b>Intermediate Boys</b>	Theo Marsden
<b>Juniors</b>	Isabelle Raftery		

Congratulations also to our Handicap trophy winners

<b>Open Handicap</b>	Emese Svab
<b>Veterans Handicap</b>	Tim Bywater-Lees

The results for these trophies are based on your British Orienteering ranking score relative to your average ranking score. So both winners ran considerably quicker than their average run - well done!

As well as the trophy winners, there were some honourable mentions.

Poppy Chorlton ran impressively to be first HH female on the Green course, but there is no Open/Junior trophy on that course.

Darrio Tam and Anna Lucia Gonzalez Blankenship were close behind in second place on the Intermediate Boys & Girls trophy. And well done to Laura Parkes who managed to combine 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Women's Open with 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Open Handicap - the only double podium of the day.

Full results are at:

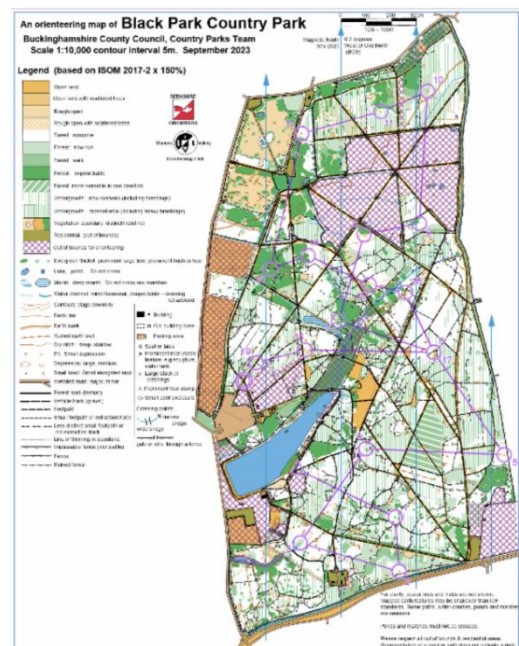
<https://www.bko.org.uk/node/1499/results>

Thanks to the more than 50 club members who came along and raced.

Click the map for Routegadget...



*Tom receiving his trophy*







## HH Fixtures 2026 – volunteers please

*Neil Gostick*

We now have a complete fixture list for next year, so please enter the dates in your diary. Maybe write them on your newly acquired calendars?

Beyond March they are subject to permission, so things may change here and there, but the basics are in place

Date	Level	Type	Area	Organiser	Planner	Controller
03/01/2026	D	Saturday	Sherrardspark	Roger Moulding	Dan Hodson	Dave Tookey
31/01/2026	D	Saturday	Nomansland	Ben Bardsley	Ian Byford	David Saunders
07/02/2026	A	Night	British Night Champs 2026 - Egypt plus	Mike Bennett & Alan Rosen	Alan Rosen	Neil Crickmore
08/02/2026	B	Middle	Ace of Herts - Egypt plus		Helen Marsden	Neil Crickmore
07/03/2026	D	Saturday	Whippendell & Lees Wood	Jacob Sharpe	Mark Adams	
11/04/2026	D	Saturday	Moneyhole		Daniel Hitch	Laura Parkes
02/05/2026	D	Saturday	Chipperfield			
06/06/2026	D	Saturday	Highfield			
04/07/2026	D	Saturday	Croxley Moor / GLOSS		Tim BL	
05/09/2026	D	Saturday	Norton Common			
03/10/2026	D	Saturday	Verulamium	Tim BL		
Autumn 26			Jack of Herts - Urban TBC			
07/11/2026	D	Saturday	Wardown Park			
05/12/2026	D	Saturday	Frithsden			
02/01/2027	D	Saturday	Haileybury		Stu Levene	
07/02/2027		Compass Sport Cup	Ashridge North / Compass Sport Cup Regional Round			

As you will have seen above, we now have a schedule for the year. The next step, aside from permissions is to build the organising teams, so if you would like to organise, plan or control please catch me in a car park eg at Sherrardspark, or email me at [jngostick@ntlworld.com](mailto:jngostick@ntlworld.com)

It's a bit of work each time, but very rewarding to shape and deliver an event for typically over 100 people enjoying themselves on a Saturday or Sunday morning

### New Organisers

In particular, we are keen for new people to give organising a go. We have decided not to run a specific organiser's course, but will mentor you if you are new to the process.

We also have a Very Good "HH - Know How" section on the club website

<https://www.herts-orienteeing.club/members-section/hh-know-how/>



Within which there is a Wiki for event officials with sections for Organisers and Planners

Eg <https://sites.google.com/view/hh-know-how/saturday-series/organiser>

Lastly there is also lots of e-learning material on British Orienteering's website

<https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/elearning>

Within which there is an e-learning course on Event Safety which you have to have done before being an official. It's not onerous and does cover risk management, which is anyway a necessary part of an organiser's job. Eg to manage the risk of people being hit by cars I will just have a separate walkway for pedestrians, for which we need some stakes and red / white tape.

Again catch me at an event or email me on [jngostick@ntlworld.com](mailto:jngostick@ntlworld.com)

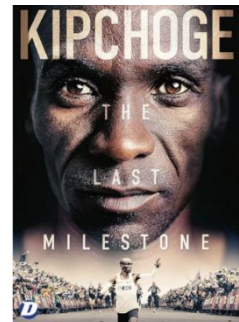
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## Film recommendation: Kipchoge: The Last Milestone (2021)

*Emese Sváb*

Well, OK, maybe Marathon running has nothing to do with orienteering, but just for the style, you can see people running it worth watching.

You might have already seen this film, but I just came across this last week. I recommend you to watch if you love to see a dream come true. It also contains high and lows, high tech and poverty.



### About

Kenyan long-distance runner Eliud Kipchoge attempts to break one of the last milestones in sporting history by becoming the first person to finish a marathon in less than two hours.

Initial release	24 August 2021
Director	Jake Scott
Running time	1h 26m
Music by	Simon Elms; Colin Smith
Producer	Ross Plummer
Distributed by	Universal Pictures

This film is suitable for younger children too, as there is nothing they should not watch or hear. Maybe a bit boring for them. I recommend to watch, if you would like to see people running/flying 1km in 2.5 minutes for over 42 km. This is a miracle on its own, not just the speed but the style. I loved the scenes when they show how they train, I almost felt the red dust on my skin!

I loved the engineering work behind the scenes, how the team worked out how to whittle down 3 minutes from his previous Marathon effort. 3 short minutes but very close to what we possibly can achieve.



## Compass Sport Cup - save the date! (22 February)

Tom Cochrane

Soon I will be calling for entries for the 2026 Compass Sport Cup. This is the UK's national club competition.



We have a great chance this year at making the final. Our usual heat in the SE has limited entry so we have moved to be up against WAOC in a straight fight in Brandon on Sunday 22 February (Parking at [IP27 0PA](#)).

The scoring system rewards large teams with lots of runners spread across different courses. If we can get our turnout up to 60 or above we will have an excellent chance - so please do run!

A previous map of the area as used for an event in 2017 can be viewed on [RouteGadget](#) although as a working forest it may well have changed since then.

### Courses:

Entry Class (Course)	Age Classes	Length	Climb	Map Scale	Colour standard
1	Open	10.3 km	45 m	1:10,000	Short Brown
2	M18-, M45+	7.9 km	35 m	1:10,000	Blue
3	Women's Open	7.8 km	35 m	1:10,000	Blue
4	M55+	6.4 km	25 m	1:10,000	Short Blue
5	W18-, W45+	5.8 km	25 m	1:10,000	Green
6	M65+	5.8 km	20 m	1:10,000	Green
7	M75+, W60+	4.7 km	45 m	1:7500	Short Green
8	M80+, W70+	3.2 km	30 m	1:7500	Very Short Green
9M	M18-	5.3 km	35 m	1:10,000	Light Green (Green length)
9W	W18-	5.3 km	35 m	1:10,000	Light Green (Green length)
10 M	M14-	3.3 km	20 m	1:7500	Orange
10W	W14-	3.3 km	20 m	1:7500	Orange

In addition to the above, the following non-competition (colour-coded) courses are provided. These are open to all, and entry on the day will be accepted for these courses subject to map availability.

Course	Length	Climb	Technical difficulty	Map scale
White	2.0 km	10 m	Very Easy	1:7500
Yellow	2.6 km	15 m	Easy	1:7500
Light Green	4.2 km	35 m	Difficult	1:10,000

We enter as a club so don't enter individually except for those on the non-CSC courses. Full details to follow via the mailing list. This year we will be trying out an electric sign-up system, but in the meantime if you've any questions please let me know.

The National Final is very convenient compared with most years – it's at Pippingford Park near East Grinstead on 18 October.



## Toledo City Race Weekend End November 2025

*David Hodson*

As the buildup to Black Friday and Cyber Monday was intensifying we were pleased to be escaping to the final City Race European Tour (CRET) event of the year in Toledo, Spain.

About 30 minutes south of Madrid by train the historic centre of Toledo is surrounded on three sides by the River Tagus and was designated a UNESCO World Heritage City in 1986.

Perched on top of a hill the historic centre is a maze of narrow roads and passageways with the skyline dominated by the Gothic Cathedral of Saint Mary of Toledo, the second largest in Spain dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and the Alcazar fortress, dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century but extensively rebuilt following a lengthy siege during the Spanish Civil War.



This was our fourth EuroCity race of the year, following previous events in Budapest, Gdansk and Lincoln, so we just missed out on obtaining a full set of scores in five events for the end of year ranking (we managed to double book ourselves for the London City Race and Viv was recovering from a broken arm for the Sintra weekend).

The weekend was less extensive than some of the other city race events (particularly Gdansk) with a middle-distance race on the Saturday followed by the main city race on the

Sunday; although this did give us more time to explore the sights of the city centre, including a few of the sites associated with El Greco.

The events themselves were very popular with 991 participants registered from 27 different countries. This included a sizeable contingent from the two local clubs in Toledo and Madrid as well as the usual large representation from the UK, with six of us from HH making the journey.





The Saturday event was outside the city centre in the more residential area of Santa Barbara, although it was still a bit hilly with an estimated climb of 125m for the 3.0km men's Supervets race. This was a relatively gentle introduction to the weekend with very few complex route choices and not many traps set by the planner. The most confusion appeared to be working out where the start kite was in relation to the actual start line and, on my course, which route to take from 19 to 20 (see map below.)



I went east from 19 navigating through the buildings while trying to avoid the dead ends and any other competitors on the narrow steps. In retrospect it would have been simpler, and with easy fast running, to go west and follow the building around to the control.

Onto Sunday and the main event, with the city race planned to make optimum use of the historic centre of Toledo.

During the previous few days on the tourist trail in Toledo we had been surprised at how many cars and delivery vans we had encountered on the narrow lanes in the centre, when, in extreme cases, we had to jump into doorways to allow them to pass through – not an ideal situation when on the race and trying to navigate and run through them as fast as possible. Thankfully, there were very few of the vans delivering stock to the many small shops in the centre on the Sunday so most of the traffic that was encountered was just local residents travelling into or out of the city so was much reduced.



One of the wider roads where cars could park on the side of the road.





Many areas of the city, however, were still very busy with lots of tourists travelling in for the day to tour the city centre on foot; particularly around the various Christmas markets that had recently sprung up on many of the larger squares dotted around the city. As these were recent additions none of them had been mapped although the courses had been planned to try and avoid the busiest areas.



*Viv*



*Mark*

Although the map and navigation did not look too complicated the running was not fast as it was vital to stay in contact with the map throughout, this was due to many of the route choices

requiring multiple turns down very narrow passageways that were easy to miss with a slight loss of concentration; particularly whilst staying alert and looking out for pedestrians, cars and other competitors. The area was also very hilly with numerous climbs up steep hills and steps and, on the men's Supervets course, I managed to record 230m of climb over the 5.9km course.

Again, the start kite was placed a short distance away from the actual start line so as to avoid those in the start boxes watching which direction competitors were heading off in for the first control.

The map extract below shows most of the women's Supervets course which required close map reading throughout, to avoid missing turns and making mistakes, as it would be quite difficult to relocate if contact with the map was lost. This was particularly true for the last few controls from 17 to 22 around the site of the very crowded and busy cathedral.

At least with the men's Supervets course we had the option half way around of a long run along the bank of the River Tagus; although this came with a long climb back up to the city centre before the last few controls around the Cathedral.



*David*





Although none of the HH's in attendance managed to get a place on the podium for our respective events, it was still an enjoyable and well-organised weekend.

The weather, although not overly warm (unlike Faro in early December last year), was still an improvement on the rain in the UK.

Planning can now start on which events to attend in 2026 and although it might be difficult to record a full set of five events, with only one event in the UK (Canterbury), they are still well worth attending.

Selected photos from the Toledo City Race website.



Janet





## City Race Euro Tour 2026

<https://cityracetour.org/>



GRAN CANARIA	MADEIRA	WARSAW	TBILISI	MUNICH	CANTERBURY	BUCHAREST	AZORES	SEGOVIA
01 JANUARY 2026	09-11 JANUARY 2026	06-08 MARCH 2026	20-22 MARCH 2026	17-19 APRIL 2026	22-24 MAY 2026	05-07 JUNE 2026	03-05 OCTOBER 2026	24-25 OCTOBER 2025

## British Orienteering Incentive Awards

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

Member	Certificates	Awarded
Cobie Wong	Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★★★★	09/12/2025
	Navigation Challenge ★★★★★	09/12/2025
Darrio Tam	Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★★★★★	15/12/2025
	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★★★★	26/11/2025
Tallis Oliver	Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★★★★	09/12/2025
	Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★★★★	09/12/2025
	Navigation Challenge ★★★★★	09/12/2025
Theo Marsden	Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★★★★★	03/12/2025





## E-learning Courses



Do you know about British Orienteering's [e-learning courses](#)?

*“Courses are designed to take around 1 hour to complete. At the end of each course, there is a quiz to confirm the learners' understanding, the quiz content is formed from the course content. A certificate can then be downloaded by the learner to confirm that they have completed the course and the British Orienteering database member/participant record updated accordingly.”*

Here's the current list:

**Event Safety eLearning Course** - mandatory for event organisers, planners and controllers.

Attendance at a British Orienteering Event Safety and Welfare Workshop is a mandatory requirement for all Organisers, Planners, Controllers and other key officials at all levels of British Orienteering registered Events.

Attendance and certification on an Event Safety eLearning course are equivalent to an Event Safety face-to-face workshop.

**Introducing Orienteering eLearning Course**

**Introducing Orienteering for Secondary Schools eLearning Course**

**Introducing Safeguarding eLearning Course**

**Introduction to Event Organising eLearning Course**

**Introduction to Inclusion eLearning Course**

**Introduction to Planning Course**

**Introduction to updating Forest Mapping eLearning course**

**Introduction to updating Sprint and Urban Mapping eLearning course**

**Keeping your child safe in sport - Provided free by the CPSU**

**Sudden Cardiac Arrest eLearning course – Provided free by UK coaching**

**Young Leader Award – Tutor eLearning Course**



## 2026 Development Conference



Not so much a single conference as a series of sessions which may well be of interest to all of us in different ways. Have a look at the session descriptions [here](#) and see what may be entertaining, educational or informative, whether to you individually or to the club.

*As the website says:*

***The sessions for the Development Conference 2026, are now live.***

*This is your chance to explore practical ways to develop your club—from governance, safety, and safeguarding to delivering **unforgettable events** that attract and retain members.*

***Don't miss this opportunity to learn, share, and grow together!***  
*Check out the full list of sessions and secure your spot today.*

<b>Monday 12 January</b> <b>19:00-21:00</b>	Elite Tactics: Preparing for the Race That Really Matters
<b>Tuesday 13 January</b> <b>19:00-20:00</b>	Orienteering Foundation-funded Club Development Officers: A Look Back and a Way Forward
<b>Tuesday 20 January</b> <b>19:00-21:00</b>	British Orienteering Recognised Delivery Partner Update
<b>Tuesday 27 January</b> <b>19:00-20:00</b>	Growing Your Club: Hosting Events for Juniors and Beginners Without the Pitfalls
<b>Thursday 29 January</b> <b>19:00-20:30</b>	Safeguarding in Practice: Handling Low-Level Concerns, Codes of Conduct
<b>Monday 2 February</b> <b>19:00-20:00</b>	Safety Advisory Group Update
<b>Tuesday 3 February</b> <b>19:00-20:00</b>	Creating Engaging Experiences: Beyond the Event: Crafting Experiences That Captivate
<b>Thursday 5 February</b> <b>19:00-20:30</b>	OCAD Updates: New Features, App Innovations, and Team Collaboration
<b>Monday 9 February</b> <b>19:00-20:30</b>	The Orienteering Instructor Qualification for Clubs
<b>Tuesday 10 February</b> <b>Timing TBC</b>	Nature Without Boundaries: Responsible Experiences Providers Scheme for Orienteering and Beyond
<b>Thursday 12 February</b> <b>19:00-20:30</b>	Changing Perceptions: Quid Games and Digital Memberships



## Chair's Chat

*Ben Bardsley*

Happy New Year to you all from Herts Orienteering Club!

Firstly, thank you to everybody who helped out HH in whatever role during 2025, from Committee members to event officers to event volunteers and beyond; a big 'Thank You' to you all.

A new year brings an opportunity for a fresh start from last year, whether that be moving on or recovering from injuries, putting some frustrating performances behind you or maybe consolidating a good end to the year with lots of ranking points as we move into one of the busiest parts of the season.



For HH, 2026 brings a big event – the British Night Championships which we're very proud to be hosting on behalf of BOF, and which will bring some of the UK's top orienteers to Egypt Woods in early February.

This is a big showcase for the club, especially coupling it to the Ace of Herts the following day. Mike Bennett, Alan Rosen/Helen Marsden, as Organiser and Planners, have been putting in much work in preparing to try and make these events as successful and well-received as possible, working behind the scenes along with a number of other club members. I do hope you can try to help out by volunteering to help, even if you do not intend to run. Being a Major event and a night event, more help than usual will be needed so please fill in the online form (page 19) to register your willingness to help – we are still short of a number of helpers...

Elsewhere in this issue you should see the outcome from the Club Championships held at Black Park last month. Congratulations to all the winners and enjoy having those rather smart trophies on your mantelpieces during 2026...







## Meet the committee – Hugh Wiltshire, Treasurer

When I was at school, I hated running. But I always loved maps: the Ordnance Survey, the A to Z, my World Atlas. Some years later, many of the staff where I worked in Welwyn Garden City used to go to the Gosling Stadium in their lunch hours to play games: Squash, Badminton, Five-a-side football, Volleyball and some of us started running to improve our stamina for real sports. As I was the only local, I planned most of the various courses we developed.

One of our group had a Swedish wife and was, therefore, an orienteer. Eventually three of us joined him in Burnham Beeches and immediately discovered that being a good runner was not the only skill required. Over the next few years, I took part in around forty events, never very successfully, in various parts of the country and we joined Happy Herts as a family. Unfortunately, our son had become seriously ill and could no longer climb muddy hills but could swim. He and I, therefore, joined the Platypus Swimming Club for the Disabled. This met on Sunday mornings and so clashed with almost all orienteering events in the mid-eighties. Our Happy Herts membership lapsed.



Twenty-odd years later, on holiday in Guatemala, we met an orienteer from one of the Sussex clubs who told us that they ran events on Saturdays as well as Sundays. With no children at home to worry about, Barbara and I rejoined Happy Herts - now nearly twice as old as when I first started. We discovered pre-printed, waterproof maps - no more copying down control positions with sweat dripping onto the flimsy maps - and electronic timing - no more punching a piece of card pinned to your shirt-front. Punching real maps does have advantages as you know where you have been - no excuse for forgetting a control or having to go back when you can't remember whether you went to no. 6 or not!

With my interest in maps, I was easily persuaded to plan some courses and, over the years, have planned or controlled most of the areas we use in Hertfordshire. In 2017, I was approached by Mark Adams to join the committee as treasurer. I introduced Microsoft Money to keep track of the club's finances as I had used it for our personal accounts and knew, from past experience, the danger of using Excel spreadsheets - easy to make mistakes but hard to find them. I did my three years and then passed the Microsoft Money file on to Ben Bardsley during Lockdown.

For the next few years, I continued to help at Happy Herts events but old age, a spell in the Lister and a loose sole resulted in my throwing my Innov-8s away and becoming a walking orienteer. Moving slower than before, I should have made fewer stupid mistakes, but my navigation is just as bad.



Then, as I finished the Hatfield Urban race last year, the Club Chairman, David Dixon, accosted me. He told me that Ben was taking over his role and that a new treasurer was, therefore, needed. I was clearly the last resort, and I gave in!

Many things had changed during the intervening years since my first stint as treasurer: committee meetings are now virtual - no more long drives to distant parts of Hertfordshire; entry fees are all electronic – no more cash to collect. Other things are just the same: I must still chase up payments for those events, like the Compass Sports Cup, where we pay all the entrance fees in one go. I also still have to analyse the Microsoft Money Reports.

As you run through the Hertfordshire woods take care asking for help from the “hypervet” with the unruly white beard who is probably lost as well.

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## Jukola 2026

*Tom Cochrane*

Two events definitely deserve to be on every orienteer's bucket list: one of them is [Jukola](#), the classic relay held each year in Finland with around 1400 women-only teams running the daytime 4-leg Venla and 1600 open teams running the 7-leg Jukola, through the short Finnish summer night.



Jukola 2026 will be held in Kotka, near the lovely south coast of Finland about 50 miles east of Helsinki, over the weekend of 13-14 June. And we will have a HH team!

So far we have enough interest to be sure of entering at least one team but the more the merrier, so please think about coming along. I will happily organise entries for as many teams as we can field.



*Start of Jukola 2025*

Full details will go out to the mailing list soon...

[The other must-do is the [Swedish O-Ringen](#): 5 days of high quality orienteering every summer with around 18,000 entries – the 2026 event is near Gothenburg]



## Coaching at Haileybury School in 2025

Emese Sváb

I am sure many of you know about my coaching at Haileybury School. I thought I would tell you how it started, what I have achieved and future plans.

Around this time last year (December), Simon Errington tossed a half-ready orienteering map of Haileybury under my nose. 'Look what I made even without visiting the site', he said. Later he finished his job with some on-site checking but always with someone escorting him.

When the map was made they reached out to HH for coaching availabilities and as I had some free time I grabbed the opportunity and in early January I started my weekly 90-minute sessions there.

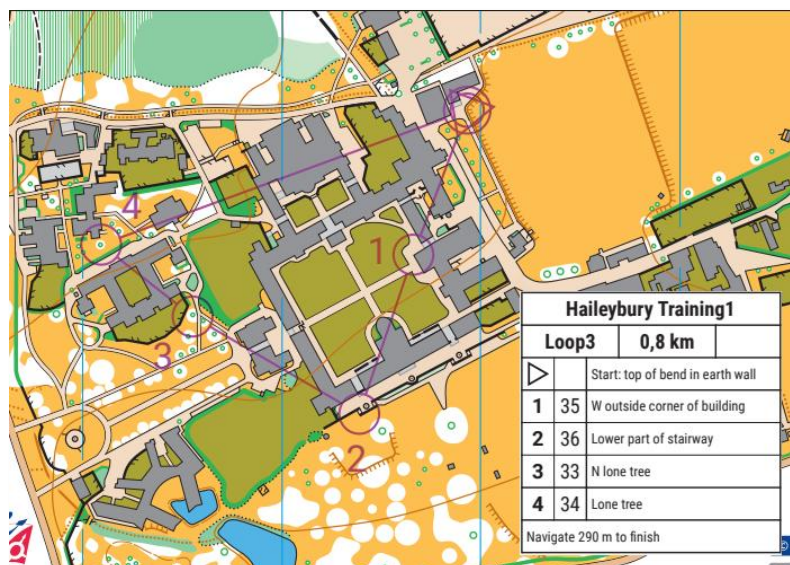
Haileybury is a private boarding school that teaches even on Saturdays so has longer holidays. The school has a huge emphasis on any kind of sports. I think their strengths are hockey, rugby and maybe football. But they do other sports like climbing, horse riding, sailing, canoeing and bike riding.

I work with the Outdoor and Adventure Sports Coordinator. At the beginning of each half term she lets me know what she would like me to do. So far the requests have been:

- 6 orienteering sessions for the same 9-12 students
- orienteering for everyone: I got 15-20 students, Y10s or Y11s, to have fun with the map, different students every week, the session is easiest if it is the same.

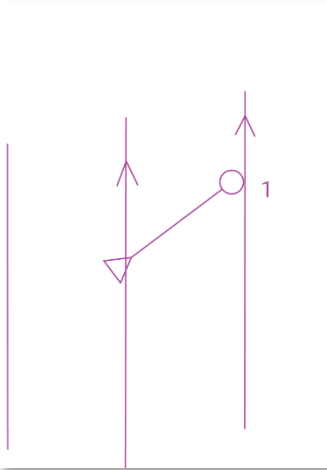
The latter is very demanding as students usually do not directly choose orienteering. They are on a rota with other sports or possibilities like frisbee or climbing.

These sessions are organised after-school activities in the Spring and Autumn terms but during the winter time it is during the afternoon to avoid the darkness then they go back for two more lessons. Either way, I imagine it is a bit *demanding to listen and behave all day at traditional teaching periods and then they are supposed to do the same at my sessions.* So I try to listen to their needs while teaching them map reading, compass work and navigation.



I really do not mind if they forget the map symbols we discussed several times before – this is where I have consecutive sessions. My goal is to give them examples of how they can solve navigation challenges and have fun sessions.

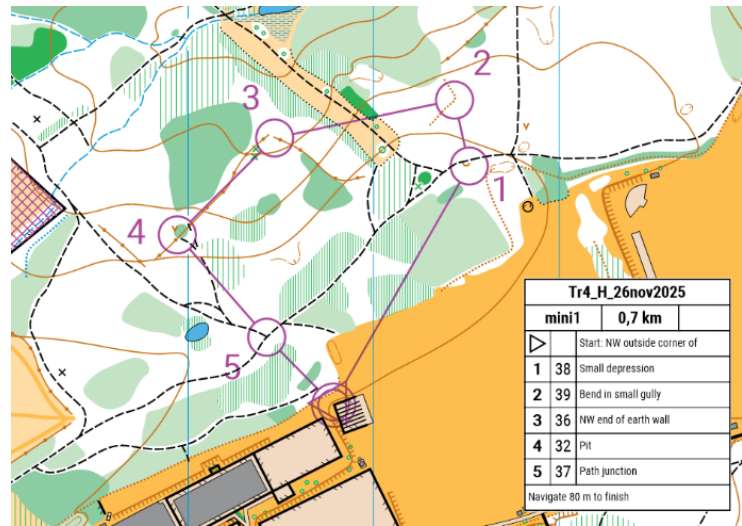




I already had two groups whom I had for 6 sessions. Both were Y11s, which means most of them did the Duke of Edinburgh Award so probably have some map reading experience. The students in these groups chosen orienteering against bushcraft, biking, outdoor cooking etc. These two courses were the most fun to run as students usually came back from the forest telling me how much they enjoyed themselves completing the task given. With the first lot we went to Panshanger to do a “test course” there. With the last one we finished their last course near their “camp”, a little cosy fireplace under a canopy and tree logs to sit on with Hot Chocolate and cinnamon swirls. I think they did not believe me when I told them that their course going to lead them to Hot Choc. They were a bit spoilt as this happened right after their

Christmas Lunch.

Last Spring I was asked if I would be available to help out at their Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. The preparatory walks for DofE replaced my orienteering sessions for a while. Then I did a Bronze level Assessor/Supervisor training online to help them out. It was a great adventure. Then we had the expedition where I was responsible for 1 group that always got lost, and their tracker always failed to work. But they walked the furthest distance of all. I figured out that they cannot see paths even among pastures or meadows, let alone forests. If it was a little bit overgrown, they chose the less overgrown path, not the one which led them towards their goal.



Next term we resume the same introductory session for slightly bigger groups. The school invited me again to their DofE and this time I would like to talk to them about how we could improve the students' navigation skills before the expedition.

In July 2025, I was the planner of the HH event at Haileybury. This had a practical reason: I was already DBS checked and was able to move freely when we got the permission from the school for the event.

You often ask me when you are going to see my students at HH events. The truth is that they have lessons on Saturdays so even if they would like to take part it is impossible. I wanted to invite my group to our Panshanger event as it is sooo close to them but after their lessons they have sport on Saturdays. I am sure it is easier to keep students in check if you occupy them *but this lets only very little hope them coming to an event.*

In February our Ace of Herts event going to take place on Sunday so I try to organise a minibus to that event.



So as it is what we or I can achieve that orienteering is a sport present at Haileybury and students might come across with it and they are going to know some basics. But apart from that there is only little hope that they even going to have an opportunity to take part any orienteering event even if they wish to.

But there is a slight hope! One of the students turned up at the Army event at Minley with his whole family: Mum, Dad, Granddad and brother. Brother is also a student at Haileybury but as he is older he did not come across me. So Dad and Granddad are both keen orienteers and they grabbed the boys and they did the Festive Score. My student with his Dad, brother and Granddad on his own. I think this student told me that he does sometimes orienteering with his family but this was long ago. His parents amazed that he did not choose orienteering when he could have – he chosen bushcraft instead. He said orienteers and bikers were always covered in mud after their session. I think it was not that bad. He really was covered by some mud after the score!

I am happy to answer any questions regarding to my sessions, please feel free to ask any.



*My DofE group is approaching the finish, which is around 1km beyond that white building. They are between two fences, so I am sure they are not going to get lost here. Not so sure about skirting around the house. Luckily, they did not get lost by the end.*

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

Thanks to everyone who has already filled in the online form offering your services for The British Nights and/or the Ace of Herts.

As there are two big events, we need as many helpers as possible – and it will, of course, be possible to run as well.

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

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





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## British Orienteering Access & Environment Newsletter Winter 2025

Message from Gracie Grant, British Orienteering University and Access Officer

Good Afternoon,

I hope you are well.

I would like to introduce the first edition of the **British Orienteering Access & Environment Newsletter**. This bi-annual newsletter has been designed to keep members informed about key developments over the previous six months, share success stories and highlight new resources available to support your enquiries and negotiations with landowners.

The **Winter 2025 edition** includes updates from major landowners and announces the launch of a new section to the British Orienteering Website: *Information for Landowners*, now available within the Access & Environment pages.

You can find the newsletter on the link below.

### [Access & Environment Newsletter Winter 2025](#)

This message has been sent to all Permissions Officers, Chairs and Club Secretaries. Please feel free to share this with other members of your club.



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## The 2025 US Orienteering Championships

Eliza Hermann

### Slow-going terrain, a Nor'easter and Tick repellents

Despite everything, Mark enjoyed the event. As for me, not so much. We had deliberately scheduled our October visit to my family in Vermont to coincide with [the 2025 US O-Champs](#) to be held at Noanet Woodlands, near Boston.

Noanet is 595 acres of scenic, hilly, rocky, forested landscape with a network of hiking trails. It is believed to be named for the chief of a tribe of the indigenous Nipmuc people. The event was hosted by the New England Orienteering Club over three days: a forest middle on Saturday, a forest long on Sunday, and a sprint along the waterfront in downtown Boston on the bank holiday Monday. We were very impressed with the event assembly on Saturday – easy parking, clean toilets, a large open-sided wooden building for shelter – and hoped this was a good omen for the orienteering.

Mark had a good run. His course was 2.8 km with 90 metres' climb and he finished in 42 minutes, easily in the top half of the field. However, I struggled with moving through the terrain at anything like a decent pace. I didn't make any significant navigational errors,



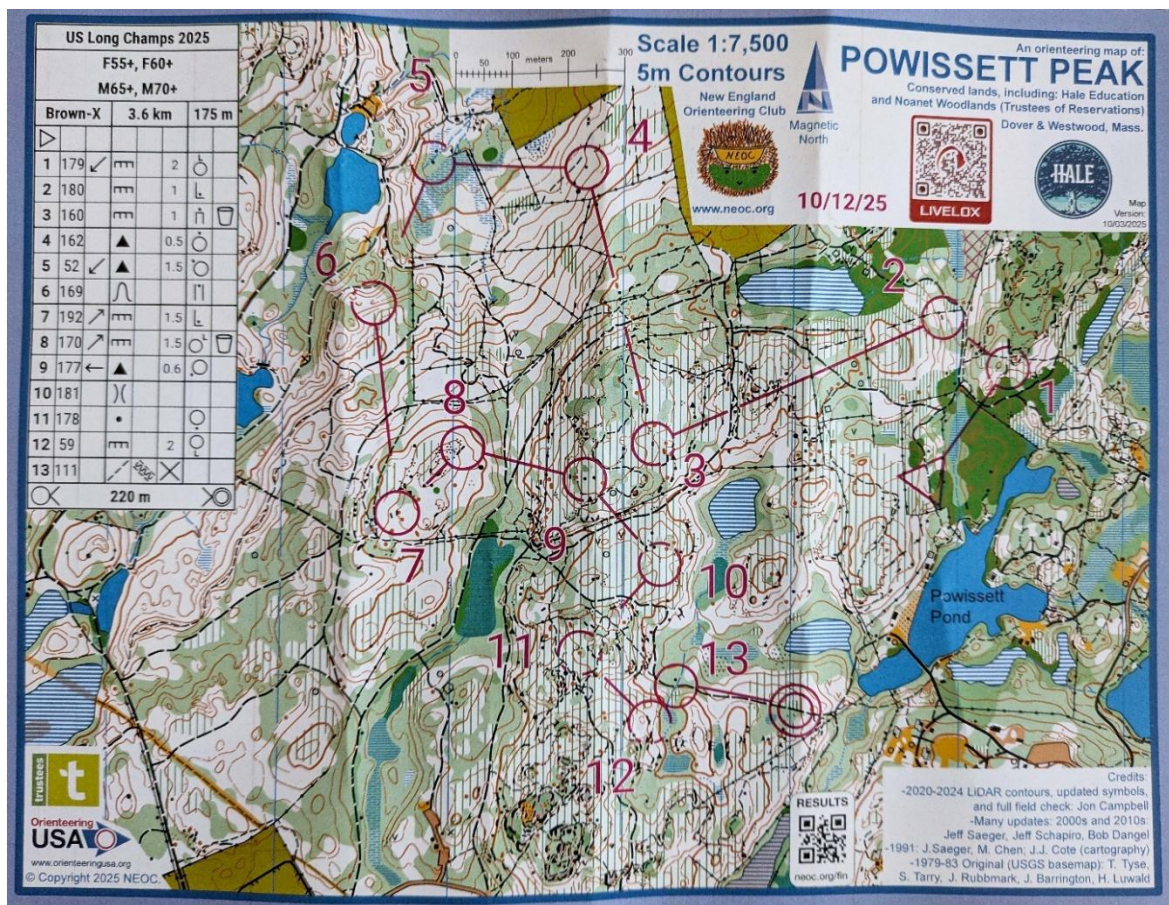


but there were so many boulders and brashings littering the forest floor that I mostly had to walk. My course was 2.4 km with 100 metres' climb and I finished in 59 minutes, which meant I placed 21<sup>st</sup> out of 30 orienteers on my course. No, that's not a typo, it took me nearly an hour to complete a 2.4 km course. That's how slow-going it was in that terrain.

The final details for the long event on Sunday said that all the courses had been shortened due to the terrain – not a good sign. In addition, a Nor'easter was forecast to blow in around midday. A Nor'easter is a storm combining strong wind and heavy, often horizontal, rain, not a hurricane but sufficiently serious to require precautions. Mark and I had late start times and we were concerned enough to move these up by an hour.



As it turned out, the storm moved in more slowly than anticipated and we stayed dry. Once again Mark enjoyed it and had a comparable result to the day before. His course was 5.0 km with 260 metres' climb and his time was 67 minutes. And once again I struggled with the terrain. This time it was a combination of dense, thigh-high young saplings, and prickly undergrowth that grabbed your legs and held on tight as you tried to pass through.





My course was 3.6 km with 175 metres' climb and I eventually finished in an appallingly slow time of 92 minutes, in 22<sup>nd</sup> place out of 28 orienteers on my course.

The Nor'easter blew in on Sunday afternoon. We got an email from the organiser saying that they hoped to go ahead with the Monday sprint unless it became too dangerous, or if a state of emergency was declared, or if seawater rose above pedestrian level. Our concern was not only the conditions, but also that there was no covered area for assembly. We decided not to do the sprint – which did actually go ahead and apparently no one drowned – and instead we took ourselves off to the excellent Harvard Museum of Natural History in the warm and dry.

Reflecting on the event overall, for me the slow-going terrain was just enormously frustrating. That said, it's always interesting to orienteer in completely unfamiliar areas, and the organisation was exemplary, right down to the provision of a wide array of tick repellents for communal use in the pre start area each day, next to the clear and check boxes. Northern New England is pretty much the deer tick capital of the world, and I thought having a bucket of tick repellents was a thoughtful and practical intervention, and one that would have been most welcome at this past summer's Scottish 6 Days.

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## **Proposed change to planning rules**

*Eliza Hermann*

Dear All,

You may have seen the BBC news story:

**'Sports stars fear disappearance of playing fields amid reforms.'**

The Government wants to remove Sport England as a statutory consultee on planning applications, which would have the effect of making it easier for developers to build on sports playing fields and recreation grounds.

I think this is terrible, and so I have signed this petition.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/735586>

You may wish to sign it as well if this is something that concerns you, and if you're willing, share it with friends.

*[Note: we have, in the past, responded to planning applications and proposals which would have had an impact on some of 'our' areas, including gravel extraction near Burnham Beeches and a quarry at Ellenbrook Fields which is still being considered.]*





## South-East League (SEL) 2025/26 – Rounds 1 & 2

Ben Bardsley

The new South-East League season, 2025-26, is underway with the first two rounds being held at Hindleap (SAX) and Frith & Windmill Hills (SN) in the second half of November.

Neither event is particularly close to Hertfordshire, especially Hindleap, so well done to all club members who made it to these events and scored some points on behalf of HH. That did mean other clubs were able to outscore HH having more entrants and SO already look unstoppable again at the top of the leaderboard.

Fingers crossed though that Epping North on 4 January will be an opportunity for HH to put some good points on the board since Epping events are typically very well attended by HH members.

### Round 1: Hindleap

Position	Club	League Score	Match Points
<b>DIVISION 1</b>			
1	SO	2069	6
2	MV	1296	5
3	SN	1078	4
4	DFOK	751	3
5	SLOW	557	2
6	HH	242	1
<b>DIVISION 2</b>			
1	SAX	1246	7
2	LOK	215	6
3	GO	197	5
4	HAVOC	174	4
5	CHIG	166	3
6	BAOC	144	2
7	RAFO	32	1

### Round 2: Frith & Windmill Hills

Position	Club	League Score	Match Points
<b>DIVISION 1</b>			
1	SO	3009	6
2	SN	2096	5
3	MV	1498	4
4	HH	1117	3
5	SLOW	1038	2
6	DFOK	957	1
<b>DIVISION 2</b>			
1	GO	669	7
2	BAOC	595	6
3	LOK	562	5
4	SAX	505	4
5	CHIG	262	3
6	HAVOC	230	2
7	RAFO	0	0

### Current 2025/26 League Table

Position	Club	Match Points	Position change
<b>DIVISION 1</b>			
1	SO	12	-
=2	MV	9	-
=2	SN	9	↑ 1
=4	DFOK	4	-
=4	SLOW	4	↑ 1
=4	HH	4	↑ 2
<b>DIVISION 2</b>			
1	GO	12	↑ 2
=2	SAX	11	↓ 1
=2	LOK	11	-
4	BAOC	8	↑ 2
=5	HAVOC	6	↓ 1
=5	CHIG	6	-
7	RAFO	1	-

For those interested in pencilling in the remaining dates of the 2025/26 SEL fixtures, the planned schedule is as follows:

**23-Nov-2025**

**SAX Hindleap**

**30-Nov-2025**

**SN Frith and Windmill Hill**

**4 Jan 2026**

**CHIG Epping N**

Pre-enter using [SI Entries](#). Entries close at 23.59 on Friday 2 January

**18 Jan 2026**

**DFOK South Ashdown**

Standard rate entry until midnight on 11 January. Late entry from Monday 12 January subject to map availability. Entries at [racesignup.co.uk](https://racesignup.co.uk)

**8 Feb 2026**

**HH Egypt & Hangings Woods**

**15 Feb 2026**

**MV White Downs & Ranmore S**

**3 May 2026**

**SLOW Winterfold**

**10 May 2026**

**SO Sunny Sussex weekend**



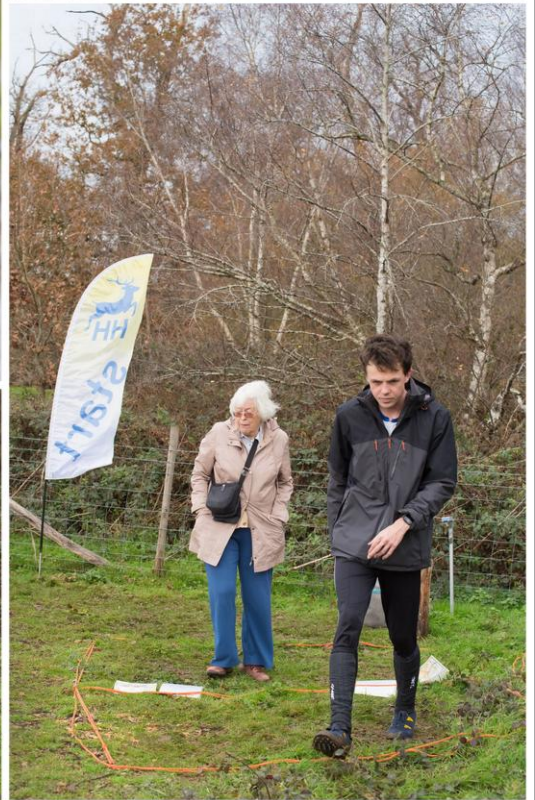


## Panshanger photos

Thanks to David Dixon for the photos











## Route to Christmas 2025

While some people think that the first 24 days of December are special because they involve eating a piece of chocolate every day, orienteers have a different reason to get a daily dose of what they like...the annual [Route to Christmas](#) where an interesting 2025 leg is put online and viewers are invited to draw the routes they might have taken which are then compared with how the elite tackled the leg.

There is the odd sprint leg but the vast majority are on terrain that we can only dream of in the UK.

Here's Day 24 from a World Cup race at Idre in Finland. Straight? Over the col to the NE? Go NW and lose height or NW and stay high?







And here's Day 21 – which way would you go from #13 to #14?



Day 17 is a 3.8k night leg from Jukola 2025 – see page 16

When you've looked at 2025's 24 course extracts, there's [every year back to 2007](#) online to keep you entertained!

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## Future Events

*[fixture lists]*

[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

[UK Urban League](#)

[Southern England Orienteering Urban League](#)

[UK Orienteering League](#)

*[entry systems]*

[www.fabian4.co.uk](http://www.fabian4.co.uk)

<https://www.sientries.co.uk/>

<https://racesignup.co.uk/>



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 03 January	HH Saturday Series	Sherrardspark Wood	<a href="#">HH</a>	Local
Sun 04 January	CHIG Mitre (SE League and SWELL)	Epping N	<a href="#">CHIG</a>	Regional
Sun 04 January	SCOL03 and TVOC Regional Event	Penn Street	<a href="#">TVOC</a>	Regional
Sat 10 January	Park-O	Wandlebury Country Park Stables	<a href="#">WAOC</a>	Local
Tue 13 January	London Street-O Series	Waterloo	<a href="#">SLOW</a>	Local
Sat 17 January	TVOC Saturday Series	Kings Wood	<a href="#">TVOC</a>	Local
Sun 18 January	DFOK SE League event	South Ashdown	<a href="#">DFOK</a>	National
Sat 24 January	Concorde Chase Urban (UKOL)	Woosehill?	<a href="#">BKO</a>	Regional
Sun 25 January	Concorde Chase & Southern Championships (UKOL)	Star Posts	<a href="#">BKO</a>	National
Sun 25 January	HAVOC Regional & SWELL event	Langdon Hills Country Park	<a href="#">HAVOC</a>	Regional
Tue 27 January	SLOW Night-O Series	Barnes Common	<a href="#">SLOW</a>	Local
Sat 31 January	HH Saturday Series	Nomansland	<a href="#">HH</a>	Local
Sun 01 February	LOK SE Middle Champs	Scratchwood	<a href="#">LOK</a>	Regional
Tue 03 February	SLOW Night-O Series	Battersea Park	<a href="#">SLOW</a>	Local
Sat 07 February	British Night Championships (UKOL)	Egypt and Hangings Woods	<a href="#">HH</a>	Major
Sun 08 February	HH Ace of Herts (UKOL)	Egypt & Hangings Woods	<a href="#">HH</a>	National
Tue 10 February	LOK London Street-O	Southgate	<a href="#">LOK</a>	Local
Sun 15 February	MV National	White Downs and West Ranmore	<a href="#">MV</a>	National
Sun 15 February	East Midlands Championships 2026	Longshaw	<a href="#">DVO</a>	National
Sun 15 February	Maulden Wood Regional Event	Maulden Wood	<a href="#">WAOC</a>	Regional
Sat 21 February	TVOC Saturday Series	Park Wood, Bradenham	<a href="#">TVOC</a>	Local
Sun 22 February	CompassSport Cup Heat	Chobham Common	<a href="#">GO</a>	National
Sun 22 February	CompassSport Cup Heat	Sutton Park	<a href="#">OD</a>	National
Sun 22 February	CompassSport Cup Heat	Brandon Park	–	National
Sun 22 February	CompassSport Cup Heat	Clouds Hill	<a href="#">WIM</a>	National
Tue 24 February	SLOW Night-O Series	Brockwell Park	<a href="#">SLOW</a>	Local
Sun 01 March	SOS Colour Coded		<a href="#">SOS</a>	Regional
Sat 07 March	TVOC Saturday Series – Hill End	Hill End Outdoor Centre	<a href="#">TVOC</a>	Local
Sat 07 March	HH Saturday Series – Whippendell	Whippendell Woods	<a href="#">HH</a>	Local
Sun 08 March	Sarum Saunter 2026	Fonthill TBC	<a href="#">SARUM</a>	National
Sun 08 March	HAVOC East Anglian League & Yvette Baker Trophy Heat	Weald Country Park	<a href="#">HAVOC</a>	Regional
Tue 10 March	London Street-O Series	Westminster	<a href="#">SLOW</a>	Local
Sat 14 March	Park-O Cherry Hinton Hall Park	Cherry Hinton Hall Park	<a href="#">WAOC</a>	Local
Sat 14 March	BUCS Individual Championships	Merthyr Mawr	UBOC	National
Sun 15 March	SO Regional Event – Worthlodge Forest, Crawley	Worthlodge Forest	<a href="#">SO</a>	Regional
Sun 15 March	BUCS Relay	Clevedon Court	UBOC	National
Sat 21 March	DFOK KOL	Joydens Wood	<a href="#">DFOK</a>	Regional
Sun 22 March	TVOC Chiltern Challenge National Event	Christmas Common	<a href="#">TVOC</a>	National
Sat 28 March	CHIG London ( Beckton) UK urban league	Beckton	<a href="#">CHIG</a>	Regional
Sun 29 March	DFOK Urban	Canning Town	<a href="#">DFOK</a>	Regional

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