



NEWSLETTER AWARDS 09 ~ 17 20 22

CompassSport

SAX NOTICES

ALISON HOWE ELECTED AS BRITISH ORIENTEERING NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

See News on p. 5 for full info.

BRITISH ORIENTEERING MEMBERSHIP

Don't forget to rejoin Saxons this year. Go to your British Orienteering account on their website. Click on Renew your membership and you will find all the relevant information.

https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/renew_membership

CONTENTS

Editorial	3	British Orienteering News	21
Chairman's Chat	4	MapRun UK	24
News	5	Scotney Old Castle	26
British Orienteering Performance Awards	6	Gear Review	29
Future Events / Events Further Afield	7 / 13	Reflections of a Former Publicity Officer	33
Welcome to New Members	14	Quiz	36
SEOA Badges	15	Leagues	37
Permanent Orienteering Courses	15	Saxons Out & About	43
Find Your Way	16	Answers to Quiz & Credits	60
Coach's Corner	17	Club Committee & Officers	61

Cover photo: Saxons in Action! Clockwise from top left: Sarah Covey-Crump & Ben Cronin at the CompassSport Cup Final (credits: Sarah Covey-Crump & Brian Henry), Mark Glaisher at Lapland O-Week 2023 (Mark Glaisher), David Kingdon, Holly Howe & Roger Pring, all at the Scottish 6 Days (Brendon Howe)

EDITORIAL

In my previous Editorial I noted that 2023 was already turning out to be a busy year for Saxons. The pace did not let up right through the summer, with a strong Saxons presence at major UK events such as the Scottish Coast & Islands and 6 Days, CompassSport Cup Final, Veterans Home International, Junior Interregionals, November Classic and London City Race. Mark Glaisher made it to Lapland for the annual Finnish O-week, and we even found time to squeeze in our club summer event in Victoria Park, Ashford. And, as the “main” winter orienteering season is now well underway, it looks like we’ll be just as busy going into 2024.



Photo credit: Sean Cronin

Congratulations are also due to Alison Howe, our Development and Club Clothing Officer, who, while all that summer activity was taking place, was elected as a Non-Executive Director of British Orienteering. Please see the *News* section of this issue for more details.

I'd like to end this Editorial to ask for help with a couple of things. Firstly, just to reiterate my previous request for assistance with producing SaxAlert. Having even just one extra pair of hands would make it possible to bring out more than the current 2 issues per year.

Secondly, I'm trying to track down some back issues of SaxAlert. We're fortunate in having a near-complete run of club newsletters all the way back to the very beginnings of Saxons in 1972 (and even its predecessor clubs as well). However 7 issues are missing from the collection—2 of the earlier SaxNews and 5 of its successor, SaxAlert.

If you have any of these, in paper or digital format, please let me know. If you only want to lend a paper copy rather than permanently donate it, I can arrange to get it scanned, especially as we're moving towards getting the entire archive digitised anyway.

The missing issues are:

SaxNews #81—would be dated between March 2001 (#80) and July 2001 (#82), probably May 2001.

SaxNews #101—dated between July 2004 (#100) & November 2004 (#102), probably September 2004.

SaxAlert #s 122-126 (also numbered 19-23)—January to November 2008.

If you can help with either of these requests, please contact me at saxalert@saxons-oc.org.

Graham Denney

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Jean Fitzgerald

At the AGM on 17 November, I was re-elected as Chairman. Thanks for all your support over the previous year. Sean Cronin resigned from the committee at the AGM. Sean has done a great job using Facebook to target people living near a forthcoming event, as well as other publicity for the club, so we urgently need someone who is keen on social media to take over the reins from him. Please get in touch if you are interested.



Since my last chat in June a band of Saxons have been to various 'out of Kent' (and also out of UK) events, some of which will have write-ups in this SaxAlert. I attended the Scottish 6 Days (now 5 days of 'serious' (for some) competition with some less formal events for the sixth day). This year the event was held along the Moray coast, with sand dunes much in evidence and shorter walks to the starts than are sometimes seen in the mountainous regions. This is one of my favourite Scottish areas. What's not to like: intricate sand dune terrain, not too much climb, and the sea adjacent to several of the areas complete with long sandy beaches. Also, the dolphins! Anyway, I didn't win any medals but had a great time. Saxons arranged a social on the beach with soft drinks and cake (lots of cake) and several members even managed a swim.

Moving back to Kent, we held our summer novelty event and picnic a bit later than usual. On 2 September Beryl Pring organised an ultrasprint event on a map of Victoria Park, Ashford, produced by Bendon Howe. Four courses, each of around 1k were available and you could rest in between each. The sting in this format is that the controls have no control codes attached and are sometimes pretty close together, so you have to be careful with compass

bearings and reading control descriptions. There was also a penalty for punching incorrect controls. We then had a buffet picnic organised by Beryl and made the most of the glorious (or a bit hot for some) weather. The winner of the event was Alan Hickling, so he gets the fun of organising something for us next summer.

In my last chat I mentioned that our website was about to be updated. Have you all had a look at the new site? It has all the old info but is much better organised and it is easier to find background info and resources. Brendon and Alison have recently run a series of zoom workshops on how to plan and organise courses which were recorded. These videos are available to view under 'resources for planners and organisers' and are well worth a view.

We are now well into the 2023/24 season. We have already had 8 KNC and 4 KOL events (co-ordinated by Mark Glaisher and Alan Hickling). We are holding our New Years Day event at Mote Park and are considering using MapRun technology in part to remove the early morning rise normally required for the planner. Please check the website for updates. Our first Sunday event is at Kings Wood on 7 January. I would like to thank all our volunteers without whom we would not be able to run the large number of events that we do for our members and others. I hope to see many of you in the forest in the coming year.

It just remains for me to wish you all the best as we move into the Christmas season and hope you have a happy and enjoyable New Year with plenty of orienteering fun.

Jean

NEWS

Alison Howe elected as British Orienteering Non Executive Director



The 42nd AGM of British Orienteering was held after the London City Races on 16th September, at the race centre, Decathlon Surrey Quays.

One of the roles of the AGM is to ensure that the BO Board of Directors continues to be made up of a Chair, 6 Elected Directors, 3 Independent Directors and the Chief Executive, as required by the Articles of Association.

At this AGM, 2 of the Independent Directors, Duncan Birtwistle and Ruth Beale, reached the end of their respective terms of office. Duncan decided to seek re-election and was duly nominated but Ruth did not, which created a vacancy. Step forward Saxons very own Development Officer, Alison Howe! No other nominations were received which meant that Duncan and Alison were both elected unopposed at the AGM.

For Alison this means participating in Board meetings 7 or 8 times a year with the other Directors, Chair and Chief Exec. Directors have the responsibility to constructively challenge and contribute to the strategy of British Orienteering and oversee governance of the organisation. They serve an initial term of 3 years, and may serve up to 2 further terms of 3 years each if re-elected. Congratulations Alison - now the hard work starts!

One perk of the job is that Alison now gets a snazzy British Orienteering email address—so if you have any questions about BO strategy or policy, or have any topic or issue which you think BO should consider or address as part of its strategy or operations, please contact Alison at alison.howe@britishorienteering.org.uk

Saxons Success at the Southern Championships

The November Classic in the New Forest was the venue for this year's Southern Championships. Saxons were prominent across the Senior categories, taking 6 podium places. Congratulations to: Mark Glaisher (1st in M70L), Peter Martin (2nd in M70L), Jeremy Oldershaw (1st in M85), Alison Howe (1st in W50L), Brendon Howe (2nd in M50L), and Beryl Pring (3rd in W75L).

SE Night Championships - Podium place for Simon Blanchflower at Addington Hills

7 Saxons took part with our best performance coming from Simon Blanchflower, who won Bronze in the M65-75 category.

BRITISH ORIENTEERING PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Well done to the following:

These are the members and awards that I have been informed of. If any are missing please let me know and I'll include them in the next issue—Ed.

Nicky Bedford	Racing Challenge: Silver Award	★★★★★	26/10/2023
Catherine Catchpole	Navigation Challenge	★★★★★	26/11/2023
Sarah Covey-Crump	Racing Challenge: Gold Award	★★★★★	26/10/2023
Ben Cronin	Racing Challenge: Gold Award	★★★★★	26/10/2023
Justin Knott	Racing Challenge: Bronze Award	★★★★★	26/10/2023
Phillip Locke	Racing Challenge: Silver Award	★★★★★	26/10/2023

The date given above is the date that British Orienteering informed our Membership Secretary, Graham Thomas, of these awards. It may not be the exact date of the event where the award was achieved.

If you are missing these awards make sure you put your BOF number on your registration form, especially if you are hiring a dibber.

The number of stars indicate the technical difficulty- 2*=Yellow, 3* = Orange,4* = Light Green, 5* = Short Green – Black. You get a Gold racing award if your time is less than the course length x 12.5 mins, Silver x 15mins and Bronze x 20 mins.

FUTURE EVENTS

A

selection of forthcoming events run by Saxons and neighbouring clubs from the start of the New Year through to the JK and slightly beyond:

Mon 1 Jan	Mote Park, New Years Day score event	Maidstone (SAX)
Mon 1 Jan	SOS New Year Novelty	Hilly Fields (SOS)
Thu 4 Jan	Tunbridge Wells Common, Kent Night Cup: 11	Tunbridge Wells (SAX)
Sat 6 Jan	SO - SOG A7 - Washington Common - Washington Common	Washington, West Sussex (SO)
Sat 6 Jan	HH Saturday Series - Hockeridge - Hockeridge Woods	Berkhamstead (HH)

Sun 7 Jan	Kings Wood Challock, Start the Year!	Challock (SAX)
Sun 7 Jan	Dorset Delight	Cold Harbour (WSX)
Tue 9 Jan	SLOW London Street O Series - Chelsea	London (SLOW)
Wed 10 Jan	HAVOC-SOS Street-O Winter Series No.6 - Pilgrims Hatch, near Brentwood	Brentwood (HAVOC)
Thu 11 Jan	SO: Tilgate golf course, Kent Night Cup: 12	Crawley (SO)
Sun 14 Jan	DFOK SE League event - Westerham	Sevenoaks (DFOK)
Tue 16 Jan	Mole Winter Series - Old Malden	Old Malden (MV)
Thu 18 Jan	Faversham, Kent Night Cup: 13	Faversham (SAX)
Sat 20 Jan	Hargate Forest, Kent Orienteering League, event 5	Tunbridge Wells (SAX)
Sat 20 Jan	SO - SOG A8 - Ditchling Common - Ditchling Common	Burgess Hill (SO)
Sat 20 Jan	SN Saturday Series	Horsell Common (SN)
Sun 21 Jan	HAVOC SWELL - Langdon Hills Country Park	Langdon Hills, Essex (HAVOC)
Mon 22 Jan	WRNL Ringwood	Ringwood (WIM)
Tue 23 Jan	SLOW Night O Series - Battersea Park	London (SLOW)
Wed 24 Jan	SOS-HAVOC Midweek Winter 7	tbc (SOS/HAVOC)

Sat 27 Jan	BKO Urban event	Birch Hill (BKO)
Sun 28 Jan	Concorde Chase 2024	Barossa (BKO)
Sun 28 Jan	SOS Highwoods	Highwoods Country Park (SOS)
Thu 1 Feb	MV: Priory Park, Kent Night Cup: 15	Reigate (MV)
Sat 3 Feb	Buckmore Park, Kent Orienteering League (DFOK event)	Chatham (DFOK)
Sat 3 Feb	HH Saturday Series	Sherrards Park Wood (HH)
Sat 3 Feb	Sarum Wessex Night League	Larkhill TBC (SARUM)
Sun 4 Feb	GO SEL event & Southern Champs (UKOL)	Redlands (GO)
Tue 6 Feb	LOK London Street O Series	London (LOK)
Wed 7 Feb	HAVOC-SOS Street-O Winter Series No.8	TBA, Hornchurch East (HAVOC)
Thu 8 Feb	Kings Wood, Kent Night Cup: 16	Challock (SAX)
Sat 10 Feb	TVOC Saturday Series	tbc (TVOC)
Sat 10 Feb	SO - SOG S1 - Chailey Common (north)	Chailey Common North (Red House Common) (SO)
Sun 11 Feb	MV SE League event	Netley Heath (MV)
Sun 11 Feb	SCOL xx and SOC regional event Micheldever Woods	Micheldever Woods (SOC)

Thu 15 Feb	Walderslade, Kent Night Cup: 17	Chatham (SAX)
Sun 18 Feb	CompassSport Cup Heat	Esher Common (SLOW)
Sun 18 Feb	CompassSport Cup Heat	Bere Wood (WIM)
Tue 20 Feb	Mole Winter Series	Redhill (MV)
Wed 21 Feb	SOS-HAVOC Midweek Winter 9	tbc (SOS)
Thu 22 Feb	Perry Wood, Kent Night Cup: 18	Faversham (SAX)
Thu 22 Feb	BADO Basingstoke Wessex Night League	tbc (BADO)
Sat 24 Feb	BKO Saturday event	Swinley West (BKO)
Sat 24 Feb	SN Saturday Series	Hindhead (SN)
Sat 24 Feb	SO - SOG S2 - Eartham Wood (south)	Eartham South, Slindon (SO)
Thu 22 Feb	BADO Basingstoke Wessex Night League	tbc (BADO)
Sat 24 Feb	BKO Saturday event	Swinley West (BKO)
Sat 24 Feb	SN Saturday Series	Hindhead (SN)
Sat 24 Feb	SO - SOG S2 - Eartham Wood (south)	Eartham South, Slindon (SO)
Sun 25 Feb	HH SE League event	Ashridge (HH)

Tue 27 Feb	SLOW Night O Series	Wimbledon Common (SLOW)
Thu 29 Feb	SO: North Ashdown, Kent Night Cup: 19	Forest Row (SO)
Sat 2 Mar	SO - SOG S3 - Cowdray Forest & Burnt Place	Cowdray Forest & Burnt Place (SO)
Sun 3 Mar	Knole Park tbc, National and SEL event	Sevenoaks (SAX)
Wed 6 Mar	HAVOC-SOS Street-O Winter Series No.10	TBA, Basildon (HAVOC)
Sat 9 Mar	Kings Wood, KOL 7	Ashford (SAX)
Sat 9 Mar	SO - SOG S4 - Abbots Wood	Abbots Wood, Polegate (SO)
Sun 10 Mar	Sarum Saunter	tbc (SARUM)
Tue 12 Mar	SLOW London Street O Series	South Bank (SLOW)
Thu 14 Mar	Knole Park, Kent Night Cup: 21	Sevenoaks (SAX)
Sun 17 Mar	SO Regional Event - including SEOA YBT heat	Gravetye Estate (SO)
Sun 17 Mar	SOS Hockley Woods	Hockley Woods (SOS)
Sun 17 Mar	Rushall Woods	Rushall Woods (BKO)
Tue 19 Mar	Mole Winter Series	Epsom (MV)
Sat 23 Mar	SN Saturday Series	tbc (SN)

Sat 23 Mar	SO - SOG 5 - Great Walstead School	Great Walstead School (SO)
Sun 24 Mar	TVOC Chiltern Challenge National Event	Penn & Common Woods (TVOC)
Sun 24 Mar	CHIG Regional and SWELL event	Hainault forest. (CHIG)
Fri 29 Mar	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Sprint (UKOL)	University of Loughborough
Sat 30 Mar	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Middle (UKOL)	Beaudesert
Sun 31 Mar	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Long (UKOL)	Beaudesert
Mon 1 Apr	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Relays	Stanton Moor
Sat 6 Apr	SO Galoppen S6	Oldhouse Warren (SO)
Sun 7 Apr	HAVOC SWELL	Dagnam Park (HAVOC)
Tue 9 Apr	SLOW London Street O Series	Wandsworth (SLOW)
Tue 16 Apr	Mole Winter Series	Cheam (MV)
Sat 20 Apr	Cobham Great Wood, Kent Orienteering League (DFOK event)	Strood (DFOK)
Sat 20 Apr	SN Saturday Series	Frimley Fuel Allotments (SN)
Sat 20 Apr	SO Galoppen S7	Friston Forest East (SO)
Sun 21 Apr	TVOC Regional Event & SCOA YBT round (SCOA League tbc)	Hodgemoor Wood (TVOC)

Sat 4 May	Ightham, Kent Orienteering League	Sevenoaks (SAX)
Sat 18 May	Jeskyns Community Woodland, Kent Orienteering League (DFOK event)	Gravesend (DFOK)
Sun 19 May	Ightham, regional event	Borough Green (SAX)

You can find out what orienteering events are coming up locally and throughout the country by app, Web or email:



- Use Neil Bricknell's **Event-O app** ([Google Play](#) or Apple App Store)



- Visit the [Saxons website events page](#)
- Visit [oevents.info](#) and use their online events calendars
- Use the [British Orienteering Event Finder](#)



- Subscribe [here](#) to oevents.info's weekly events list email

Icons courtesy of [Online Web Fonts](#)

Events Further Afield:

12-14 Jan	Madeira Orienteering Festiva...	Madeira, Portugal
26 Jan-06 Feb	OCEANIA SPRINT ORIENTEERING ...	NZL, New Plymouth, Tarana...
27-Jan	Edinburgh Big Weekend - Indi...	Edinburgh, Scotland
31 Jan-02 Feb	ANTALYA O MEETING	Antalya, Turkey
02-04 Feb	Avis O Weekend 24	Portugal
08-13 Feb	Portugal O Meeting 2024	POR, Almeida, Guarda Dist...

16-20 Feb	MAXIMUS O MEETING	ESP
16-18 Feb	NAOM - Norte Alentejano O Me...	POR
08-10 Mar	XIII PREMI D'ORIENTACIÓ C...	ESP
13-17 Mar	Cyprus International Oriente...	CYP
22-24 Mar	MOC Championships 2023	ITA
24-Mar	Interland	Ardennes, Belgium
24-Mar	Czech O-Tour 2024 - WRE, 2 s...	CZE
26 Mar - 01 Apr	Dzintaru O-Cup Amber O-Week	LAT
30-31 Mar	22nd Belgrade Trophy 2024	SRB
01-Apr	Lieldienu balva	LAT
12-14 Apr	Halden O-Meeting 2024	NOR
13-14 Apr	Kuyavia Cup	POL
14-Apr	Estonian Sprint Cup 1st even...	EST

Details of all the above can be found at the [WorldofO website](#).

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Since our last issue the following new member has joined Saxons:

Senior: Peter Thorpe.

Welcome to the club! We hope to see you at local events very soon. Please make yourselves known to the organisers and the 'Can I help you?' volunteers at our events. Also our Junior Co-ordinators look forward to meeting new Juniors.

SEOA BADGES

Send off for your free colour course badge!

You can get a fabric colour coded badge to sew on your track suit or O-top, sponsored by the South East Orienteering Association, if you beat the par time three times, on any qualifying colour-coded course. Three qualifications at the same colour get you a badge—there is no time limit on when you can get them.



Par time is set at 150% of the winner's time, or within the top 50% of competitors, whichever is greater, except for the White course, where you only have to complete the course three times to qualify.

To obtain your badge, please email details of your qualifying results (organising club, event, course and orienteer's name) to Neil Crickmore from the SEOA website Contacts page (<https://www.seoa.org.uk/contacts>). There is no charge for these badges, and Seniors and Juniors alike are eligible for them!

PERMANENT ORIENTEERING COURSES

Beryl Pring

Saxons have [8 Permanent Courses](#) throughout Kent. The courses can be used in different ways, depending on your own specific needs. The great thing about them is that you can go at a time to suit you, on whatever day of the week you choose. They are also an ideal way of introducing children and adults alike to the sport, where you can go at your own pace and spend as much time as you like figuring out the map. If you want to go in a pair or as a group, again, this is the perfect opportunity. You may have just started orienteering and are wanting to gain confidence in your skills outside of the pressures of an organised competition. So whether you are using them for training purposes or just for a more adventurous family stroll, the choice is entirely yours.

- Bedgebury Pinetum

- Betteshanger Country Park
- Brockhill Country Park
- Kent University, Canterbury
- Milton Creek Country Park
- Mote Park, Maidstone
- Trosley Country Park
- Whinless Down near Dover

Full information on the [Saxons website](#) with maps available from the [Go Orienteering website](#).

If you have any problems regarding the courses, [let me know](#) and I will try and rectify them.

FIND YOUR WAY

Alison Howe

The Find Your Way project has continued to roll out to existing and some new areas.

There has been varying success on

launch events largely dependent on location, weather and the amount of advertising. Follow on usage has been somewhat disappointing however and we will look to step up visibility and marketing once all sites targeted are completed.

- Saxons areas now launched include Trosley Country Park, Capstone Country Park, Brockhill Country Park, Betteshanger Country Park, High Meadow, Haysden Country Park, and Mote Park.
- Milton Creek, Victoria Park in Ashford and Whinless Down to follow in 2024.
- Saxons experience similar to other clubs involved in the project. Good local engagement with local councils and other interested groups, but more limited active usage post launch events.

Find out more at <https://findyourwayvo.org.uk/>

FIND YOUR WAY

EXPLORATION AT THE END OF YOUR FINGERTIPS

COACH'S CORNER

Brendon Howe

Look Up!

Introduction

At the November Classic at Iron Wells I spent some of my course running 'alongside' a young marine. He was clearly a much faster runner than me and a capable orienteer, yet I would regularly arrive at the control site before him.



I took a moment to analyse his orienteering and identified that he would often forget to look up from his map to check the terrain around him at critical times. I see similar issues with the South East Junior Squad - fit and excellent at interpreting the map, but failing to look about enough.

I believe that looking up is a definite skill we can all learn, and should practice when we can...

Prerequisites—Looking Up

Its all very well saying "look up more!" But there are some prerequisites to being able to do so. The first of these is Simplification. If you have not been able to simplify your route to the next control you will invariably be 'fine navigating' to the control. This requires more time looking at the map to chart your progress to the control. Invariably, the more you look at the map, the less you have time to look around you.



I should add here, that there is a difference between 'actively looking up' and 'fine orienteering looking about'. If you've not simplified your leg you need to look at everything for clues about where you are. This takes time as you're required to parse the plethora of visual clues to identify

what's important and then compare that to the map. Compare this to 'actively looking up' where you are spotting those features you'd identified during the simplification process. This is a much less mentally draining process and something that can be done effectively at speed.

The other prerequisite is Footwork. As seasoned orienteers our bodies become

used to the rigours of uneven ground and the impact it has on our bodies, particularly our ankles. New orienteers are prone to run along looking at their feet. Often foot gazing becomes a habit and continues as we develop. Don't get me wrong, there are times when we need to look down—complex tree roots, brachings, that steep bank, or river crossing—but I'm talking about the other stuff.

It's a fact that our proprioception skills and muscle 'elasticity' tend to reduce as we get older. We can take steps to reduce or halt this demise through specific exercise and stretching. More on this later....

En Route - Actively Looking Up

By actively looking up we can identify our 'simplified features' and move more quickly through terrain. As we get better at this there is scope to include more obscure simplified features. I'm thinking particularly of Vegetation Boundaries and Clearings. Often Veg Boundaries are not clear when looking at head height; to get a proper sense we need to look into or above the canopy. In doing so these boundaries are much clearer. I believe that the prevalence of using satellite imagery and LIDAR for mapping makes this skill more pertinent as mappers are more able to identify and mark changes in vegetation.

The other key trap from not looking up is running into the clutches of fallen trees or heavy vegetation. This usually occurs in an area of what is mapped as open runnable, but has been impacted by wind blow, or where there is seasonal unmapped veg. Picture the image - an orienteer is slavishly following their compass bearing, they're looking down too much. Suddenly, they run into the boughs of a fallen tree. Each set of tree branches we have to navigate through cost us many seconds, if not minutes.

If we use the spot and go technique with our compass (take bearing, spot distant object, then run to it, then repeat) we can be more dynamic in our route—we can see the fallen tree ahead and skirt around it whilst keeping our spot target in sight. Not only is this quicker, but its directionally more accurate than staring constantly at the compass.

In the Control Circle - Looking Up

If you've read any of my previous musings you'll be aware of the CARE or TOPCAR mnemonics. The C bit gets us to make a mental picture of the Control Site; what's the control number? where is it placed?



Credit: Brendon Howe

what is around it? What is the terrain doing? What about vegetation?

As you move toward the control circle your mind will be comparing what it sees around it to the mental picture in your head. The better the mental picture, the quicker your mind will make the match, and the faster you will get to your control.

Within that mental picture, we have a perspective of where the control actually is. As we approach our control we should be acutely aware of what we are looking for. Looking up is critical here as it is often possible to see the control quite early and thus head straight towards it, saving ourselves faffing time.

Sometimes however, things don't quite go according to plan and we approach the control circle not quite in the right place, or that our Attack Point to CP plan hasn't been executed as well as we'd have hoped. Again, looking around it super important. At this point we are in damage limitation mode and we want to mitigate time lost as we regain control of the map and spot that pesky control. The urge is to run on, but taking a moment to have a good look around often pays dividends. If I'm pretty certain I'm in the right place and am in the control circle, but can't spot the control I will stop and look around, particularly behind me; if this doesn't bear fruit I will take one or two steps and repeat the process. Often the 'hidden' control miraculously shows itself. Hurrah!

Practice - Looking Up

So far we have looked at the benefits of actively looking up more, but how do we go about practicing it? Here are some drills and exercises we can practice:

Exercises - Footwork

- Invest in a 'wobble board' and practice standing on it on one leg. This will help improve ankle strength.
- Once you've got the hang of this, try doing the same with your eyes closed. This really improves our proprioception ensuring our feet adapt quicker to uneven terrain and we avoid rolling our ankle or falling over.
- Next time you're out on a trail run practice running short sections without looking down. Find a piece of card to hold below your nose to obscure the ground and run/trot/walk 50m. Concentrate on the feedback your feet and legs are giving. Concentrate on the path further ahead of you and make a mental picture of what your feet will encounter.



Credit: Brendon Howe

- You can also try this at night by deliberately pointing your head torch into the distance.
- As you get better at this, try running faster or further using this technique. Perhaps try on rougher terrain.

Exercises - Simplification

- Look at some past maps, perhaps a different course at a recent event you can find on Routegadget. For each leg, make a simplification plan of three or four elements.
- Convert your next race into a training activity and stop at each control and make a simplification plan before executing it. You could try to sketch your next leg in 30 seconds and use that map instead. (Why not race first, then ask the organiser if there's a spare map for a different course you could practice on, or offer to collect controls??)

Practice - Looking up

- Go for a run in your local forest and practice looking for vegetation boundaries. Look into the canopy to identify broadleaf and pinous species, look for gaps in the canopy that might be marked as a clearing, look for different aged trees—recent coppice, mature trees, juvenile trees.
- Compete against a team mate to see who can spot the control first. Run to the next control. Stop as soon as you see the control. Who was furthest away? Repeat.
- Practice picking the fastest line—chose some runnable open woodland and pick a spot in the distance (or just run). Look ahead and judge as you run which is the best route to follow. Think about what obstacles cause the most delay or physical fatigue; is it late changes in direction, or having to high-knee it through undergrowth? Make a mental note of what impacts you the most and then avoid it.

Looking up - Summary

Looking is something we can all improve on. There are a couple of pre-requisites, and we need to remember that not all looking up is good looking up. What we want is quality, 'useful' looking up.

We need to:

- **S**implify

- don't **IOO**k at our feet
- do some **T**raining
- look above or into the canop**Y** for veg changes
- **T**actical checking to pick the fastest line
- create a visual **P**icture of the control circle
- spot the control **E**arly

There, we now have a new mnemonic: **SOOTY TAPE** :-)

BRITISH ORIENTEERING NEWS

Graham Denney

British Orienteering's monthly newsletters across the summer and beyond have been full of interesting items. Here is a roundup of headlines and links that may repay your time to delve into:



Volunteers:

In July, BO released a new video highlighting some of the volunteers who enable orienteering to take place, to encourage more participants to come forward and help out at events: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qJa8_VVv9s&t=10s

Volunteer Effort Project:

The Orienteering Foundation is sponsoring a review of 'volunteer effort', to identify ways to innovate and share ideas that can reduce volunteer effort and/or reduce the pressure on key officials without compromising event quality. They are seeking expressions of interest to take part in a working group on the topic. The closing date was 15th October but the project is led by somebody well-known to most Saxons, Andrew Evans of DFOK, so if you ask nicely he may be able to include you! <https://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk/volunteer-effort-project>

Asylum-seekers and refugees:

Sal Chaffey from DVO has been introducing orienteering to asylum-seekers and refugees in Derby. Many were already active in sport in their home countries, and have really taken to orienteering in the UK: https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/index.php?pg=news_archive&item=6219

Reporting Incidents:

BO, Howden Insurance and leading risk management company Proactive are to develop an app to simplify the incident reporting process at orienteering events. If you're interested in joining a working group on this, please email Howard Blackman at hblackman@britishorienteering.org.uk (but bear in mind that places may have been filled since this article appeared in July).

Extending access rights and opportunities:

BO is working with other members of the Outdoor Industries Association to make politicians and decision makers more aware of the challenges that we face in gaining access to the countryside. There is also a link to a British Mountaineering Council survey on extending access rights and opportunities in England. <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/news/6235>

Vision & Orienteering Survey:

Researchers from Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) want to understand the vision corrections that over-40s use when orienteering, through an online survey, coordinated by Professor Kez Latham (WAOC). Presbyopia - the reduction of the ability of the lens of the eye to change focus between distance and near objects - affects everyone over 45 years, meaning that people require different vision corrections for optimal distance and near vision. This can be a serious challenge in a sport like orienteering! https://aruspsych.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1RnXlze2Czkq2qi

"The Winning Formula" - From distraction to discipline webinar series:

Rachel Collins of DFOK and Meadow Wellbeing is running this series of online workshops to help you with your focus when orienteering. The course is already underway but it might be worth emailing Rachel to ask about joining late or if she will be re-running the course at a later date: rachel@meadowwellbeing.com <https://britishorienteering.cmail20.com/t/d-l-vjtihhd-dldtnztd-s/>

Safeguarding Member Feedback:

The results of feedback and a survey with both junior and adult BO members earlier this year on the current state of safeguarding and to identify areas for improvement: <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/news/6251>

Help us improve our indirect environmental impact – get involved today!

Another request for volunteers to join steering groups, this time to work on an Environment Policy for BO and a project to improve orienteering's indirect environmental impact. Both are being run by Emma Monkham, BO's Environment and Access Officer: <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/news/6256>

British Orienteering Development Conference to return in 2024!

The conference will be held online, with a series of webinars and workshops over 4 weeks from Monday 8th January 2024. You should already be able to sign up on the BO website for the first round of sessions: <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/news/6276>

New membership offers:

At this year's AGM the Board confirmed 2 new membership offers:

- *Family membership*—£35 for a max of 2 seniors and 1 or more juniors, additional seniors in the household charged at the individual membership rate of £15.
- *Young Adult*—£10 for anyone aged 21-25.

Now that membership renewal season is open, login to your account at <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/> to renew today!

2023 Coaching Review Report & Recommendations:

The Coaching Review took place from March to May this year, with the report being completed in July. The Board has accepted all the recommendations for strengthening lifelong pathways in the sport. <https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/news/6288>

Club, Coach, Mapper & Volunteer Awards:

Voting is now open for BO's 2023 awards. Nominations close on 25th February 2024 and can be made using the forms linked to from this page:

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

20% off BO eLearning courses over Christmas & New Year:

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

999 Text Service:

If mobile coverage at an event (or anywhere else for that matter) is patchy, you can send a text message to the emergency services—but note that it will take

longer than phoning 999. You need to register your mobile phone with the service first.

<https://www.emergencysms.net/index.php>

https://www.emergencysms.net/files/3649_esms_6.pdf

JK2024: Midlands

Just a quick reminder that JK2024 returns to the Midlands—Days 2 and 3 may be familiar to anyone who took part in JK2018! Entries will be open from 7th January and will close on 3rd March for Individual races and 10th March for the Relay event. Fees are yet to be announced but it seems there will be an earlybird discount for those entering by 4th Feb.

Locations:

- Day 1 (Fri 29th March - Sprint): Loughborough University
- Days 2 & 3 (Sat 30th - Middle & Sun 31st - Long): Beaudesert
 - Don't forget the clocks go forward on the 31st!
- Day 4 (Mon 1st Apr - Relay): Stanton Moor
- TrailO events will be available on Days 1 and 2.

<https://www.thejk.org.uk/index.php?pg=439>

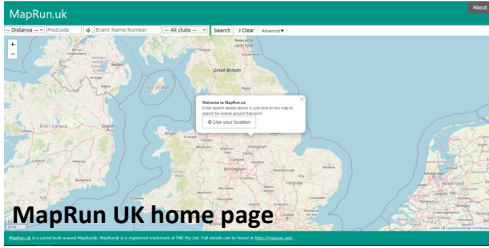
MAPRUN UK

Graham Denney

While writing my article on Mole Valley's Little Bookham Street-O in September (see *Saxons Further Afield* in this issue), researching some technical details about MapRun led me to the website of [MapRun UK](#). Although not of direct relevance to that article, it appears to be a useful resource so I thought it would be worth a brief mention here.

MapRun UK is essentially a map-based web portal of UK MapRuns, developed by Stephen Borrill, Chair of WAOC. Stephen was nominated for last year's BO Development and Innovation Award for his work on MapRun UK; although he didn't win, it's interesting that the winners were Peter Effeney—who developed the original MapRun concept and app in Australia—and Pat MacLeod, who manages MapRun in the UK. Stephen's nomination was a clear recognition of his contribution in enhancing the accessibility of MapRun for UK-based

orienteers.

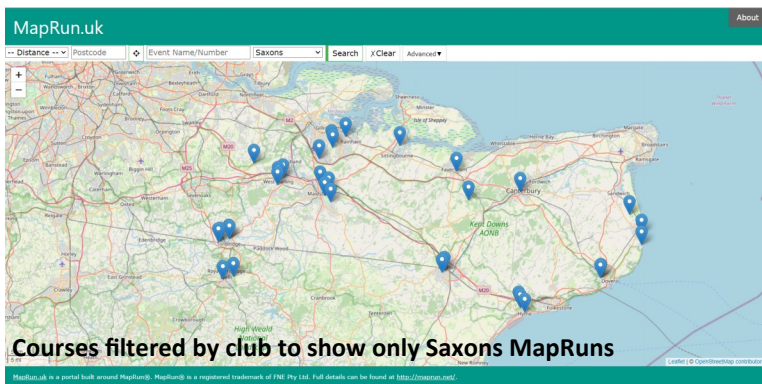


Personally I find it a bit difficult to choose courses in the MapRun app on my phone. The folder structure is a little too non-intuitive for my liking (and always seems to involve a lot of scrolling, plus you can't do a text search) and I find it difficult to get the map to show the courses that I want

(map results are based on filters set in another tab in the app). Also, clicking on a course downloads it immediately, without giving you further details about it.

MapRun UK overcomes most of these issues by bringing UK-only MapRun course data to the big screen—that is, a laptop or desktop computer screen. This enables the user to interact via a large, easily zoomable map of the UK, with basic and advanced filters set via a menu bar at the top. This makes it much easier to find and select courses. In theory at least, each pin on the map links to full details of the course it represents, allowing you to make a more informed decision about whether to run the course or not than the MapRun app permits, in my opinion.

That said, it's only as good as the quality of data in the portal database: I clicked the 'Full details' link for our Mote Park & Shepway course, only to get an error message when taken through to the Saxons website. This is very likely because we've recently revamped our entire site, and MapRun UK doesn't have an updated link to this course. (The 'Get map' link resulted in the same error message). Also, a lot of courses in MapRun UK don't have maps available so you have to go hunting on the website of the club that owns the course. For example, for Sevenoaks North—a DFOK course of personal interest as it's my closest MapRun—says 'No map yet' on the MapRun UK portal, but the PDF map



can be downloaded for free from <https://www.dfok.co.uk/anytime/sevenoaks-north>. Rummaging around MapRun UK I noticed quite a lot of similar situations, so this would appear to be a key issue to be addressed if resources permit.

However overall I have to say that I like MapRun UK - both for its concept and its execution. Any tech that makes something simpler, easier and/or more relevant than what already exists is a step in the right direction, and MapRun UK is exactly that. When I'm back in Kent over Christmas and New Year I'll definitely be using it to find a few MapRuns to keep me busy (not to mention sane!) Certainly MapRun UK has a few glitches, but these appear to be in the quality of the data used rather than anything fundamentally technical. It's a useful guide to what's generally available and where, and a very helpful addition to the MapRun app itself. Get on to <https://maprun.uk> and get MapRunning!

SCOTNEY OLD CASTLE

Graham Denney

By an interesting coincidence, around the time of our KOL3 event at Scotney Castle (25th November), [Current Archaeology](#) magazine ran an article about excavations on the site of the original medieval mansion there.

Current Archaeology claims to be 'the UK's best-selling archaeology magazine', and having been a subscriber for some years now I can see why it's so popular. It consistently manages to present what can be a dry, technical subject in a manner which is highly accessible to Joe Public; in fact I don't think I've ever read a dull article. CA's remit covers the entirety of human existence in the UK and Republic of Ireland; it's great to read about the history of far-flung parts of the British Isles—but it's even more fascinating when that history is close to home.

I don't know how long Saxons has been using the Scotney estate for orienteering, but I'd guess our relationship with it goes back a long way. It was one of the first Saxons locations that I ran at when I re-started orienteering in 2016, and my scan of the map from that event provides a brief summary of Scotney's lengthy history:



"The earliest record, from 1137, gives the owner of Scotney estate as

Robert de Scoteni, after whom it was named. Roger Ashburnham is credited with building the original 'castle' c.1378-80. The estate was left to the National Trust in 1970 on the death of the then owner, architectural historian and author, Christopher Hussey."



Scotney Old Castle NE Front, 1783

Credit: Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, Public domain,
via Wikimedia Commons

Interesting stuff, but the brevity belies the rich and fascinating history of Scotney. Ashburnham's original building, for example, would have been rather similar to Bodiam—essentially a large fortified house, albeit with the typical defensive features of a medieval castle such as corner towers, a curtain wall and of course a moat (though the plan for Scotney may never have been fully realised).

During the 500 years of its existence, Scotney Old Castle saw considerable turmoil, even scandal. There were 'star-crossed lovers separated by Elizabethan religious turmoil', according to CA. There was a Jesuit priest—Father Richard Blount—hidden for seven years from 1591-98 by Scotney's then-owner, Thomas Darrell, himself a Recusant (Roman Catholics, usually from the English gentry and nobility, who remained loyal to their faith after the Reformation). Twice Blount barely escaped with his life from raids on Scotney by the authorities, the second time having to swim the moat to get away. Then there was an Earl in Georgian times who, suspected of being involved in the smuggling that was then rife, disappeared without trace, faking his death by leaving a coffin at the castle, which when opened was found to contain only...rocks. In between all this the owners found the time and money to rebuild the south wing in 1580 and the eastern range 50 years later.



Scotney Old Castle, 1809

Credit: Letitia Byrne, Public domain,
via Wikimedia Commons

The Hussey family bought the estate from the Darrells in 1778. Successful ironmasters from Worcestershire, the Husseys continued to ply their trade in the Weald, working with many of the local furnaces and forges. This is interesting as this was when ironmaking began shifting in the opposite direction—the era when the smelting of iron with coke was developed, when the iron bridge at Ironbridge was built, when the industrial revolution truly began—and when the centre of gravity of the ironmaking industry shifted permanently from the Weald to the Midlands as a result.

Yet despite this the Husseys remained wealthy, to the extent that from 1837-43 a descendant, Edward Hussey III, could afford to pull down Old Scotney Castle and replace it with the grand house seen today. He retained the central section, which had contained the service/kitchen range, and a single tower. These ruins formed the picturesque centrepiece of newly landscaped gardens that reflected the Romantic movement of the times.

This then is essentially what can be seen above ground today. But what of the original medieval building—if anything—remains hidden below the surface? This was the question facing the National Trust, who own and manage Scotney, when a rare opportunity to explore arose earlier this year.

The decision had been taken to create a subtropical garden at Scotney, to reduce water consumption by planting species that are more tolerant of drier conditions. Since this garden is due to open next spring, this enabled the Trust to excavate the site ahead of planting to see what lay beneath.

The dig took place in July this year, carried out by volunteers under the professional direction of Nat Cohen (a NT archaeologist, who I trained under at



Aerial view of Scotney Old Castle today. July's dig took place in the ruins at the centre of the photo.

Credit: Lieven Smits, [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/), via Wikimedia Commons



Knole a few years ago), and Simon Stevens from Archaeology South-East (ASE), and formed part of the Council for British Archaeology's annual Festival of Archaeology.

A dozen evenly-spread test pits quickly yielded results: rubble from the demolition of the old castle, mostly tiny fragments showing just how thoroughly the workmen had pulled it down. Strangely though, most of the rubble has vanished from Scotney entirely—traces of it have never been found in the new castle or its outbuildings, nor are

Both Scotney Castles—Old and New

Credit: see p. 60

there signs of it being dumped on the wider estate. Remains of a structural wall were also revealed by the test pits. As would be expected from a site with such a long history of occupation, plenty of smaller artefacts were unearthed too: animal bones, medieval pottery sherds, brick and tile pieces, clay pipes, bottle glass from the 1700s—the time of the disappearing smuggler earl—and even a child's toy soldier made from lead.

On any archaeological excavation, the dig itself is simply one, short, part of a much longer process. Now the post-excavation phase is underway, with ASE writing a report based on analysis of what was found. This can be a lengthy undertaking, so it may be some time before I can provide a further update of the final conclusions.

In the meantime though, the NT is cataloguing and exploring Scotney's archives. These cover hundreds of years of the estate's history, and are amongst the most comprehensive property archives that the National Trust owns. They were bequeathed to the Trust with the estate by its last owner, Christopher Hussey, who as a notable architectural historian in his own right, understood their true value better than possibly anyone. Doubtless there are more fascinating discoveries at Scotney waiting to be made on paper, as much as below ground.

GEAR REVIEW

Brendon Howe

Petzl Nao RL Headtorch

After a decade of loyal service my old Silva head torch give up the ghost. It'd been repaired a number of times, but my latest attempt at resurrection came to nought; I was in the market for a new head torch...

In recent years I had used my Silva for street night O. It was reasonably light and provided enough light (660 lumen) for the varying conditions one finds on most street O.

After some research I plumped for a Petzl Nao RL. The Nao has a sticker price of about £120 though I purchased mine from TrekInn (Spanish company—very good) for £108.

The head torch boasts a massive 1500 lumens and weighs in at a tiny 145g. It is fully head mounted, meaning the battery sits on the rear of your head rather than on an extension cable. It also has some nice touches like an integrated rear light (flashing or steady) and battery level indicator. Run time on full power is 2 hours, and has a 2 hour reserve on low—more than enough for a KNC.



Credit: image courtesy of Brendon Howe

The battery unit is removable so you could have more than one battery if you were planning an all-nighter. My battery took a couple of hours to charge from 0% using a USB connection.

Out on the Road

I was keen to try out my new purchase, so took it for a spin around Canterbury. This is what I found...

Its such a lightweight unit you really don't feel as though you're wearing it; I did not noticed any 'bounce' or shifting of the unit whilst running. There is an over-the-head add on strap (included) that stops the headband riding down. I'd installed it on my unit, but don't think it was necessary though perhaps it more useful if you like a loose fit around your bonce.

I started off running with a wooly hat, then removed it as I got hot. Adjusting the headband was very simple by flipping a clip at the rear and pulling on a bungee.

Probably something you could do with gloves, but certainly very easy with fingers.

Once the hat was off I noticed that the small form factor of the straps meant that my head remained cool. There was no noticeable build up of sweat under the front headband or foot of the front light.

The Petzl has two lighting modes: Reactive and Manual, as well as three levels: low, medium and high. A large button on the underside of the head unit toggles between the modes and levels. The Reactive mode adjusts the light output based upon the surroundings, thus saving battery and providing a consistent level of light. Even on high, I found the Reactive light level to be a little on the low side. I suspect this was due to the fact I was toggling between Manual and Reactive.



I did find that the output was impacted by the lights of oncoming cars. Their headlights would cause the unit to reduce its output. I found this disconcerting. A short press and hold of the button switches the unit to manual mode and normal service was resumed. I found this simple toggling between modes without having to scroll through different light output (including Off) was helpful.

The Petzl provides a wide spread of light as well as a more focussed beam for distance work. Reading the map was a breeze. The edge of the lighting area was sufficient to see the map well, but without lots of glare from the paper.

The head unit pivots at its base. Adjustment was easy and it stayed put.

In the Field

After my street based trial I thought it would be interesting to see how the head torch fared off-road. KNC—Capstone Country Park was a suitable soft target. The night of the KNC was slightly misty and cool following a day of rain. Often, high powered head torches can be a problem in the mist as they tend to create a corona of white light in the foreground as the light beams hit the mist; this means you're blinded by the light and can't see much. I'm glad to say that the Petzl did



Credit: Brendon Howe

not suffer from this problem. That said, I did find that the reactive lighting mode did struggle with the mist. This resulted in the light level yo-yoing as it encountered both blocks of mist and breath clouds in the cool night air. No problem in Manual mode however, so I stuck with that.

In Manual mode I found that the light level was consistent and sufficient on high for everything the terrain could throw at me. Reading the map was easy, with no glare from the white of the map.

The beam created by the head torch was nicely spread so that I was able easily to decipher the

humps and bumps of tree roots and other assorted trip hazards. This meant I was confident of foot and able to run fast without having to second guess what was coming.

Despite having the Petzl on full power for an hour, plus some warm up time, the battery check showed I had three of the five bars left. This would suggest that the 2 hour burn time is pretty accurate. More than enough time to collect controls, or search for a missing competitor.

Capstone does have a few wide open spaces. I found the Petzl did not have the power to penetrate long distances, so spotting the stile from the other side of the field was not possible. That said, this would have been a challenge for all but the most powerful of headtorches, and probably not possible for any on a misty evening. In this instance I had just to trust my bearing and 'fine tune' when I got to the other end of the field.

I was running much harder at the KNC than my initial Canterbury trip. Sweat was flowing, but I didn't find that the head torch contributed to that. I did get a little sweat build up under the front headband, but it didn't prove troublesome. A light sweatband would have sorted it.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I'm pretty happy with the Petzl Nao RL. It does everything I

expected of it and is going to be just the job for night street O. Good light output, lightweight, rear light and not expensive. When it comes to the woods I'll be sticking with my Mila Vega 2 though.

Overall Score: 18/20

Pros:

- Lightweight
- Comfortable
- Good Light Output
- Lighting promotes sure-footedness off-road
- Integrated rear light
- Sufficient battery life for KNC

Cons:

- Reactive lighting is a bit hit and miss

REFLECTIONS OF A FORMER PUBLICITY OFFICER

Sean Cronin

As I'll be busy next year, I need a break from volunteering and I've stood down from publicity after a good few years in the role. Unless someone has volunteered since the AGM there is a vacancy. Please do consider it. It's one of those jobs where you can do as little or as much as you want in the way you want, and you don't need a great deal of experience.

I'm happy to handover the techniques I've developed, but a new person will have their own ideas, and with new ways of doing things different people will be reached, so a change of personnel could be positive.

Many of our committee have been doing the same role for a long time, sometimes longer than I've been a member. I



Will Heap (SO) & Brendon Howe (SAX) - 2nd & 3rd on M50L at the November Classic & Southern Champs | Credit: Brendon Howe



Typical landscape—Lapland

O-week 2023

Credit: Mark Glaisher

see this situation with my employer too and it does mean that things can be done quite efficiently as people know their jobs really well. There are dangers too, particularly silos of knowledge and organisations getting out of the habit of changing. I'm aware of a club in Wales which has completely stopped holding events as a couple of key people have stopped orienteering. Rather like Kent, they are a peripheral area and can't rely on just going to other clubs' events to sustain them.

Some clubs have fixed terms for 'senior' posts, e.g. Chair, Treasurer, Secretary. I think this would work and would be a positive thing even if it was those on the committee swapping positions. This would share ideas and experiences, and in a new job new things are more likely to be tried. However all the jobs are important so a more radical idea might be for all posts to have new people for a limited period – say 6 months before reverting to the original. Essentially a guest development officer, guest SaxAlert officer, guest events co-ordinator etc etc. Maybe pull the job out of a hat in a Saxons lottery. You might be horrified by this, but it would be a great way to share knowledge as the guest volunteer would definitely be asking the full timer how it's done and would be a ready-made replacement when the full timer stands down.

Obviously this is a great idea when you've just taken your name out of the ring for volunteering!

Reflecting again on publicity, the best thing about the role was seeing a big crowd of newcomers at events. People new to the sport are naturally the most enthusiastic and seem to be having the most fun. Of course very few have turned into regular orienteers, and this is not unexpected. I think of the things I've really enjoyed and keep telling I'd do again if only I had the time, OMM, Parkrun etc.

We could definitely improve the retention of our newcomers. DFOK have an interesting thing where they have a periodic zoom call where people meet up and discuss events, future and past, and just talk through various things. Part tips, part coaching, part social. It's aimed at the newer members but also experienced orienteers come along as naturally they are also keen on seeing what they could do better. I



Graham Thomas performs the CompassSport Cup Final rain dance...

Credit: John Cross

could see this really helping our new orienteers, both for technique and knowing some faces to speak to in the car park after the event. They seem to have a few new members coming through so maybe this is something someone reading this would like to do in Saxons? No-one will stop you if you want to start it up, and I'm sure DFOK would share their experience.

Some of you may know I used to be a DFOK member and when I joined Saxons it felt like joining the big club from the small club. Have things changed? If we compare the most active members, which I've measured by those on the ranking list (because it is easy) there is an interesting result.

	DFOK	SAXONS
M/W20 -	3	4
M/W21 - 35	9	1
M/W40 – 45	7	6
M/W50 - 55	15	15
M/W60 - 65	12	6
M/W70+	7	14
TOTAL	53	46

Numbers of ranked orienteers in each age category.

The numbers of ranked Saxons members have declined significantly. Just before the pandemic it was above 80. Due to geography, perhaps Saxons have more experienced orienteers who just go to local events and are not ranked, but I don't think we can confidently say anymore that Saxons are the bigger club. The two clubs look pretty even to me. DFOK also have many more in the M/W21 - 35 age group which suggests that on current trends DFOK will be the bigger club and our future dominance at Compass Sport Cup looks very shaky.

It's not just about CompassSport Cup of course, with new younger members coming through, DFOK should be able to sustain their event program and other volunteering, whereas things look more difficult for us.

What to do? Saxons could 'go for growth' making growing its membership of especially younger orienteers its main focus. I actually think it wouldn't be that hard, but some difficult decisions might need to be made regarding short term priorities and volunteer capacity and ideally growing the club would need to be the main priority rather than a priority. For example DFOK traditionally put just one regional event on a year, leaving volunteer energy for more local events and

club development. There are ways we could get more local events to grow our membership with less effort. Some of our areas such as Challock and Ightham are big enough for events on multiple successive weeks, something that definitely helps new orienteers. The good news here from my experience is that newcomers seem just as keen on a wet cold classic orienteering area as experienced orienteers. Somewhere like Perry Wood in November seems to be the easiest sell.

An alternative approach might be a managed decline, or put more positively just not worrying about these things and just go orienteering. Personally I would be ok with this too and the eventual scenario at some point in the future would likely be DFOK and SAXONS combining into a Kent Orienteering Club. Since we know them well and are our friends this would work out fine I'm sure and nothing to fear.

GENERAL QUIZ

Mike Fletcher

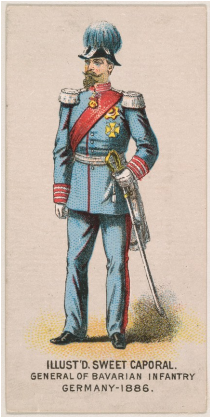
Many thanks to Saxons member Mike Fletcher for contributing this 'themed' 'general' quiz [answers on p. 60]:

- 1) Who was known as *el Generalísimo*?
- 2) Which country did he lead for thirty-six years?
- 3) Which five star general later became President of the USA?
- 4) Who devised the *General Theory of Relativity*?
- 5) Which general died at the battle of the Little Big Horn?
- 6) In the navy what is the equivalent rank of a general?
- 7) What post does Antonio Guterres hold?
- 8) George C. Scott starred as a general in which film?
- 9) Which profession does the GMC represent?
- 10) Which actor of the silent era starred in *The General*?
- 11) The *General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)* is usually taken by pupils of what age?
- 12) By which month and year must the next General Election be held?



**19th century Russian
Generals meet for a quiz**

Credit: Karl Piratsky, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



13) Charles Sherwood Stratton was an American performer who achieved fame as a dwarf under the circus pioneer P. T. Barnum. What was his stage name?

14) A British mathematician and World War Two codebreaker is considered to be the first person to envisage a machine with artificial general intelligence. Who was he?

15) The *General Synod* is the highest governing body in which organisation?

16) Which British coin ceased to be in general circulation in 1961?

17) Which leader of Pakistan died in a plane crash in 1988?

19th century Bavarian Infantry General in full

quiz dress uniform

Credit: Kinney Brothers

Tobacco Company, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

18) *The Night they Drove Old Dixie Down* is a song by The Band. Which general is mentioned?

19) *The Buick* is a famous car brand owned by which American firm?

20) Which general was the 18th President of the United States?

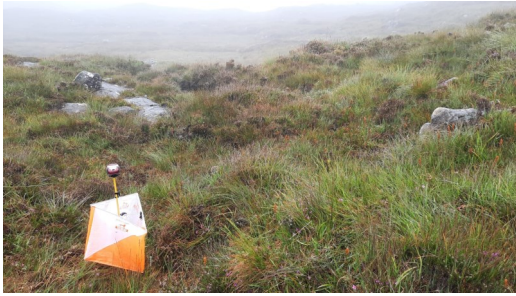
LEAGUES

Kent Night Cup 2023/24:

The 2023/24 KNC Season kicked off with a hybrid event at Trosley CP & Vigo Village on Thursday 19th Oct. The 33 runners who took part coped well with dense mist in the woods and changes of vegetation awaiting re-mapping.

The Season continued with SO running KNC2 at Maidenbower & Pound Hill the following Thursday, then the first ever MapRun KNC - an urban event at Singleton in Ashford. We have introduced MapRun to urban KNCs to simplify the organisers' effort, but we are still using SI at the Start and Finish to supplement MapRun for technical and competitor safety reasons.

DFOK took on the next KNC, at Buckmore Park on Bluebell Hill - a new KNC venue. KNC5 took us to another newly mapped venue, Capstone CP just outside Rochester. The newness continued the following week with a MapRun urban at Paddock Wood on a newly-extended map. The most recent event at time of writing, KNC7, used Marden's Hill, another fairly new Saxons area and a lovely corner of the Ashdown Forest. Organiser John Cross set a challenging course incorporating dumbbells and plenty of route choice.



Classic Scottish terrain—Scottish Coast & Islands | Credit: Brendon Howe

After 7 events, Saxons hold 6 of the top 10 league positions, with Brendon Howe on 120 pts being hotly pursued by John Cross on 118, then Alison Howe (1st Woman) and Mark Glaisher tussling for 3rd and 4th on 113 and 112 respectively. David Lobley upholds DFOK's reputation in 5th place with 108 pts. Sean Cronin (SAX, 6th, 104 pts), Ian Ditchfield (MV, 7th, 103

pts) and Peter Dobra (SAX, 8th, 101 pts) are all within a few points of each other, but also face stiff competition from the mighty DFOK trio of Mark Collins (9th, 99 pts), Andy Pitcher (=10th, 98 pts) and Neil Speers (=10th, 98 pts) hot on their heels. There are still 14 events left in this KNC season, so there's plenty of time for big upsets and major changes at all levels of the league table.

[The current league table is here.](#)

Kent Orienteering League 2023/24:

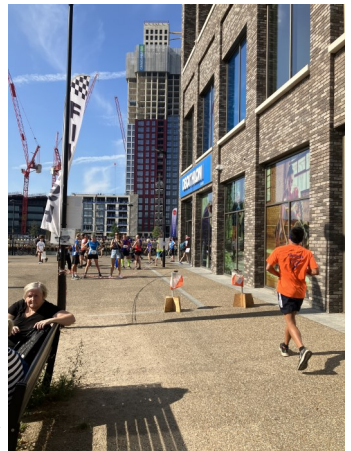
With the KOL season 3 events in so far (Milton Creek, Foots Cray & Scotney Castle Estate) and 7 still to go, this is the current state of play on each of the courses:

Blue:

Alan Hickling (M55, SAX) on 200.0 points (best 2) is just holding off Simon Evans (M40, SAX) on 196.7. Andrew Evans (M65, DFOK, 180.7 pts), Sean Cronin (M55, SAX, 174.1 pts) and Peter Dobra (M21, SAX, 173.1 pts) are tussling for the next 3 places. First woman at present is Gabby Roch (W50, SAX) in 11th place overall with 106.9 pts, well ahead of next contender Kezia Jukes (W21, BAOC, 89.1 pts) 18th overall.

Green:

On Green, Richard Leahy (M50, SAX) currently leads on 200.0 points, with Robin Kendall (M55, SAX) nearly 14 points adrift of him at present, but with 7 events still to go, plenty of time to catch up.



London City Race—Saturday's Finish at Decathlon Surrey Quays | Credit: Sean Cronin



Beryl Pring SAX (R, 3rd on W75) with Sally Thomas BOK (L, 2nd W75) & Sue Hands WIM (M, 1st W75) at the Nov Classic

Credit: Beryl Pring

Third placed, and first woman, is Ella Pyman (W55, DFOK), on 166.8 pts, followed by Ben Cronin (M18, SAX and 1st Junior) on 163.9. Fifth, sixth and seventh places are tightly contested by Peter Lilja (M65, SAX, 161.9 pts), Allison Page (W50, DFOK, also 161.9 pts and 2nd Woman), and Geoff Goodwin (M70, DFOK, 161.7). As we're just 3 events into this season's KOL so far, this will develop interestingly over the coming months.

Orange:

Sarah Reith (W55, SAX) leads with a convincing margin on 170.0 pts at present. Chris Davidson (M50, no club) trails a distant second on 125.3, but with a comfortable gap ahead of Ronald Huggett (M75, SAX), Rhona Fraser (W21, no club) and Maria Gemmell (W21, no club), all on 100.0 pts. Harriett Evans (W10, SAX, 1st Junior and 1st Junior Woman) could easily challenge all of them over the next few events, as she is just 2.9 pts behind on 97.1. 1st and 2nd Junior Men are Travis Batt (M16, no club) on 87.3 pts and George Ransley (M16, no club) hot on his heels on 85.6.

Yellow:

Harry Green (M12, SAX, 1st Junior and 1st Junior Man) has a decent lead on Yellow at present: 200.0 pts vs Joseph Embleton's (M10, no club) 191.7 - but it's still close enough for that to change. Saxons Juniors dominate the next few rankings: Charlie Green, Ahmed Mollarecep, Izyan Murshed, Dylan Collins and Elliot Sanders (all M10s) hold 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th positions respectively, with Isla Findlay (W10, DFOK and 1st Junior Woman) holding her own in 7th place, just 0.7 of a point behind Dylan and well ahead (by 55.4 pts) of Elliott.

Score:

An interesting set of results currently, with the leading competitors grouping in clusters of exactly the same scores. Stephen



More classic terrain—Scottish Coast & Islands

Credit: Brendon Howe

Mitchell (M35, no club), Jackie Sibthorp (W55, SOS and 1st Woman) and Richard Lloyd (M55, no club) all share the lead on 40 points each (best 2 events). Caylan Uddin (M12, no club), Dimitre Poydovski (M50, DFOK) and Ben Sallows (M45, no club) share equal 4th place with 38 points each. Meanwhile, Tony Connellan (M80, SAX), Sarah Uddin (M45, no club) and Ronald Huggett (M75, SAX) have divided 7th place up between them on 36 points each. What this actually means is that each of these competitors has only done 1 Score event apiece so far in this season's KOL; so with 40 points available for the winner of each Score course at a KOL, and 7 KOLs still to go, the leader board is sure to change dramatically before the close of the season.

[The latest KOL league tables are here.](#)

South East League:

2023/24 League:

The new SEL season is now underway. I don't have updated results for the 2023 Individual League; this appears to remain as it was when the previous issue of SaxAlert was published:

[2023 Individual League results as of March 2023:](#)

The SE Individual League runs to the calendar year, whereas the main (club) league runs over the autumn/winter/spring season.

In the new 2023/24 season, unfortunately the first event—due to be run by Saxons at King's Wood—had to be cancelled late in the day. This means that there will now be 7 SEL events this season instead of 8, with SN's Mytchett/Windmill Hill on 26th Nov the first.

Following Mytchett, SN lead Division 1 having convincingly won with 3671 points vs 2nd-placed SO's 2325.

Relegated to Division 2 for this season, Saxons came third with just 679 points. To be fair though, BAOC (also in Div 2) had a lot of runners present for the Army Champs which were part of this event. This enabled them to score nearly double the event points of 2nd-placed GO.

The new season's fixtures are as follows:

26/11/23 SN Mytchett/Windmill Hill

03/12/23 CHIG Epping NW



South East
Orienteering
Association

14/1/24 DFOK Westerham
 04/2/24 GO Redlands (S Champs)
 11/2/24 MV Holmbush & Buchan
 25/2/24 HH Ashridge
 12/5/24 SO Houghton Forest

[More info about the SE League and SE Orienteering Association is available here.](#)

UK Orienteering League:

The UK Orienteering League exists to encourage greater and better quality competition at a national level, across a variety of terrain types and to promote new and alternative event formats. To achieve this it provides a series of 16-24 events (although 25 have been planned for this year) throughout the UK.



The 2023 programme of 25 events ended with 2 races on the November Classic weekend—the Winchester Urban and then the Nov Classic itself in the New Forest.

In the Club League, Saxons came 44th (out of 111 clubs) with 2761 points, versus leaders SYO with 5655 points. Of our neighbours, SN came 6th (4696 pts), SO 10th (4388 pts), SLOW 20th (3870 pts), SN (B) 45th (2760 pts), SO (B) 58th (2206 pts), DFOK 61st (2084 pts), MV 63rd (2048 pts), SLOW (B) 65th (2019 pts), and LOK 80th (1446 pts).

Notable Saxons (scoring over 200 pts) in this year’s Individual League were:

SAX Pos	Name	Age Class	Total Score	Age Class Pos
1	Alison Howe	W50	385	2
2	Beryl Pring	W75	384	6
3	Jeremy Oldershaw	M85	342	4
4	Brendon Howe	M50	307	8
5	Sarah Howes	W60	285	17
6	Mark Glaisher	M70	215	29

[2023 schedule of events](#) [2024 not announced yet]

[2023 Club League](#)

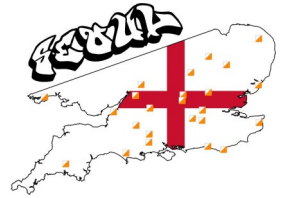
[2023 Individual League](#) (filter by setting Club to SAX to view individual Saxons' results)

[More info about the UK Orienteering League is available here.](#)

SEOUL:

Southern England Orienteering Urban League:

The 2023 SEOUL league consists of 19 events, with the Winchester Urban on 4th November now included. The only League event remaining now is the Brighton City Race on 16th December. Events for 2024's League have not yet been announced.



League standings are individual, not by club, and your best 7 races out of all 19 count towards your score. At present notable Saxons in the League are:

WYJ: Alice Evans (7th, 186 pts), Harriet Evans (19th, 91 pts)

MO: Brendon Howe (45th, 179 pts), David Thomas (49th, 174 pts)

MV: Brendon Howe (40th, 181 pts), Simon Evans (56th, 153 pts), John Cross (65th, 121 pts)

WV: Alison Howe (14th, 284 pts), Sarah Covey-Crump (59th, 89 pts)

MSV: Alan Hickling (33rd, 219 pts), Graham Thomas (57th, 166 pts)

WSV: Renate Henry (115th, 44 pts)

MUV: Peter Martin (32nd, 258 pts), David Kingdon (62nd, 158 pts), Steve Waite (68th, 143 pts)

MHV: Roger Pring (13th, 327 pts)

WHV: Beryl Pring (3rd, 484 pts)

[SEOUL website](#)

SAXONS OUT & ABOUT

Saxons At Home

Saxons Summer Event, Ultrasprint in Victoria Park, Ashford—2nd September 2023

Saturday 2nd September dawned bright and sunny for our Summer Picnic event.

Beryl Pring organised it with a great deal of help from Brendon and the idea of the Ultrasprint came from Nick Barrable.

30 members and their families came to Victoria Park bringing wonderful delights to eat after the sprint races.



Beryl presents the winner's cup to Alan Hickling | Credit: Beryl Pring

Whilst Beryl and Brendon put out the controls, other willing hands erected the pergola and put out tables, chairs and the food.

There were three races, A, B, and C, all very short about 1km long. Some people took their time and enjoyed the day others really went for the win. So whilst the scores were being calculated, mostly by Peter Dobra, the feast began. Most of it all went, especially the cakes!

The winner was then announced who will have to organise next year's summer event—Alan Hickling with a total time of 16 mins 30 secs. Brendon had a run and came second although uncompetitive and then Peter Dobra third.

The junior winner was George Ransley with Holly Howe a close second and then Harriet Evans.

I still have a blue pottery bowl if anyone wants to claim it?

Beryl Pring, Organiser
[Event results](#)

Saxons Further Afield

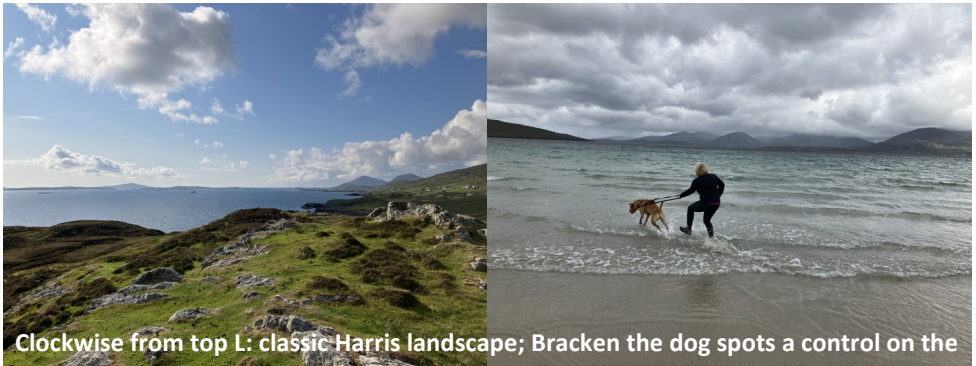
A number of Saxons made the lengthy journey north of the border in the summer to attend one or both of this year's major Scottish events. Here are their experiences of some of the highest quality orienteering in the UK—Ed.

Scottish Coast & Islands—22nd-28th July 2023

Once upon a time multi-day orienteering in Scotland meant 'The Scottish 6 Days' (S6D), but now there is competition – “Coasts and Islands”, this year 6 days of orienteering held on the Isle of Harris, Outer Hebrides in the week before the S6D.

The Cronin family are big fans of the Outer Hebrides with the fantastic mixture of islands, lochs and incredible beaches in wild almost wilderness areas. So the first ever orienteering event on the island was too good an opportunity to miss.

This was quite a different event in many ways. You had to get in quick with a limit of only 200 competitors. I believe this limit was primarily an agreement with the authorities worried that the lightly populated island wouldn't cope with a larger influx. But that was only half the battle – accommodation sold out quick as did space on the ferries to and from the island (peak tourist season).



Clockwise from top L: classic Harris landscape; Bracken the dog spots a control on the far side of the bay...; rocky Start Day 5; sheep waiting for a baaa-...

All credits: Sean Cronin





Alison Howe in full stride | Credit: Ian Ditchfield, MV

5 of the 6 events were near the 'main' town of Harris, Tarbert (population 503) and featured an innovative parking arrangement, basically there was a single central car park in Tarbert with events either within walking distance or with a shuttle bus / get on your bike option. Freed from the need to find a big car park for each day, this gave the organisers more freedom to choose areas. Also

this is an event that you could have genuinely done on public transport since getting to Tarbert is relatively easy on Harris buses, though the bus stops were mostly used by sheep. Co-ordinating with my non orienteering other half Karen was also quite easy as she could simply throw Ben and myself out near the event or in Tarbert and go off and do something else knowing we could always shelter in a Tarbert café until she returned.

With minimal travel there was plenty of time to visit local attractions such as the dramatic Luskentyre beach (see picture of Bracken getting a little overexcited). I sometimes think there is too much orienteering at multi-day orienteering events, but often it's too much travelling to orienteering.

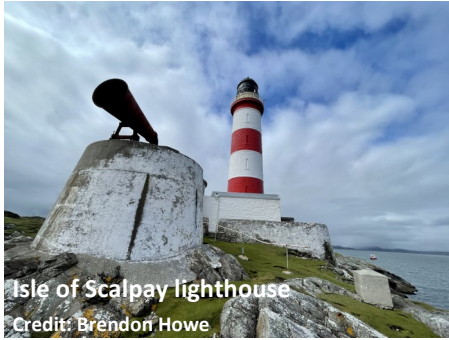
As Tarbert is so small, it was easy to bump into other Saxons and DFOK members – the Howe and Collins family, plus Jerry and Rowan Purkis, ex Saxons now Lakeland Orienteering Club. BTW, following on from a previous article on electric vehicles, Jerry and Rowan drove theirs all the way from the Lake District to Harris and found a charger right next to the café in Tarbert. The friendly feel was extended to the start procedure – you simply turned up and one person with a clipboard told you when you could start. It was all very relaxed and stress free compared to big event starts.

The actual orienteering was excellent. Open moorland with a mixture of rocks, marsh and grass with lots of great contour detail. It was hard, but not impossibly so. You could run but it was physical – typical mountain marathon terrain. Summer vegetation wasn't a problem. No paths of course and I think I may have



Control with a view

Credit: Brendon Howe



Isle of Scalpay lighthouse
Credit: Brendon Howe

taken a bearing to every control on every course. The technique was to take a bearing, but tick off the obvious contour features such as hilltops and unusual valleys along the way. With such minimal vegetation really long distances could be run accurately on a bearing.

It wasn't just technical orienteering though, the planners had thoughtfully positioned controls at viewpoints. One minute you'd be head down on a bearing, picking off the features and checking for your control, and the next minute you would round a hill to see a glorious view across the sea to Skye and mainland Scotland with dozens of small islands in between.

The organisers had chosen to go their own way with courses. Neither the age class based competition seen at the S6D or a full range of colour coded courses. Instead there was just 'short', 'medium' and 'long' which were roughly equivalent to Green, Blue and Brown without committing the event to stick to these lengths. There was also an orange course. I stuck to medium. Austin, Alison and Brendon Howe all bravely went for Long and an intense family competition – with each being victorious on at least one day.

It wasn't a cheap event, but that is quite understandable as there is no orienteering club on the island, and planners and mappers had to visit from far away places in Scotland and England, but with outstanding orienteering, great terrain and a relaxed, friendly feel it was good value nonetheless.

It looks like Coasts and Islands will be every year and you can find out more at <https://coastandislands.com/>. It is organized by a non geographically based club masterplan adventure which aims to put on innovative events and recycle the proceeds to support athlete and orienteering development. See <https://masterplanadventure.weebly.com/> for more information.

Sean Cronin



Torsacleit map—click for fullsize | Credit: Brendon Howe

This year was the second ever Coast and Island event. It was held the week before the S6D on the Isle of Harris. About 220 orienteers made the trip with most events gravitated around the small town of Scalpay.

Despite the chore of getting all the way to the Hebrides, it was a very relaxing week of orienteering. Each event was no more than 20 minutes from our accommodation, entry numbers were limited, and flexible start times meant you could just turn up and run.

The terrain was exclusively open fells. Not a tree in sight. This meant for some tricky navigation - mostly crags, boulders and marshy re-entrants, as well as plenty of climbing and rough terrain.

The event offers just three courses: short, medium and long. The planner had been very clever to ensure that none of the controls could be spotted until you were in/at the feature. So, if you could see a control in the distance you had to remind yourself that it wasn't yours! Yes, it did catch me out once or twice.

The last day's racing was at Lews Castle in Stornaway, chosen as it was a convenient leaving point for all those heading to the S6D. This was more of a park sprint, though many were disqualified due to some suspect OOB issues that weren't clear on the ground.

Whilst not orienteering we spent much of the time on the beach. Whilst not the warmest, the deserted beaches and clear water was something to behold. Swims were brief but obligatory :-)

Brendon Howe

[Event results](#)



A determined Holly Howe at the S6D

Credit: Brendon Howe

Scottish 6 Days, Moray—30th July-4th August 2023

1 8 members of Saxons travelled up to delightful Morayshire for this years Scottish 6 Days, which this year was actually only 5 days plus the rest day Sprint.

Day 1 was a Long Distance in Lossie Forest. It varied from runnable mature pine forest and intricate tree covered Dunes. This area was heavily fortified in World War two and, protected by the trees, many of the defences have survived. These include concrete anti-tank blocks, pillboxes, the ruins of a coastal gun

battery and the concrete foundations of a military camp, where the soldiers who built and manned the defences lived.

Running in the dunes was a first for me, very tricky but quite exciting and I managed to come 10th.

Day 2: a Middle Distance and world ranking event in Darnaway. The area was varied with many broadleaf areas (mainly beech) and a varying density of conifers (some regrowth which was thick and some well spaced pine). Underfoot varied as well from reasonably clean forest floor through to short grass, long grass and then heather and bilberry.



Brendon Howe in full flow at the S6D | Credit: Brendon Howe

There was excellent contour detail - a myriad of knolls and depressions with some paths, tracks and roads crossing the area.

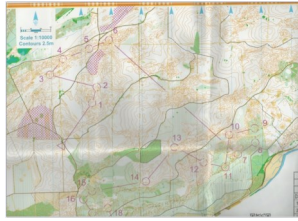
I started off okay then messed up completely going to #4 and lost about 8 mins. Had to relocate in the end and then okay after that. Slipped down to 17th today.

Day 3: another Long Distance race. Roseisle is a beautiful forested sand-dune area with areas of very little undergrowth interspersed with some denser areas where visibility is reduced and contour complexity increased. I found it really tricky but even so loved the area but my nav was poor and I had trouble finding #1 and #6 and although I came 20th the run in was my saving grace being 4th.

Afterwards 15 of us went down to Roseisle beach to have much needed cake and a chill out. Sarah Covey-Crump had bought these in advance so all we had to do was eat them. A lovely end to the day.

Rest Day Sprint: only 9 of us decided not to have a rest day and do the sprint. Forres is a beautiful town and regularly features amongst the Scotland in Bloom prizewinners; it boasts some intricate alleyways between older buildings and some newer estate housing with park and woodland areas. It was great fun and bought back memories of when I used to live up there. Both daughters were born there too. Alison was 3rd in WV and I was 5th in WHV.

Day 4: final Long Distance race. Culbin was planted between the wars to stabilise shifting sand dunes; the resulting open pine forest on complex topography is perfect for orienteering. The forest is mainly runnable with good visibility though some pockets of gorse and deeper heather do exist. There is very little bracken, or water, and no rock. Hills are not high, but some had short steep faces. We had a 2km walk to the start and back from the finish which was



Maps of Roseisle (L) & Culbin (R)—click either for fullsize version | Credits: Brendon Howe

longer than my course of 2.4km. After a really bad start I settled down then #8 caused a bit of a headache but overall not too bad: 15th.

Day 5: Culbin again but a Middle Distance this time. Leaving the arena in the other direction today but another long walk following a narrow path through heather of 2.1km.

The finish was 1.7km (same length as my course) from the arena unless you were on one of the longer courses which finished in the arena. Much better nav but took too much time in the heather going to #7 and #8 losing about 2/3 mins. 15th again.

Everyone had a great time and the two most notable achievements were Jeremy Oldershaw coming 3rd in M85 and Alison Howe 6th in W50L. But I think all of the Saxons who took the trouble to travel to Morayshire should be congratulated, one in particular, Jean Fitzgerald who managed to complete all 5 days needing two hip replacements!

Beryl Pring

[Event results](#)

Veteran Home International (VHI), Forest of Dean—30th September-1st October 2023

The Veteran Home International (VHI) is an annual competition between teams from England, Ireland (Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland), Scotland and Wales. Each team comprises 2 men and 2 women in each age group 40, 45, 50, 55 and 60, and one man and one woman in age groups 35 and 65: 24 athletes per team. The competition comprises an Individual race on the Saturday and a Team Relay on the Sunday.

This year's VHI was hosted by NGOC in the Forest of Dean, which saw a lot of orienteering action that weekend. In addition to the two VHI races (individual and relay), the Southwest Long Distance Championships, Caddihoe Chase, RAF Orienteering Champs and Interland Selection race all took place on the Mallards Pike area of the Forest over the two days.

As VHI teams represent each of the home nations, team places are awarded by



Alison Howe proudly sporting her England top at the VHI

Credit: Brendon Howe

national selectors, based on performance at earlier selection races. Congratulations to Saxon Alison Howe who was chosen by the Orienteering England Vets selectors for the W50 team.

England took a commanding lead in the Day 1 Individual races, with 157 points overall, almost completely evenly split between Men (79) and Women (78). Scotland were second at the end of Day 1 with 115 points, followed by Wales on 81 and Ireland on 70. Alison came first of 8 in her category, nearly 2 minutes ahead of her nearest challenger, Jenny Heming of Wales/ERYRI.

In the Day 2 Team Relays, Alison ran a strong Leg 2 to help team England 12 to third place in the Man-Woman-Man team category (as distinct from the Woman-Man-Woman team category!)

England teams took 3 of the top 5 places in MWM, and 4 of the top 5 in WMW, to secure their overall victory by a clear margin: 283 points to Scotland's 193, then Wales with 137 and Ireland on 122.

Congratulations to all who took part for dealing with the unusual hazards of the Forest of Dean. As the event area notes nonchalantly mentioned in passing, "It is quite possible that you will encounter boar during your run. They are very rarely aggressive, and will generally seek to avoid human beings, but with numbers of runners off track in the forest there is a very small risk that they may feel themselves to be cornered, in which case they may approach you. You are strongly advised to allow them space, and give way to families and large males."

Graham Denney

[Event results](#) [scroll down to 30 September]

November Classic 2023 & Southern Championships, Winchester & the New Forest—4th-5th November

Saturday 4th November started the weekend off with the Winchester Urban race organised by BAO. A really great place for orienteering and except for one huge mistake to control 11 (going via 12) losing about 4 mins, was quite clean. 4th WHV. There were 11 other Saxons and Peter Martin was 1st MHV, Brendon 2nd MV with Alison 2nd WV. I have to mention my other daughter, Cat (Devon OC) came 4th WV. Some of us being very lucky and

avoiding the rain.

Sunday 5th and into the New Forest. Parking was at the Ocknell Campsite and the area was called Irons Well. The start was a good 1.75k.

It had been raining and so was very wet and muddy but as usual a really good area for orienteering. The area was a mix of open heathland and mostly mature woodland, predominantly oak and beech. There was plenty of bracken but luckily mostly dying down. The streams were quite deep and it was just a case of running through them as they were too wide to jump. I did get to see a stag just before running into a stream.



Double Saxons victory at the Nov Classic: Mark Glaisher & Peter Martin SAX (1st & 2nd on M70L respectively)

Credit: Beryl Pring

Saxons did extremely well: Alison Howe 1st W50L, Brendon 2nd W50L, Mark Glaisher 1st and Peter Martin 2nd M70L, Jeremy Oldershaw 1st and Doug Deeks 3rd M85. Everyone else did admirably, so a good haul of trophies with all the prizewinners getting a hat. Which I have made good use of already in the Forest of Dean.

Beryl Pring

Event Results—[Winchester Urban](#) | [Nov Classic+Southern Champs](#)

CompassSport Cup Final, Forest of Dean—12th November 2023

For the third year in a row the Saxons Massive were triumphant in winning their heat and were thus eligible for the finals, this year held in the Forest Of Dean. 27 intrepid Saxons made the trip, with many making a weekend of it by taking part in a nearby NGOC event on the Saturday.



**Alison Howe with soggy tent—
CSC Final** | Credit: Brendon Howe

The Finals were held at New Beechenhurst, an old mine workings area with complex contours and runnable woodland. I was up early getting the club tent installed on flat ground before the first team members arrived.

In dribs and drabs the team arrived, all looking quite relaxed. Much of this was due to the knowledge they'd garnered about the area by attending our

Zoom map geeking session where we'd looked at previous courses, contour and lidar data a few days previously.

As you can tell from the photo the event was a soggy affair. Underfoot was pretty sketchy, particularly for the later runners.

We had some great results and finished 5th overall (out of 12) narrowly missing 4th place by a couple of points. It was great to see some qualifying scores from runners that often don't appear in the final reckoning. Well done to everyone that took part; let's aim for 4th next year!



Simon Blanchflower running in at the CSC Final
Credit: Brian Henry

Brendon Howe

[Event results](#)

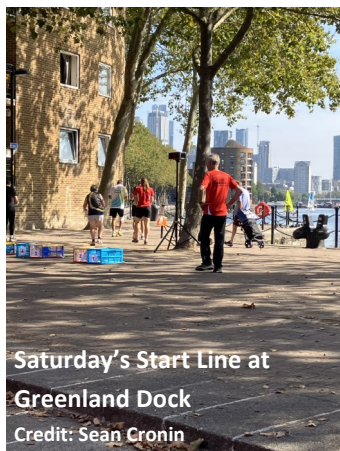
Junior Interregionals—South Wales

[Event results](#)—scroll down to 23 Sept for JIRC results



Austin Howe in full warpaint waving the flag for the South East Junior Squad at the JIRCs—Llantrisant Forest in late Sept.
Credit: Brendon Howe

London City Races & British Sprint Championships—15th-17th September 2023



This year's London City Race took place on a warm and sunny weekend in Southwark and Rotherhithe on the south bank of the Thames. Once a major part of London's docklands - in its time the largest port in the world - and heavily bombed during World War Two, in recent decades it has been transformed into a pleasant, largely residential area. There is a lot of green space for somewhere so close to a major city centre, an enormous amount of history, and - usefully for orienteers - it's largely flat.

The weekend kicked off with a fast-paced race around Southwark Park and neighbouring streets, ably organised by DFOK. Southwark is a large, open park with some interesting features such as a large lake, a Victorian bandstand, some low banks and enough fencing and areas of dense shrubbery to provide a challenge and make route choice occasionally not-so-obvious. Good use of the housing immediately adjacent to the west side of the park forced a sudden increase in concentration and attention to map detail, compared to running the open spaces inside the park.

Some stats: Friday's event had 314 entrants, including 91 from foreign clubs, representing 22 countries spread across 4 continents - a great achievement. [Thanks to Luke Bennett of DFOK for providing these figures in his event writeup for the BO website].

The race centre for both days was the large top floor space of Decathlon's Surrey Quays store. It was well located for both events - around 10 minutes walk from each Start - and close to Canada Water Tube station. Personally, with the weather being so good both days, I chose to walk down from London Bridge station along the river, a route which is essentially a hike through history.

Saturday's longer race took us across and around much of the wider Rotherhithe area. For personal reasons - i.e. I hadn't done any running for over 2 months! - I chose to run down to Course 5 / Men's Super Vets, 5.7km straight line distance.



Southwark Park Course 2 map—click for fullsize version / Credit: DFOK

From a split-level Start by the Greenland Dock bascule bridge - the callup boxes from -4 to -2 minutes (if I recall correctly) were up on the bridge itself with -1 and the Start down on the dockside below - courses took us out across what is a quite varied landscape. Although much of the old docks have been filled in to create housing and parks, there is still a lot of water in the form of small lakes and channels, plus some of the original docks such as Surrey Quays which have been retained. This of course affected route choice, and the modern parks - notably Russia Dock Woodland and Stave Hill Ecopark - offered some good control locations. The planner (Alan Leakey of SLOW) clearly couldn't resist the temptation to put a control on top of artificial Stave Hill - the highest point in the area by a considerable margin! As he says in his post-event comments, "It is always good to add in some 'Theatre'." Humph.



Greenland Dock Bascule Bridge—Saturday's callup boxes from -4 to -2 mins were on the bridge, with -1 min and Start on the dockside below

Credit: Irid Escent, [CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/), via Wikimedia Commons

The only issue that I had with my course was that the leg from control 20 to 21 was exceptionally long - literally from one side of the A3+ sized map to the other, or 13 mins 50 secs in my case. (For comparison, my next longest leg was 5:08!) A number of other courses appeared to use the same leg, which didn't have a great deal of route choice when trying to keep to a as straight a line as possible between the two controls. Otherwise however it was a most enjoyable run.



Runner's Nemesis—the sudden climb up Stave Hill to Control 12

Credit: SLOW

There were 971 entrants for the Saturday event, the biggest LCR for some time, and just shy of the organisers' target of 1000. Notably this year saw the introduction of an Accessibility course, primarily for wheelchair users, but other entrants included a user of a powered mobility scooter and a baby buggy (I assume it was the person pushing the buggy who entered, not the actual buggy user...) While the flatness of the Rotherhithe area facilitated such a course, which isn't necessarily a given in other locations, SLOW are to be congratulated on this innovation and hopefully we will see more Accessibility

courses in future, with more competitors.

Mention should also be made of the 35-strong event volunteer team - which shows how much effort needs to go into staging a race of this size and complexity. In particular, they dealt admirably with the theft of control #158, replacing it within just 10 minutes of being informed that it had disappeared (it was later found in a nearby alley).

Sunday saw the British Sprint Championships take place at Brunel University. The decision to run it on the same weekend as the LCR worked well, as it enabled organisers LOK to share publicity with the previous 2 day's events. The resulting turnout of 151 teams was greater than expected, though Saxons did not field a team.

Graham Denney

Saxons Results [click links below for results]:

Friday - Southwark Park:

Men's Elite - Peter Dobra M21 34th

Men's Super Vets - Alan Hickling M55 13th

Men's Ultra Vets - Peter Martin M70 5th, Steve Waite M70 16th

Men's Vets - Graham Denney M50 33rd

Women's Vets - Catherine Slade W45 12th

Saturday - Rotherhithe:

W12- Alice Evans W12 5th

Men's Elite - Peter Dobra M21 88th

Men's Hyper Vets - Roger Pring M75 28th

Men's Open - Richard Whitaker M70 30th

Men's Super Vets - Sean Cronin M55 43rd, Alan Hickling M55 52nd, Brian Henry M55 58th, Graham Thomas M60 88th, Graham Denney M50 89th

Men's Ultra Vets - Peter Martin M70 19th, Simon Blanchflower M65 21st, Steve Waite M70 43rd, Peter Lilja M65 62nd

Men's Vets - Simon Evans M40 47th, Stuart Williams M45 72nd, John Cross M50 81st, Brendon How M50 mispunched

Other Course 4 - Austin Howe M18 1st

Women's Hyper Vets - Beryl Pring W75 2nd

Women's Super Vets - Renate Henry W55 59th

Women's Vets - Alison Howe W50 9th, Catherine Slade W45 41st

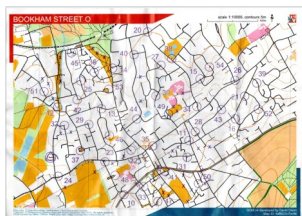
Sunday:

This 6 minute [video of the event by Neil Brooks](#) is also well worth watching.

Mole Valley Little Bookham Street-O—19th September 2023

Further to my article in the last SaxAlert about Mole Valley's MapRun-based Street-O events, their 2023-24 winter evening series kicked off on 19th September with a MapRun around the roads of Little Bookham, near Leatherhead.

The format remained exactly the same as before: a score event where the controls were all items of street furniture such as lampposts, postboxes and hydrants that have distinctive numbers or other



identifiers on them. An answer sheet was printed on the back of the map for non-MapRunners. Controls were widely spread across the event area, each carrying 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 points. The 1 hour time limit had been retained but a 40 minute event had been introduced as well. The penalty however was

Map of MV's Little Bookham Street O

Credit: MVOC

now 1 point per 2 seconds late, rather than 30 points per minute or part thereof as before—exactly the same cost per minute, but permitting more flexibility. Indeed, this enables some tactical decisions late in the run—is it worth going for that extra 30 or 40 point control? Will the points gained outweigh the time penalty incurred?!

As ever it was great fun, and—although you might think a small Surrey town to be easy running—challenging. The points format and distribution of controls makes route selection critical in order to maximise points without incurring too hefty a time penalty. It's hugely important to keep the distance within your personal abilities for the time allowed—difficult when 40 and 50 point controls tempt you that bit further, towards the edge of the map and away from the Finish...

When I ran the Reigate Street-O in January I used my (ageing) smartphone as I wanted to do it as a MapRun but didn't have a better device. Apart from difficulty getting the GPS to lock on to the satellites at the Start, it worked well. Since then however I have invested in a Garmin Forerunner 55 watch, which uses the MapRun G app. This syncs the control locations from MapRun 6 or 7

on your phone to the watch, then your track, control punches and timings back to your phone and the MapRun server at the end. The watch can be set to beep and/or buzz at each control.

To be honest, the watch was no better than my phone at acquiring a GPS position at the Start, but worked flawlessly throughout the rest of the course. Not having to carry a digital 'brick' for an hour's run made a significant contribution to feeling more comfortable and relaxed, so for me the watch is the way to go for the future.

Not having run or orienteered since early July, other than the London City Races the previous weekend, it was a bit much to expect a stellar performance from myself in this event. Despite this, I managed to achieve 23rd place out of a field of 55, with 708 points—710 minus 2 for annoyingly being just a single second over time. A result which on the downside showed my lack of fitness—I just couldn't run any faster in the last few minutes! - but on the upside indicated that I'd planned my course to within 2 seconds of my actual abilities. (Do I get a prize for achieving the smallest possible time penalty?!)

This was another most enjoyable Street-O from our Mole Valley compadres, making good use of the technology and the terrain. This Winter Series continues monthly on Tuesday evenings through to mid-April. More info on the [MVOC website here](#). Thanks to David Fisher and Justin Farhall for organising and planning Little Bookham, and to the Ye Olde Windsor Castle pub for hosting us.

Graham Denney

[Event results \[PDF\]](#)

Saxons Abroaaaad!

Lapland O-Week 2023—Finland, 29th July-3rd August

This 4th annual Lapland O week made clever use of some fine terrain in combination with an adjacent resort, out-of-season (think Santa's Hotel!) Foot O in Finland runs from April to October so it was pretty much mid-term.

The event is professionally run, both metaphorically and literally, with routamap producing the maps and LIKUP responsible for the planning and



Welcome banner
Credit: Mark Glaisher



Out on the courses
Credit: Mark Glaisher

organisation. At the O week inauguration in 2020 LIIKUP focused on using high quality terrain, making it competitor-friendly*, and minimising environmental impact with the best use of event technology**.

As in 2022, Saariselka was the host resort, 250km N of the Arctic Circle. Each of the 5 days was on a different area (with some overlap) yet all events could be reached on foot. On two of the days the courses included use of the open fell around the hill tops, otherwise the terrain included fast, good visibility forest, some areas of semi-open where particular care was required, and bouldery slopes with rocky gorges. There was negligible green on the maps.

Courses on offer, in descending order of length, were Elite, A & A+, B & B+.... down to D & D+ (the + suffix indicating the more technical course) and E. Taking the C & C+ the indicative course lengths were 3km (short, 2 days), 4.5km (middle, 2 days) and 6km (long). I reckoned that C+ would be about right for an experienced M70. There was complete freedom as to which course to enter – could be different from day to day – and no recommendation by age class. Each day is stand-alone so there isn't a competition for the week overall.



Mark at the Finnish Finish on Day 4 | Credit: Mark Glaisher

About 1000 competitors took part, with the vast majority being from the host nation. Of the 25 non-Finnish entries, 3 were from GBR. The quality of the maps, Planning and Organisation was excellent. On the C+, on my best day I was 51/126 with minimal errors; otherwise with about 5mins. error each day I was around halfway.

There were Lords and Queens of the Wilderness categories for the Elite. On the last day these categories had a Mass Start on a sprint course with butterfly loops, the order of these depending on the particular map you were given. Proper head-to-head racing for the €1000 accommodation voucher for the winners!

Next summer the Lapland O Week event will take place in Levi (near Kittila), 20-25 July 2024.

*Competitor-friendly

The entry fee remains the same right up until the

competition day. Seniors €100 for 5 days or €30/day; half price for U16s.

Start time 10:00 – 15:00, just turn up and go. Courses close at 17:00.

Later in the day, display of courses and routes on Livelox (similar to routegadget).

** Minimising environmental impact

Saariselka (open in summer for bike or kayak hire, and hill walking) has reasonable public transport links, with a bus or express coach for the final stage. Sleeper Helsinki-Rovaniemi then express coach was fine for me.

The events were within walking distance, and by chance, the Finish for the first 3 days was within 100m of my accommodation!

Apart from the map, little paper was involved:

No loose control descriptions: but it seemed acceptable to separate them from the map before punching the start.

No back up strip for the Emit card.

No results printout: presenting your card at the Download stand, it displayed OK/NOK, Name, Course position and Time. The results (inc. splits) were immediately available on the internet/mobile phone, refreshing automatically.

Some unusual features

The data required for entry was just Course, Name, Club and Country. The Age class wasn't recorded. One effect of this was that in the Results you couldn't see how you compared with others in your class.

The freedom to start at any time within a 5 hour band meant that the Start was never busy, although people obviously chose to avoid poor weather where possible.



Finish line—Lapland O-week 2023 | Credit: Mark Glaisher

The Finish was in the same place for the first 3 days, then after a rest day, at another location for the last 2. With the Starts and Finishes so close to the resort, plus the spread of start times, there were no club tents nor banners in evidence. Apart from 3 O gear shops it was fairly quiet in the arena.

Being Lapland in summer, the days were long, with sunrise at 02:30 and sunset at 23:30. On the sunny days, max 21°C, the sun could be seen to rise in the NNE and set in the NNW. Drizzle and 12°C on a couple of days. No mosquitoes or midges! – but a few juvenile reindeer.

Mark Glaisher

This article with map originally appeared in CompassSport Oct 2023 issue and is reprinted here with kind permission of its Editor, Nick Barrable—Ed.

Answers to Quiz

1) Franco	11) 16
2) Spain	12) January 2025
3) Eisenhower	13) General Tom Thumb
4) Einstein	14) Alan Turing
5) Custer	15) Church of England
6) Admiral	16) Farthing
7) Secretary General of the UN	17) General Zia
8) Patton: lust for glory	18) Robert E. Lee
9) Medical	19) General Motors
10) Buster Keaton	20) Ulysses Grant

Credits:

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Thanks to contributors to this issue: Jean Fitzgerald, Beryl Pring, Alison Howe, Brendon Howe, Graham Denney, Sean Cronin, Mike Fletcher, Sean Cronin, Mark Glaisher. Thanks to Nick Barrable of CompassSport magazine for permission to reprint Mark Glaisher’s article on Lapland O-week 2023.

*Apologies to anybody inadvertently missed off this list—let me know and I’ll credit you in the next issue—Ed.
Disclaimer: Please note that maps are used for events with the landowner’s agreement*

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Karen Ransley	Secretary	secretary
Beryl Pring	Permanent O Courses	poc
Graham Thomas	Membership	membership
Richard Field	Land Access	landaccess
Simon Blanchflower	Mapping	mapping
Alison Howe	Development	development
Brendon Howe	Lead Coach	coaching
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