

SAX NOTICES

Planner/Organiser Urgently Required

KOL 8 - Hemsted Forest

25 April 2020

Please contact Alan Hickling

Kent Orienteering Weekend

28/29 March 2020

Pre-entries now open

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another addition of Saxalert. Thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition. Please send your articles and photos to me at saxalert@saxons-oc.org

As many of you know we often use Ashdown Forest, which is a great area for orienteering. Well, the Ashdown Forest Foundation have a sponsored walk/run in April. Why not get a group together and go and enjoy the area at a more leisurely pace whilst helping to raising money? See the poster later in the magazine.

WELCOME

Welcome to the following new members:

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Caylan Uddin | M10 |
| Wilf Peet | M14 |
| Alexander Pullen | M21 |
| Phillip Locke | M65 |

CONGRATULATIONS

National Events

East Midlands Championships (8/12/19)

Ffion Bricknell (Green) Silver

SN Trophy SE League Event (17/11/19)

Jeremy Oldershaw (Very Short Green) Gold
Austin Howe (Light Green) Silver
Douglas Deeks (Very Short Green) Bronze

CHIG Mitre Middle Distance (8/12/19)

Austin Howe (Light Green) Gold
Jeremy Oldershaw (Short Green) Silver

SLOW SE League Event (24/11/19)

Mike Solomon (Short Green) Silver
Peter Martin (Green) Silver

SAX Urban Event (06/10/19)

Brendon Howe (Brown) Silver
Alison Howe (Blue) Silver
Ffion Bricknell (Light Green) Silver
Jeremy Oldershaw (Short Green) Silver
Caylan Uddin (Yellow) Silver
Mark Glaisher (Green) Bronze
Austin Howe (Light Green) Bronze
Mike Solomon (Short Green) Bronze

Major Events

Compass Sport Cup Final (20/10/19)

Holly Howe Bronze

British Sprint Championships (14/09/19)

Jeremy Oldershaw (Course 18) Silver

BRITISH ORIENTEERING PERFORMANCE AWARDS

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|
| Charlie Pickin | Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★★★★★ | 13/10/2019 |
| David Kingdon | Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★★★★★ | 13/10/2019 |
| | Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★★★★ | 13/10/2019 |
| | Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★★★★ | 13/10/2019 |
| | Navigation Challenge ★★★★★ | 13/10/2019 |
| Elsa Burdett | Racing Challenge: Gold Award ★★★ | 14/10/2019 |
| | Racing Challenge: Silver Award ★★★ | 14/10/2019 |
| | Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★★ | 14/10/2019 |
| Karen Ransley | Racing Challenge: Bronze Award ★★★★★ | 10/11/2019 |

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

At our AGM on 30 November I was re-elected as Chairman, so you will continue to hear from me over the coming year! Thanks for your support. All the existing committee members were also re-elected, so we continue into 2020 with a team keen to continue to put on attractive events and ensure our participants have a great experience and come back for more.

The AGM was held at Trosley Country Park for the first time, and after the business meeting Alan planned a celebration of 25 years of the Saxons Saturday Series and its successor the Kent Orienteering League; results and a write up are on our web site. It was interesting to see relative newcomers like Brendon having 'issues' with control cards and red pens!

At the AGM, reports showed that membership is stable, but that we could do with some new members so why not bring a friend along to an event? The club's finances are good, with a reasonable balance at the bank. We are surveying new and old areas and assessing the possibility of other areas to add to our map 'portfolio'. Participation at our events is good, with lots of novices turning up to try orienteering as a result of Sean's Facebook advertising. I have heard lots of comments from newcomers on our welcoming and friendly approach, so let's keep it up! We always need more volunteers to spread the load at events so if you are interested in putting something back into the club please get in touch with a committee member.

Getting away from the AGM I would like to mention a couple of my highlights from 2019. First our organisation of the SE qualifying round of the CompassSport Cup and Trophy event at Enchanted Place in March, where Saxons qualified for the second time for the final, which was this year at Pippingford Park. Saxons helped MV with the organisation and manning of the final and also came 6th (out of 12) in the Trophy event (for small clubs). Second our organisation of the Peter Palmer Junior Relay event at Michael Hall School and Hindleap Warren in September. Sam and Andrew did a great job assisted by Saxons and SO volunteers to successfully co-ordinate this overnight relay with over 150 juniors and

their responsible adults on site. We had 2 teams in the event, both joint Sax and DFOK teams; no medals but a great experience for all.

Looking forward to 2020, on 28/29 March we have a weekend of orienteering in East Kent. On Saturday we have our inaugural 'Indoor Urban Orienteering event' at a corporate headquarters and lab building in Sandwich; with is part of the UKUL and SEOUL. On Sunday we have a level B (National) event in Kings Wood Challock. We will be using the grounds of Chilham Castle as our event centre and for the finish run-in, which will provide a brilliant setting for the event. It also means we can use parts of the forest not normally reached by shorter courses. Make sure these dates are in your diaries. We will be using Eridge and Enchanted Place for two of our Sunday level C (Regional) events plus running our other KOL and KNC events and more training events, so it looks like another busy orienteering year ahead.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy, enjoyable and successful new year of orienteering.

FUTURE EVENTS

If you want to receive a weekly e-mail of orienteering events coming up, you can subscribe at oevents.info

I have downloaded the list of SEOA event by local clubs up until the end of March from the British Orienteering events diary. It was correct at the time of download, please check the BO or club websites for details. Alternatively, you can download the Event-O app (iPhone and Android) to get live data on all orienteering events registered with BO.

| Date | Event | Location | Club | Level |
|----------|---|-----------------------|------|----------|
| 25/01/20 | SO SOG A9 | Chailey Common South | SO | Local |
| 26/01/20 | GO Middle Distance Event (UKOL) | Farley Heath | GO | National |
| 30/01/20 | KNC 18 | Knole Park | SAX | Local |
| 01/02/20 | KOL 6 | Scotney Castle Estate | SAX | Local |
| 02/02/20 | SO Regional event - Tilgate Forest, Crawley | Tilgate Forest | SO | Regional |
| 06/02/20 | DFOK Kent Night Cup 19 - Street O | Grove Park | DFOK | Local |

| | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------|----------|
| 08/02/20 | SO SOG S1 | Coates Common | SO | Local |
| 09/02/20 | SAX Regional | Enchanted Place | SAX | Regional |
| 13/02/20 | KNC 20 | Longbeech North | SAX | Local |
| 15/02/20 | SO SOG S2 | Rivers Wood | SO | Local |
| 15/02/20 | SN Saturday Series - Event 6 | Eagle House School | SN | Local |
| 20/02/20 | KNC 21 | Addington Hills | SAX | Local |
| 27/02/20 | KNC 22 | The Enchanted Place | SAX | Local |
| 29/02/20 | SO SOG S3 | Abbots Wood S | SO | Local |
| 05/03/20 | SO SONICVKNC | East Court | SO | Local |
| 07/03/20 | DFOK KOL 7 | Whitehorse Wood | DFOK | Local |
| 07/03/20 | SO SOG S4 | Great Wildgoose Woods | SO | Local |
| 12/03/20 | KNC 24 | Walderslade Streets | SAX | Local |
| 14/03/20 | SN Saturday Series - Event 7 | Alice Holt | SN | Local |
| 14/03/20 | DFOK NW Kent 1 | Darenth CP | DFOK | Local |
| 19/03/20 | DFOK Kent Night Cup 25 | Whitehorse Wood | DFOK | Local |
| 26/03/20 | KNC 26 | Tunbridge Wells Common & Streets | SAX | Local |
| 28/03/20 | Discovery Centre Indoor Urban | Discovery Centre | SAX | Regional |
| 28/03/20 | SO SOG S5 | Worthlodge | SO | Local |
| 29/03/20 | SAX South East League Event | Chilham Castle & Kings Wood | SAX | National |

Key to table

Local : Low key local events put on by clubs primarily for their own members and newcomers. Generally, a limited number of courses are available.

Regional : These generally have six courses available of different lengths and technical difficulty. They are aimed at club members plus participants from other local clubs and generally attract larger numbers of entries.

National : High status events that aim to attract orienteers from around the country. Generally, they use the best terrain that can be found within a particular club's mapped areas. There may be 10 or more colour courses & 8 available. Serious orienteers enter a course specified for their age class,

so they compete directly with their peers, but you can decide to enter a different course if you wish.

Major : For elite and club orienteers. Best terrain possible is used. Age based courses but there are colour coded courses suitable for newcomers and the less competitive, so you can enter with your less keen family members and still have a fun day out. The Club often takes a tent so we can all meet up.

SE League: These events are held on the best areas in the South East. You collect points for your Club and for yourself.

| | | |
|-----------|-----|------------------------------|
| 02-Feb-20 | GO | Blackheath |
| 16-Feb-20 | MV | Netley & Effingham |
| 01-Mar-20 | HH | Egypt Woods (Inc. Interland) |
| 29-Mar-20 | SAX | Chilham Castle & Kings Wood |
| 17-May-20 | SO | Friston - Sunny Sussex W/E |

KNC: Saxons weekly night orienteering – 1 hour score event then meet in a pub. Suitable for all abilities but you will need a torch.

KOL: Series of Saturday morning events held jointly SAX and DFOK, suitable for all. Lots of Juniors compete and collect points for their school.

South East League

After the first 3 events of 2019/20 season Saxons are the division 2 leaders.

| | | BAOC | CHIG | DFOK | GO | HAVOC | HH | LOK | MV | RAFO | SAX | SLOW | SN | SO |
|--------------|--|------|------|------|-----|-------|------|-----|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|
| JM | | | | 192 | 111 | | 96 | | | | 76 | 28 | | 99 |
| M21/35 | | 92 | 99 | | 1 | | | 104 | | | | 366 | 103 | |
| M40/45 | | | 164 | 25 | 107 | | 381 | 81 | | | | 213 | | 141 |
| M50/55 | | | 56 | 185 | 69 | 244 | 512 | 175 | 58 | | 101 | 58 | 72 | 318 |
| M60-85 | | 203 | 242 | 295 | 109 | 290 | 612 | 106 | 411 | 22 | 414 | 108 | 188 | 422 |
| JW | | | | | | | 305 | | | | | 21 | | 157 |
| W21/35 | | | | | | | 49 | 26 | | | | 176 | | |
| W40/45 | | | 80 | 45 | | | 280 | | | | 96 | 14 | | |
| W50/55 | | 94 | | 172 | 61 | | 130 | 132 | | | | 461 | | 279 |
| W60-85 | | 109 | 140 | | 75 | 54 | 246 | | | | 165 | | | 97 |
| String/Other | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Totals | | 499 | 780 | 914 | 533 | 588 | 2611 | 624 | 469 | 22 | 851 | 1446 | 364 | 1513 |

| This event:- | | | | Total after 3 events:- | | | |
|-------------------|-------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|-------|--------------|-----------------|
| Position | Club | League Score | Match Points | Position | Club | Match Points | Position change |
| DIVISION 1 | | | | DIVISION 1 | | | |
| 1 | HH | 2611 | 6 | 1 | SO | 16 | - |
| 2 | SO | 1513 | 5 | 2 | SLOW | 13 | ↑ 1 |
| 3 | SLOW | 1446 | 4 | 3 | HH | 12 | ↑ 1 |
| 4 | DFOK | 914 | 3 | 4 | SN | 11 | ↓ 2 |
| 5 | GO | 533 | 2 | 5 | GO | 6 | - |
| 6 | SN | 364 | 1 | 6 | DFOK | 5 | - |
| DIVISION 2 | | | | DIVISION 2 | | | |
| 1 | SAX | 851 | 7 | 1 | SAX | 21 | - |
| 2 | CHIG | 780 | 6 | 2 | BAOC | 14 | - |
| 3 | LOK | 624 | 5 | =3 | MV | 13 | ↓ 1 |
| 4 | HAVOC | 588 | 4 | =3 | LOK | 13 | ↑ 1 |
| 5 | BAOC | 499 | 3 | 5 | HAVOC | 10 | - |
| 6 | MV | 469 | 2 | 6 | CHIG | 9 | - |
| 7 | RAFO | 22 | 1 | 7 | RAFO | 3 | - |

| COMMENTS:- | |
|--|----------------|
| HH had a good win but SO still managed 2nd place far from home. | |
| SAX won again in the 2nd Division further increasing their lead. | |
| With good running conditions 30 people beat their target speed. The top 5 were:- | |
| Janet Rosen | HH W60 121.3 |
| Helen Errington | HH W55 118.2 |
| Paul Couldridge | SLOW M45 117.7 |
| Neil Crickmore | SO M55 113.1 |
| Andrew Parkinson | SO M65 112.9 |
| <i>Philip Gristwood SEL Co-ordinator</i> | |

In the individual league the 2019 results are in with the following notable results. This year there were 8 events with the best 5 results counting. Maximum score 500 points.

| Age Class | Name | Position/Number Of Events/Total Points |
|-----------|------------------|--|
| M14 | Austin Howe | 2 / 3 / 298 |
| M65 | Mark Glaisher | 3 / 6 / 492 |
| M70 | Peter Martin | 1 / 7 / 500 |
| M80 | Jeremy Oldershaw | 1 / 8 / 498 |
| M80 | Douglas Deeks | 2 / 6 / 495 |
| W16 | Ffion Bricknell | 2 / 6 / 497 |
| W60 | Sarah Howes | 1 / 5 / 498 |

Permanent Orienteering Courses

| Venue | Grid Ref Postcode | Details |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Bedgebury Pinetum 01580 879820 | TQ715336 TN17 2SJ | Maps (£2) are available at the Visitor Centre 4 courses are suggested on the map: White/Yellow/Orange/Light Green. Also, 13km mountain bike trail, and terrific children's adventure play area. Car parking £10 weekdays and £13 weekends, Bank Holidays and school holidays. |
| Kent University Campus | TR137599 CT2 7NT | Maps are available at the University Sports Centre Reception. |
| Betteshanger C ountry Park 01304 619227 | TR347537 CT14 0BF | Maps available from Bike Hire. The park is open from 8am every day but closing times vary throughout the seasons so check on their website https://www.betteshanger-park.co.uk . |
| Trosley Country Park | TQ633610 DA13 0SY | Trosley Country Park is on the Gravesend Road at Vigo. Maps (£1) available from the Bluebell Café - a lovely place to go with great views from the top of the park which is set on the North Downs on a steep chalk escarpment. Car parking £2 and £2.50 at weekends or Download from British Orienteering POC website |
| Whinless Down 01304 241806 | TR298415 CT17 9PT | Maps and details available from White Cliffs Countryside Partnership. Good for schools and groups. |

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Mote Park | TQ769553 ME15 7SU | Maps (£1.50) and instructions are available from the café on waterproof paper. Opening times Winter 10 - 4 and Summer 10 - 5.30. Car parking £2 or Download from British Orienteering POC website £1 |
| Brockhill Country Park | TR146357 CT21 4HL | This is a small park with a Lake, children's play area and a really good café. Great area for children and families to learn about orienteering. Waterproof Maps (£1) available at the Café, open 10am – 5.30pm daily (10am – 4pm November to March) and on line at the British Orienteering POC website |
| Milton Creek Country Park | ME10 2HA | Entrance to the park from Green Porch Close with limited parking. Friends of Milton Creek Country Park Facebook page www.miltoncreek.co.uk A small park with Childrens Play area and a Fishing Lake. Two trails suitable for wheelchairs. Maps available from British Orienteering POC website |

KENT NIGHT CUP (KNC)

Event Reports

Haysden

Organisers: Graham Thomas, Philip Norris

A welcome return to the KNC season on a warm dry evening. Experienced KNCers and some expert newcomers tackled 20 controls located throughout the full extent of the map in a 90s and 100s format, with no-one reaching all 20 controls. No complaints received and everyone back safely. Roll on next week.

Hargate Forest

Organisers: Mark Glaisher

The attractions of Hargate Forest are the mixed forest and heathland, and the slope down to Sprat's Brook offering plenty of contour detail. It's relatively small, less than 1km x 1km, so the format for the 60 minute score was two groups of controls 90-99 (any order) and 100-109 (any order) with a mandatory changeover control 111. In addition there were two optional 'dumbbells'. It was a rather rainy evening, nevertheless it didn't put off the 30 who came.

It was nice to have Juniors winning both the Overall and Women's race – a first for a KNC round I believe. M16 Adam Conway managed to get the maximum score (220) in 57 minutes and W16 Ffion Bricknell 180 in 54 minutes.

Scotney Castle Estate

Organiser: Mark Glaisher

Scotney Castle Estate offers varied terrain - parkland offering (theoretically) fast direct routes, and woodland, some of which is hilly, has low visibility and a good range of potential control sites. With heavy rain in the days preceding the event it was quite muddy everywhere. As the event was about to start the anticipated showers started, so it proved a tough evening! Of the 30 hardy souls who came, no one quite reached all 20 controls, so it meant everyone had to adjust their plan as they went. We are grateful to the National Trust for allowing us to use the venue.

Kidbrooke & Hindleap

Organiser: Mark Glaisher

This was the first open event held on a new map, which combined the grounds of Michael Hall School with the adjoining part of Hindleap Warren. Parking in the school grounds meant that the straightforward controls were close by (ideal for newcomers). The Warren offers more tricky control sites, as well as being rather slower going on the heathland. The weather in the days preceding the event had been very wet, so it was slow going underfoot almost everywhere. No one managed to visit all 21 controls within the time limit, but Neil Crickmore (SO) came close, with 20 and SO's James Yule (M16) was second with 19.

Kings Hill

Organiser: Sarah Howes

The Kings Hill display of Christmas lights and requests for 'Santa to stop here' didn't seem to distract many people at this year's Christmas KNC with many people achieving good scores. The results show a real variety of routes both before and after changeover which is always pleasing to see.

On reflection, maybe a couple of more dumbbells would have stretched the fastest runners to the full 60 mins. On the other hand, the results indicate that some runners were tempted by a dumbbell but might have

scored higher by just visiting single controls – as always, it’s all in the tactics!

KENT ORIENTEERING LEAGUE (KOL)

Planner/organizer is still required for KOL 8 at Hemsted Forest on the 25 April 2020. Why not team up with other Saxons and spread the tasks between you? Please contact Alan Hickling if you are able to help.

COACHES CORNER

P is for Plan, C is for Control

In previous SaxAlert articles I have introduced the mnemonic TOPCAR as an orienteering ‘tool of the trade’. **TOPCAR** stands for: **Thumb - Orientation - Plan - Control - Attack Point - Route**.

To date we have looked at Thumb and Orientation; this time we look at Plan and Control.

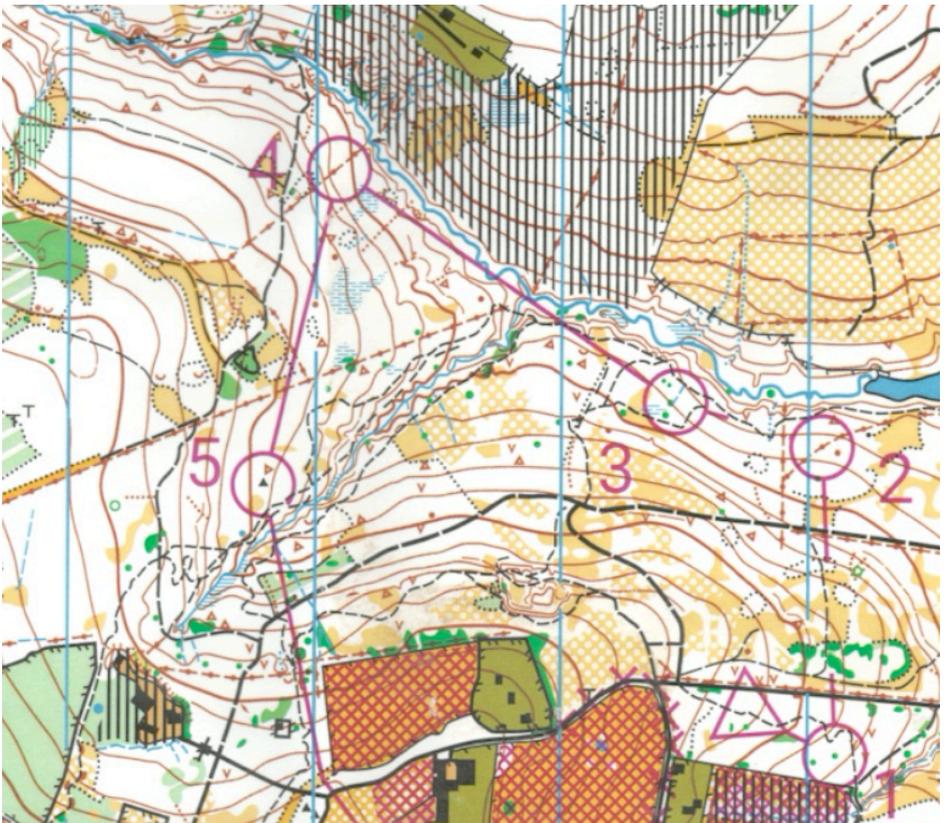
We have already learned to keep the map pointing the right way and to plot our progress across the map. Now we need to think about how we actually find Control Points (CP). To find each CP and, ultimately, complete an orienteering course, we need to have a Plan for how we are going to get from where we are to the next CP.

I know we’ve all done it. We’ve left a control site (or the start) heading off at pace without any real clue how we are going to find the next CP. This ‘run-and-hope’ technique seldom delivers, particularly once one gets beyond novice courses. Unfortunately, getting hopelessly lost finding the first CP does nothing for your confidence; you’re likely to forget the skills in your armory and speed up, trying to regain lost time. This, no doubt, will lead to further consternation.

Golden Rule: Always have a Plan. Know how you are going to get from this CP to the next before you head off.

So, what needs to be in our Plan? This is where the second half of the mnemonic comes in: **CAR - Control, Attack Point, Route.** Contrary to casual logic, we should actually make our plan backwards - destination first, working backwards to where we are now. We must consider the CP before thinking how we're going to get there.

Take this excerpt from an event at Pippingford Park recently...



How we find CP4 will be different from CP5. CP4 is on a linear feature, so this will impact on how we might choose to find the control - e.g. by Aiming Off.

CP5 on the other hand is a point feature, so a different set of skills will be needed to find this one. Perhaps we might choose to contour from the earth wall junction?

We will use the map and the control descriptions to help us decipher the details for each control.

We want to know:

- The Control Number - so we can check it's the right control when we get there
- The Control Details - What are we looking for when we get inside the control circle? Is it a positive or a negative feature? i.e. does it stick up or down? A control kite in the bottom of a small depression is more difficult to spot from a distance than a kite on a small knoll, for example.
- What part or side of the feature is the CP? If the CP is on the North side of the thicket, I will need to get that side of the thicket, or I'll miss it. If it is at the foot of a cliff, again I want to plan to approach from the lower side to avoid an uncomfortable scramble down or missing it altogether.
- Are there other similar features in the control circle? At CP3 for example, there are a number of thickets shown in the control circle. I need to know which one I'm aiming for, and where on the thicket to find the control. My route from CP2 would doubtless change according to that information: will I lead in from the Northern path, or take the longer Southern path?

Using this information plus what the map tells me, I will try to get a mental picture of what I'm looking for. Sticking with CP3 for a moment,



What can I visualise about the control?

Its in a runnable wooded area on a gentle slope with another thicket to the left with some marshy ground and an open area acting as a catching feature (what I'll probably bump into if I were to miss the control). There is a small stream leading away from the thicket down towards the river, so I expect to see a small gully (too

small to be shown on the map).

So, now I have a wonderful picture of the control I'm heading for. My next job would be to choose an Attack Point and decide my Route. This, we will cover next time.

To recap, we have looked at Plan and Control. No, this is not a key tenet of a Soviet manifesto, but step three and four is our fantastic TOPCAR mnemonic!

P is for Plan. Planning our course before leaving each CP is critical. Remember - Always Have a Plan. A Plan is broken up into three parts: Control, Attack Point and Route.

C is for Control Point: we need to know about the feature we are heading for. This has implications on which of our orienteering skills set we use to find it and will impact our choice of Attack Point. The tools we

use to find a point feature will be different from those we would use to find a control on a linear feature.

JUNIOR MATTERS

Congratulations to Ffion Bricknell (W16) for her selection as part of this year's England team for Interland. Interland is an annual five-cornered match against two Belgian teams (Flemish and French speaking), the Netherlands, and France. The England squad is made up of 42 individuals across M/W14 to M/W60+, with 3 juniors taking part in each of the junior classes. To be eligible for selection Ffion had to take part in at least 3 of the 5 selection events across the country and do better than other girls in her class. With some events far afield as Newcastle upon Tyne and Manchester she was left with only the November Classic (New Forest), Hankley Common (Guildford) and Grimsthorpe Castle (Peterborough). Six girls in the W16 class completed the minimum 3 events. Fortunately, Ffion did well enough in her events to secure her place.

This year Interland competition takes place in England on the 1 March as part of the Ace of Hearts SE League event.

NEWS

Kings Hill: A Place of Landings

Saxons returned to Kings Hill in early October with our Level B urban orienteering event, part of the South East Orienteering Urban League. Our first run here on a new map, courtesy of Bill Griffiths and Simon Blanchflower, proved that Kings Hill is a high-quality urban orienteering area. But modern though it is, Kings Hill has an interesting past – and scattered here and there throughout the estate a few reminders of its heritage are preserved.



1 *The station badge*

Kings Hill is a modern mixed housing, office and business estate constructed since 1989 on the site of the former RAF West Malling airfield. Once a medieval royal hunting estate, Kings Hill was initially used as a military landing ground during the First World War. During the Inter-war period, the airfield became a private airstrip, flying school and then Maidstone Airport, before becoming RAF West Malling in June 1940.

The station played a limited role during the Battle of Britain, as it was bombed out of action for most of that time¹, only being more effective later as a night fighter station. Among the pilots who flew from West Malling during the Second World War, perhaps the most famous were Guy Gibson, who led the 1943 Dambusters raid (and after whom Gibson Drive is named), and Peter Townsend, a Battle of Britain fighter pilot and later the RAF station commander here (after whom Townsend Square is named).



2 *It's ours now! Otto Bechtold's Fw-190 in front of the West Malling control tower*

The station's most famous moment (or infamous, depending on your nationality and point of view) occurred on 16th April 1943, when three out of a group of four Luftwaffe Focke-Wulf 190 fighter aircraft landed there by mistake, the pilots having mistakenly believed in dense fog that they were safely over German-occupied France. Only one aircraft actually survived the landing, and it

was immediately handed over to the RAF's Enemy Aircraft Flight for evaluation. The three surviving pilots were made prisoners of war (the fourth died after baling out too low near Staplehurst. He was initially buried nearby but, in common with other Luftwaffe crews who died over Britain, was reinterred at the German Military Cemetery at Cannock Chase in the 1960s).

If this wasn't enough excitement for one night, I have also read an (admittedly unsubstantiated) account that the same night a RAF Stirling bomber of 149 (East India) Sqn landed at West Malling following a raid on Munich. Aircraft number EF343 'B', captained by Pilot Officer Laurie Blair, RNZAF, was low on fuel after engaging in night-time shenanigans with a Luftwaffe Ju-88 night fighter. The Stirling's airgunners



actually shot down the Ju-88 – a not inconsiderable achievement at night. However the extra fuel consumption forced PO Blair to head for West Malling instead of home at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. EF343 landed safely and pulled up in the dark next to a small fighter aircraft at the side of the runway. The rear gunner left the Stirling, only to rush back inside within seconds. ‘Are you sure we're in England, Skipper?’ he asked frantically over the bomber's intercom. ‘There's an Fw-190 parked beside us!’ Fortunately, it was quickly realised that in fact the Fw-190 was in the wrong country, not the Stirling, and EF343's crew were able to start breathing again. Their initial reaction can only be imagined. Post-war, RAF West Malling continued as the UK's premier night-fighter airfield into the early 1960s, then was taken over by the United States Navy until 1967.

From then until final closure in the early 1990s the airfield was placed under the MOD's airfield Care & Maintenance programme. This included being home to an Air Cadet gliding school (which this author flew with as a schoolboy), and various civilian uses such as aircraft painting, filming (including scenes in The Beatles' film *Magical Mystery Tour*), regular Great Warbirds air displays and, in 1972-3, housing some of the Ugandan

3 The Beatles filming Magical Mystery Tour at West Malling airfield (23rd September 1967). The concrete structure is a blast wall, all of which were unfortunately demolished during the Kings Hill redevelopment.

Asians expelled by dictator Idi Amin prior to their resettlement around the UK.

Following redevelopment as Kings Hill, not many signs of the airfield are left now: the former Officers' Mess (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council's offices); some of the old H-block accommodation (also offices); and the Art Deco control tower (restored and home to a Costa Coffee shop so partly publicly accessible). The public loos in Liberty Square are also housed in a contemporary Art Deco building!²

Sadly, the runways have completely disappeared under the housing development and only a few other traces of the former airfield remain, all related to its defence – a pillbox located inside the Nature Conservation Area (and home to a colony of bats so very much out of bounds to the public!); a Pickett-Hamilton runway fort; and a combined observation/anti-aircraft gun tower of a design almost unique to RAF West Malling³. The underground battle HQ of the station's ground-defence squadron still exists in woods on the golf course, and some other bunkers may also remain in other nearby woods.

There are however a number of modern sculptures and artworks around Kings Hill which commemorate the service and sacrifice of RAF West Malling and those who served here. Probably the most meaningful is Richard Wolfstrome's huge RAF roundel, and accompanying plaques, at the rear of the control tower, collectively known as *A Place of Landings*. Segments of the roundel contain key dates in the life of the airfield, supplemented with some of the quirky slang used by airmen and women: phrases like *Boffins*, *Scrambled Eggs*, *Erk* and *Blighty* – fortunately with meanings supplied. Personally, my favourite is *Wallop* (= beer!)

A walk around the Kings Hill estate to spot the remnants of the airfield and the modern art is well worth the time. Liberty's website for Kings Hill has an interactive map showing locations of the area's heritage and sculptures (<http://www.kings-hill.com/estate-map/>). Unfortunately, it can't be printed but on request I can provide a copy of Liberty's previous PDF map by email.

Footnotes:

- 1: As I well know. Just over a week before our Level B event, builders working on new housing near our car park unearthed an unexploded bomb...
- 2: Though curiously unacknowledged by Liberty Property as an original airfield building (previous purpose unknown, though unlikely to have been loos).
- 3: The design is essentially 2 parallel towers separated by a gap of just 1-2 inches all the way from the ground to the roof. This gap was intended to protect the sensitive target directing equipment in one tower from vibrations caused by firing the guns on the other tower. I believe that only 2 other examples of this design are known on RAF airfields.

Graham Denney

November Classic 2/3 November

Saturday 2nd November, Chichester Urban courtesy of Southdowns OC. Storm force winds and rain but most people turned up to run. The worst bit was going to the start because you had to go ready to run, no clothes drop but when we got there we could start as soon as we wanted. As you can imagine there were not many people about except for mad orienteers. We started just by the city walls and most of our controls were inside the walls, in and out of car parks and down side streets, past the Cathedral and then out to the College where we had the last 8 controls. Bit of running back on yourself a few times but I did enjoy the challenge, despite the weather it was good fun. Finished 10th in the WUV 65+.

Sunday 3rd November, Bramshaw Woods in the New Forest organised by Southampton OC. Parking was at a campsite and from there we were bused to the start. Finish there as well so there was a clothes drop. Bit chilly to start but soon warmed up, especially as my first control was a long leg, tricky to stay with the map but managed okay. After that the controls were not too far apart and a lot easier to navigate. It was mostly deciduous trees and lots of marshy ground but easy enough to run through. Also, not too much bracken (the rain had flattened it I think). I saw two pigs which was weird, but they just ignored me then a bit further on about 10 deer crossed in front of me, lovely to see them. I did much better than of late with my navigation and finished in a creditable 9th place overall on Short Green and 3rd W70.

Beryl Pring

2019 and 2020

No perfect run but lots of medals and always well inside the national age class top 10 – so the past year brought plenty of successes as well as lots of fun - but getting slower with age means I am increasingly reliant on the rag-bag of past decision-making called “experience”. This is where improvement should still be possible: the mental and emotional aspects. Time to review my 2019 maps.

The year began with an Army event at Ash Ranges. I had a good run on Blue, which comprised three clusters of controls interspersed with some longer legs. It was in the third cluster, immediately before the finish, that I almost lost it. Trying too hard, I became slapdash with my map-reading but just about muddled through with only a minute or two lost.

A similar thing happened on the JK Middle at Windmill Hill in April. Controls 13 to 18 were all very close together and, again pushing hard, I overshot 16, looked for 18 in the wrong place and so again lost a minute or two. In both cases, trying for a fast finish led to oxygen debt, lost mental sharpness and lost places.

At Maldon, Essex in July another good run was undone near the end of the 22-control course. After wasting a minute failing to force a way out of 20 through some 'light green' I went full tilt for 21, ran off the map and lost another 3 minutes. So, the key 2019 lesson for me is: don't rush at the end, take it STEADY, stay SHARP, finish CLEAN.

Next up in January was a HAVOC event at Bedfords Park. After a shaky start the next few controls seemed to flow. Then, running towards 8, I noticed that the terrain to my left didn't look much like the patchy 'green' shown on the map. Best just carry on until it becomes clear. After a few minutes... it hadn't. In fact, nothing made sense at all. After standing puzzling for a while, with huge reluctance, I retraced my steps all the way back to #7 to start from there again. That four-minute leg actually took 21 minutes – my clanger of the year. I find it really difficult to admit to myself that I've made a mistake. I definitely need to adopt some kind of STOP, CHECK, CORRECT process IMMEDIATELY something doesn't look right; not blithely continue expecting optimism to carry me through.

One thing I did get right a couple of times in the year was, after an error, to LET GO, MOVE ON - rather than dwell on it. At Chobham in October, I was half-way to 10 before realising that I hadn't been to 9. I quickly shook off the frustration, flowed through the remainder and won the course. A week later at Langdon Hills I also managed to shake off silly mistakes at 2 and 4 to get flowing. Sadly, more mistakes piled up at 8, 11, 16, 18 and 19 so I thrashed up the hill for a miserable finish.

In December I went to Epping in an optimistic frame of mind. I hadn't checked the entry list but felt that in an age class regional championship I should have a reasonable chance. I found it hard to get warmed up for the start and muddled through the first few controls but, enjoying the sunlit open forest, I was soon moving quickly and it all seemed to flow together. I nailed the last few controls to a fast finish in just 34 minutes. The pain arrived at download: fastest by 5 minutes but WRONG 6. I usually check control codes. Thinking back, at 6 I'd been expecting 120. The kite was numbered 126 but I just assumed I'd mis-read the 6 on my wristband as a 0 - as I often struggle to read the control description

numbers whilst on the move. Nigel Bush MV had been close by the control, saying “no, no, no” to himself. I knew he was on a different course but rather than prompting me to pause and double-check, this had simply spurred me to push on - swipe and go. The basic lesson – important for all beginners and for me too in 2020 is: ALWAYS check the control code. The other issue – for me – is how to go about using the distraction of other competitors in only positive ways. I suppose it’s good to have something to work on in the year ahead! Bring it on!

Peter Martin

Moat Park – New Years Day Score Event

Organiser: Mark Glaisher

Sean Cronin came up with 21 control sites for this 60-minute Score event and offered Short (controls in any order) and Long (90s & 100s, changeover at 111) courses. The reasonable weather encouraged people to get out and about, and we had just over 200 taking part. The Short course was very popular with newcomers, including a lot of family groups having a go. On the Long course no one quite managed to visit all the controls within the 60 minutes.

Many thanks to the Saxons who helped out, on quite a busy day.

Eridge – Hindsight is a wonderful thing!

As with all my orienteering runs, I look back after the event and try and determine what I could have done better. Run faster is always top of the list.

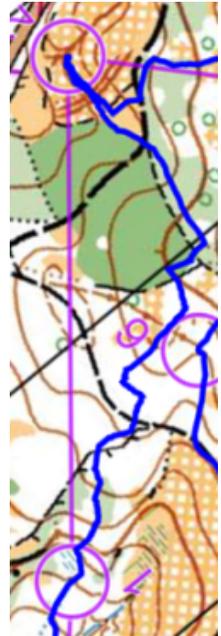
Navigation-wise, I think I have improved over the last year, mainly due to the number of events I attended being more than doubled. A couple of years ago I would have just attended the monthly KOL along with the occasional regional event. Now, thanks to Ffion, I’m out at least once

almost every weekend. In fact, in the 2018/19 season I took part in 37 events.

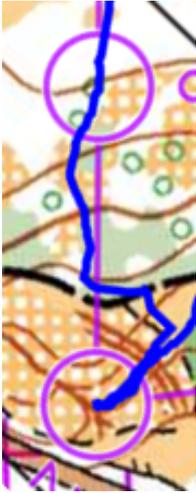


My route to #1 (7:14) was not optimum. After turning the first right hand corner I started looking for the steam and narrow marsh on the left, but things didn't look right. I did this twice before realising I needed to go up hill to the next bend and then the cliffs before heading left. Once there it became a lot clearer and I dropped down to the stream and then followed the marsh up to the control which was not suprisingly surrounded by lots of mud. Not the best start.

The route to #2 (10:38) was even worse. I had intended to head left to the fence then continue to the path junction avoiding the climb, turning right to the next junction before heading into the control. This didn't work out. I hit the fence and could see the path at right angles. At this point I should have turned left but was distracted by the control I could see ahead. Having reach that control and realising it



was not #2, I re-orientated myself and headed of in the right direction.



#3 (4:28) went a bit better. After getting back on the path I headed left through to the gap in the vegetation and then followed the distinctive trees until I reached the control.

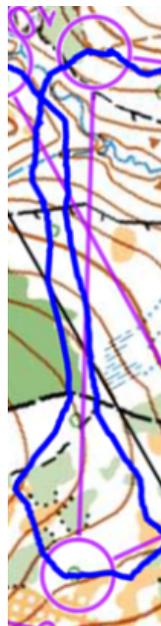
My routes to #4 (3:42), #5 (3:20), #6 (4:03) and #7 (8:39) were good, finding the controls with relative ease.



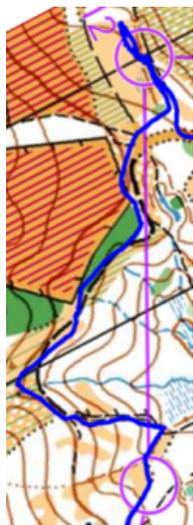


#8 (9:51) however, could have gone better. After crossing the stream and fence I should have followed the contour round to #8. However, as can be seen from the GPS track I kept heading up hill crossing 3 more contour lines than necessary. Believing I was on track having crossed a marsh it wasn't until I saw the start that I realised I was too far to the right and turned left round to the control.

#8 to #9 (2:22) was reasonable. However, I left #9 on the wrong heading. Turning right when I got to the path, led me back along my previous route from #7 to #8. Though, I managed to avoid the deepest part of the river valley locating #10 (8:45) the control quickly.



#10 to #11 (4:13) was ok, but I got distracted by a control on the earth bank half way along. Looking now it obviously wasn't mine which was on a vegetation boundary.



For the initial part of the route to #12 (13:05) I was undecided which way to go and therefore didn't have a plan. Having reached the fence, I then decided to head up and round. On reaching the open ground I headed left down the path but couldn't locate the control. I followed the earth bank down looking for the control and not paying attention that I was reaching the area marked as forest run. Eventually, I convinced myself to follow the earth bank back up the hill, where I found the control.

From #12 I should have contoured round, rather than going back up to the main path. Coming down the path, #13 (2:57) was easy to see.

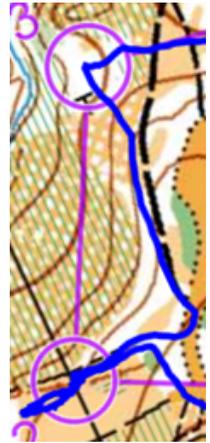
The final run in through #14 (1:58) to the finish (1:42) was straight forward.

Generally, I think I am able to find the controls and for the most part can work out where I am when I get to a feature. Where I fall down is making sure I'm on the right track in the first place.

Overall distance: 6k.

Total time: 1h 26m 57s.

Neil Bricknell



Coffee Time

Can you match the image to the map and control description?
All map features are brown.

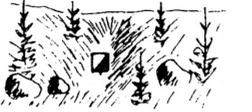
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Image source: International Specification for Control Descriptions

Ashdown Forest The Clumps Sponsored Walk

Saturday April 11th 2020

**Join us on a 14.5 mile walk around the
iconic Ashdown Forest Clumps.**

Raising funds for The Ashdown Forest Foundation

Entry £15 (under 12s free)

Enter through Eventbrite

Sponsorship packs will be sent out from end of January

Shorter routes are possible

Further information: conservators@ashdownforest.org

www.ashdownforest.org

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Thanks to contributors to this issue: Brendon Howe, Jean Fitzgerald, Peter Martin, Mark Glaisher, Beryl Pring, Graham Denney, David Kingdom, Sarah Howes, Graham Thomas, Philip Norris

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- Image source: <https://www.beatlesbible.com/>
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Coffee time answers:

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