

# Aire Affairs



**August 2023**



**Airienteers**

Orienteering in Airedale and Wharfedale

[www.aire.org.uk](http://www.aire.org.uk)



## Contents

EditO – Peter Jones.....	4
Chair Affairs – Liz Carter.....	5
Juniaires – Katie Buckley.....	6
Scottish 6 Days.....	6
Deeside 2023 .....	7
SLMM – Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon.....	8
Wordsearch .....	9
Club Captain’s Report - Steve Webb.....	10
Yvette Baker Trophy final – Lindsey King .....	10
Scottish 6 Days.....	12
Results and Junior report – Lindsey King .....	12
Memories of the 2023 Scottish 6 days – Liz Carter .....	14
6 Day Report and Urban Event – Dave Alcock .....	15
Twenty Three Minutes - Wendy Carlyle.....	16
MTBO at Scottish 6 Days – Lindsey King .....	18
Midsummer Madness – Swansea Bay style – Ian Marshall.....	19
NIAR – Nordic Islands Adventure Race – Ian Furlong.....	22
British Sprint and Middle Championships.....	29
ASOM - Ghent August 18-20 – Gerry Symes.....	30
AIRE Spring & Summer Leagues.....	32
Airienteers in Action .....	34
Knaresborough – EuroCity Sprint.....	34
Harrogate – EuroCity Urban.....	35
Orienteering - a poem.....	36



**AIRE AFFAIRS** is the Club's official magazine and is available on our website [www.aire.org.uk](http://www.aire.org.uk) and via e-mail/paper format to all members and interested parties.

## CONTACTS

<b>CHAIR</b>	Liz Carter	<a href="mailto:chair@aire.org.uk">chair@aire.org.uk</a>	
<b>SECRETARY</b>	David Alcock	<a href="mailto:secretary@aire.org.uk">secretary@aire.org.uk</a>	07989 563588
<b>TREASURER</b>	Chris Penny	<a href="mailto:treasurer@aire.org.uk">treasurer@aire.org.uk</a>	
<b>FIXTURES</b>	Leon Foster	leonfoster@gmail.com	
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	Ian Marshall	<a href="mailto:membership@aire.org.uk">membership@aire.org.uk</a>	01943 862997

Cover photo: Laura King at the Sprint event in the Czechia World Cup meeting. (Picture by Petr Hap)

Full results and GPS tracking here: <https://www.wcup.cz/en/home>



## EditO – Peter Jones

A warm welcome to new members :-

- Aron & Heather Fulton

This is my first edition as editor, so please excuse any clumsy formatting.

Many thanks to Liz, Katie, Lindsey, Steve, Wendy, Ian, Ian, Gerry and Dave for their contributions. I was concerned that I may have to chase round to get contributions, but those worries have proved to be unfounded and this issue has extended to 36 pages (woo-hoo!). We have reports on events which lasted from 15 minutes to 88 hours, and from England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Faeroe Islands and Belgium.

To anyone who is thinking of writing something for the next edition, please don't hesitate – I'll welcome reports on events and activities large and small, near and far.

I'll continue to make use of Wendy's photographs, which include all of the Yvette Baker Trophy and Airienteers in Action pictures, almost all of the Scottish 6 Day pictures, and this one of me at CLARO's excellent EuroCity Race in Harrogate.

There was a lot to like about the Harrogate race. My course was the most enjoyable and most challenging urban race I've run for a long time, with lots of opportunities for mistakes, some of which I took. In the picture, I'm accurately navigating the council offices to my control 3. If only I'd been so accurate everywhere else. I misread the levels by the Convention Centre at 7, didn't realise the small open area at 9 was someone's back garden, didn't see the flag below me by the Valley Gardens café at 20.



And, as well as a top quality course and map, there was an overall sense of occasion – assembly, finish and O-maze at Harrogate Ladies College, special permissions to use many locations around the town, sponsored prizes and a number of other 'bells and whistles'. I'm told City Race European Tour events are often like this. I must try and do some more of them.

As well as the bigger events, I run at many of our Wednesday evening events. I'm not working so I don't have the problem of getting to them after work and, given a choice between a training run and any sort of run with a map, I'll go out with a map every time. Local events are where we can try out different formats, and I've reported on this year's Middleton New Forest Village Sprints and Golden Acre Park Countryside Score later.

They're also a good introduction to planning and organising - go on, you know you want to.



## Chair Affairs – Liz Carter

We have recently returned from the Scottish 6 days (which is now 5 days) held near Inverness. There was a good turnout of AIRE competitors, and it was great to see some of our very young ones competing and doing well. A little group of them in their AIRE T-shirts were asked to help with the prize giving at the end and did us proud. And there were some good performances from our more senior members as well. The AIRE flag waved amongst the others and it was good to see quite a few of the AIRE team there. Surprisingly the weather was fairly kind (only one real downpour that I can remember) and a lovely Day 1 at Lossie Forest and on Day 3 at Roseisle where we bathed in the sunshine. The orienteering was challenging especially on Day 1. It did help to get your head round the dunes for later in the week. Scottish orienteering in such technical territory is an experience that you cannot replicate in Yorkshire. It certainly puts your skills to the test.



Putting on such a large event is a huge undertaking. The demand on volunteers is huge. Two to three clubs were involved each day with the planning, organising and management of the event and did a superb job. Day one must have caused them a headache as the main road to the event had been closed that morning due to an accident. In Spring 2025 we will also be involved with hosting not the 6 days but the JK – more on that in the future.

We are looking forward to our flagship Dales Weekend. The first day based in Ilkley should provide a good urban competition and the second in Conistone will be a complete contrast in a beautiful part of the Dales. As organiser I have the unenviable task of recruiting volunteers to help on both days. Right now, on writing this, I have made my appeal for helpers and am keeping my fingers crossed that we get enough to be able to hold these two events. We normally do but it is always a worry when you take on the organiser role – will there be enough helpers available? I am positive that there will be.

This summer we are involved with the Active Leeds 'Breeze' events at Armley, Nunroyd and Bramley where we hope to attract people to come and find out what orienteering is about. It has come about as part of the Find Your Way project that we have been involved in over the last few months. This is a project that British Orienteering have been promoting to encourage people to try orienteering at any time using an app on their phone. We may well run our winter evening events on a hybrid model of this with some runners using their phone to record their run and other using the traditional route we have used in the past. Not everyone wants to run with a phone.

Happy O'ing everyone. See you out at an event sometime,

Liz



## Juniares – Katie Buckley

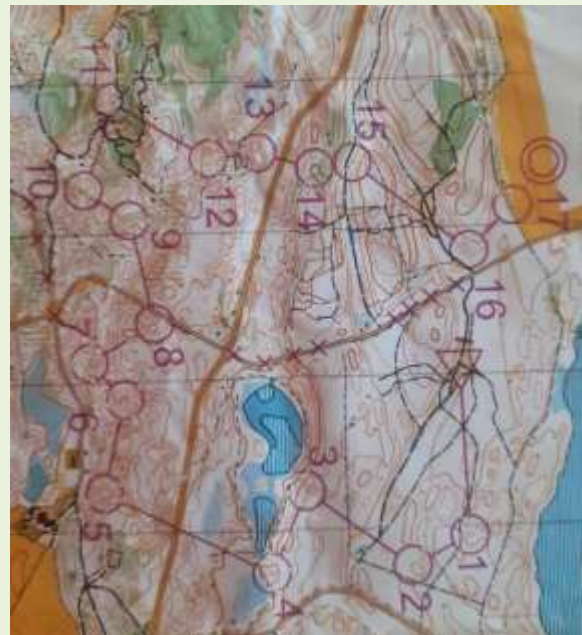
### Scottish 6 Days

This year the Scottish 6 days were held by Moravian orienteers, in the far North of Scotland. Lots of Aorienteers made the long journey there for a week of camping and orienteering in some of the best areas in the UK.

Day 1 was at Lossie Forest. This is a complex area of sand dunes, with less intricate forest further away from the sea. It was a good day for some, with Emily and Joby both claiming podium places, and getting lots of points for the week.



Day 2 in Darnaway was very different, but still required lots of concentration- on contours specifically. With the finish in the field we could all watch as everyone finished their courses. Lee won the M40S, Jo won the W75S, Tony Thornley finished 2nd on his course and Sebastian finished 3rd.



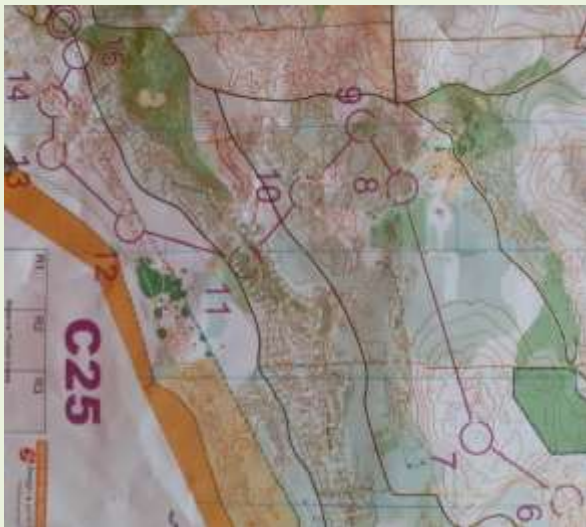
Day 3 in Roseisle was different again, with its obvious ridges, and dense green patches with very difficult navigation. Penny was 2nd in W10, and Tony Thornley again finished high up, coming 3rd in M75. On the white course Sebastian and Joby dominated the podium, finishing first and second.



On the rest day some people explored the beaches around the Moray coast, and others took part in the sprint, mountain bike-o and trail-o.

Days 4 and 5 were both held in Culbin Forest, with day 4 as a long and day 5 a middle distance. Once everyone had made it to the start (3km), we

all got to enjoy the contours and easy running of this lovely forested area. On day 4 Charlie was 3rd on M10, and Penny was 2nd on the W10 while Sebastian and Joby once again claimed 1st and 2nd on the white. On the middle distance, on day 5, George Ricketts was 3rd on the M10, Lee won the M40S, Penny was 3rd on the W10, and Joby won the white.



It was a great week in some fantastic areas, and I'm looking forward to Deeside 2025 (the next Scottish 6 Days) already.



## Deeside 2023

Deeside is one of the summer orienteering training camps run by JROS (Junior Regional Orienteering Squads) for bottom year M/W16s every year. This year 22 athletes made the journey to Templars Park, near Aberdeen, for the week of training.

The first evening we had a go at Micro, orienteering on a tiny scale (I think it was 1:100), which tested your navigation skills, and quick map reading.



On the first day of proper training we went to Easter Clune, to focus on making a plan, and executing it well. It was a lovely area- including the snacks (bilberries) during the exercises. After a pairs race, we had a swim in a river nearby before heading back to the campsite.

The next day we went to Balmedie sand dunes, where the coaches took everything off the map except for the contours, to focus on having a picture of the terrain you were running through, and also remembering to have a plan. That day we had a dune Olympics, then swam in the sea, which was freezing cold but refreshing after the training.

The next day we went to Glen Dye, to focus on direction, and compass bearings. Except for the many fallen trees, it was another beautiful area. The training was followed by a peg race, a swim and a trip to Asda.

On the rest day we had a sprint around Templars Park, before a few hours on training plans and the importance of strength and conditioning. In the afternoon we visited Stonehaven lido, and a trip to the ice cream/chip shop. That evening we had a barbeque too.

On the final day of training we went to Birsemore, an area with intricate contour and rock detail, and focused on all that we had worked on so far in the week. After a morning of training and a swim, we returned to Templars for showers and bed before Tour champs the next day.

Tour Champs was held in Glen Dye, with the first half being in the style of a middle, and the second in the style of a long distance. I was pleased to finish 2nd in the girls, behind Scarlett Kelly. After another stunning swim, we returned home to prepare for the final meal.

It was a great week, in lovely areas, and I would like to thank all of the coaches who made it possible, as well as Jackie Dakin, the cook, and all the car/minibus drivers who took us to the areas. I look forward to seeing more juniAIRES going to these tours to improve their orienteering and make new friends in the next few years.

## **SLMM – Saunders Lakeland Mountain Marathon**

The Saunders is a 2 day long mountain marathon in the Lake District. There are lots of courses for different abilities, including a score course and a parent-child course. All of them involve navigation and route choice, sometimes in thick fog.

This year it began in Coniston, in the South Lakes, with the assembly at John Ruskin School. The weather was very windy and wet, as competitors battled to put up their tents in the field (and smug people with camper vans watched!), before the race the next day.

The map this year covered the Coniston fells, and some of the hills to the north of Wrynose Pass. All courses began around 2 km above Coniston village, and went over the fells to the Duddon valley on the other side, and the overnight camp.

The overnight camp was at Turner Hall farm. The rain managed to hold off as everyone enjoyed their beer, lemonade and milk they had collected from the tent, and prepared their tea (mainly mac 'n'





cheese in a bag) whilst comparing their routes for that day, and speculating over what the next day would bring.

The second day began early, at 6.30am when control descriptions and grid references could be collected from the marquee. Then followed a steady stream of runners walking down the road to the start of day 2.

The tops were very windy, with fog on some of the higher peaks, making navigation and running challenging, but again the rain just managed to hold off. Eventually everyone arrived at the field once again, tired but happy to have finished. A delicious lunch was provided by Fell and Dale.

Some Aire performances were Dave Alcock and Nathan Martin winning Kirkfell, Katie and Jo Buckley winning the female category on Bedafell, and Ewen and Jez Wilkinson finishing 6th in the male category on Bedafell.

The Saunders was a great weekend, as always, and I look forward to next year- wherever it is.

## Wordsearch

L	Q	W	A	L	L	C	Z	G	G	H	W	N	L
O	O	G	S	U	B	F	I	L	T	W	R	G	R
C	S	K	T	T	C	M	H	H	R	Y	P	C	S
P	M	Z	C	D	R	E	A	Z	E	B	R	O	I
V	H	J	L	E	S	B	I	P	E	S	J	M	K
F	H	A	K	P	K	N	O	L	L	U	R	P	N
P	A	T	H	R	Q	R	A	C	V	G	F	A	Y
E	X	D	V	E	N	L	T	O	W	J	E	S	Y
D	O	I	V	S	E	A	H	N	H	E	N	S	H
I	P	B	C	S	M	P	I	T	I	M	C	S	M
T	P	B	V	I	H	X	C	O	S	U	E	P	P
C	U	E	O	O	L	C	K	U	T	K	E	U	K
H	Z	R	S	N	C	O	E	R	L	C	Q	R	Q
Z	L	H	F	Z	X	H	T	G	E	U	P	Y	F

KNOLL  
THICKET  
PATH  
MAP  
DEPRESSION  
TREE  
COMPASS  
DITCH  
DIBBER  
WHISTLE  
WALL  
SPUR  
FENCE  
CONTOUR



## Club Captain's Report - Steve Webb

### British Mixed Sprint Relay

This is on Sunday 17 September, the day after the London City Race. The venue is Brunel University in Uxbridge, where the 2017 JK sprint race was held. Usual format involving teams of 4 in the open class (F,M,M,F) and mixed teams of 3 in the other classes (40+, 55+, 65+, 16-, 12-). If you would like to be in an AIRE team please sign up before 31 August on the spreadsheet available at [www.tinyurl.com/aire2023](http://www.tinyurl.com/aire2023) Fees for seniors are £17 per person, the club will pay for junior entries.

### Advance notice of relay races coming up in 2024 for your diary:

1 April JK relays: Stanton Moor, Matlock. It's a Midlands JK next year with sprint at Loughborough Uni and middle/long races at Beaudesert near Cannock.

14 April British relays: Hutton Mulgrave and Skelder Woods. Not too far to travel to the British Champs weekend on the Cleveland Hills. April is going to be very busy with the British Middle Distance champs hosted by AIRE also in that month!

22 June British sprint relays, Birmingham University. Back to the Midlands for a weekend of sprinting on campus: relays on the Saturday and individual at Warwick on Sunday. Is the Crossroads Motel still available for accommodation?

We had some relay successes in 2023 (as reported in the last AIRE Affairs) so in due course I'll be looking for volunteers to represent the club and defend those medals. As and when I get details of the CompassSport Cup qualifying round (hopefully closer to us than Alnwick this time!) I will publicise them.

## Yvette Baker Trophy final – Lindsey King



AIRE team in the parade before the Yvette Baker Trophy Final.



The Yvette Baker competition involves 2 competitions, the Trophy for large clubs and the Cup for small clubs from England & Wales. This year there were juniors present from as far away as



Swansea, Norwich and West Cumbria. This year AIRE had a team of 11 – exceeding the minimum of 9 for the first time in a few years!

The final was held at Sandal Beat Woods on the edge of Doncaster. A flat area of woodland with lots of paths and ditches to confuse you. The scoring rules in the competition are that only your best 9 results count towards the trophy (or 5 results in the Cup) so even if SYO turn up with 30-40 juniors, in theory, they have no better chance of winning than any other club with a full team.

This year we improved our position from 7<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> in the Trophy competition which was a fantastic achievement from

a young team. Katie Buckley won the Green W course and gained us a valuable 100 points while Alethea and Penny came 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> on the Orange W course. Well done Girls! The results were:



Trophy	Pts		Course	Pts	AIRE competitor	
SYO	891		Green M	90	Henry Stitson	M16
TVOC	869			88	Tom Threlfall	M16
WCOC	847		Green W	100	Katie Buckley	W16
AIRE	839			90	Megan Robinson	W16
WAOC	836		Light Green M	96	Ewen Wilkinson	M16
MDOC	824			89	James Woodham	M16
SO	821		Orange M	87	Joseph Mason	M14
			Orange W	90	Eleanor Robinson	W14
			Yellow W	99	Alethea Carr	W12
				97	Penny Pinker-Hull	W10
				80	Kate Parkinson	W12

Photos courtesy of Wendy Carlyle. To see lots more photographs from the final competition including most competitors and all teams see Wendy's photos on flickr at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/wendles56/albums/72177720309662833>



## Scottish 6 Days

### Results and Junior report – Lindsey King

About 50 AIRE members headed north to Moray Coast (Nairn-Forres-Elgin) for the Scottish 6 Days in August. We had a few podium places and other great results. Here are the junior results, top 10 and Elite classes.

Age classes overall result Colour coded: daily results.

Sebastian Carr	White	5 days- 7th, 3rd,1st,1st,6th
Alfie Alcock	White	5 days -m11, 11th , 10th,7th,4th
Joby Pinker-Hull	White	5 days- 2nd,19th ,2nd ,2nd ,1st
Isobel Ricketts	Off string	5 days
Penny Pinker-Hull	W10A	3rd
Charlie Alcock	M10A	5th
George Ricketts	M10A	8th
Jack Beavers	M16B	6th
Alethea Carr	W12A	7th
Charlotte Beavers	W12A	12th
Bethan Buckley	W14A	9th
Katie Buckley	W16A	7th
Emily Gibbins	W18L	8th
Tamsin Moran	W21E	6th
Fay Walsh	W21E	15th
Anne Murgatroyd	W40L	10th
Jo Buckley	W45L	7th
Shirley Wood	W60S	4th
Jo Thornley	W75S	2nd
Dave Murgatroyd	M21S	8th
Andrew Hobson	M35L	10th
Lee Beavers	M40S	2nd
Peter Haines	M65L	4th
Tony Carlyle	M70L	8th
Tony Thornley	M75L	6th

On day 5 Alfie, Sebastian, Isobel and Joby were recruited to help with the prize giving and did a super job all in their smart AIRE tops!

There are some photos below which confirm what a great time we all had. I wish I also had a sound track of the Aire juniors playing with Edinburgh South OC juniors until dark on the campsite at Findhorn – friendships they will build over years to come!

With thanks to Wendy Carlyle –for most of these photos- More of her photos via this link <https://results.scottish6days.com/2023/>





## Memories of the 2023 Scottish 6 days – Liz Carter

Day 1 – Lossie forest (4.3k/80m). 90° error at the start took me to the sea! Hugely technical, long course, completely shattered at the end. Day 2 – Darnaway (2.8k/30m). A good start, 13 out of 14 controls good but a huge error at number 4. So cross!

Day 3 – Roseisle (3.6k/90m). Good technical o'ing. Really challenging to read the map and relate it to the ground.

Day 4 – Culbin East (4.2k/80m). Another long course in the dunes but by now I was beginning to get my head round them.

Day 5 – Culbin West (2.4k/50m). Short middle distance – on track for most of it – enjoyed it.

Rest Day – Forres Sprint (1.7k/10m). Fast and enjoyable.

So, a total of 19k and 340m climb on the control descriptions but probably 1.5 times as much on the ground over the course of the six days. So, what did Pete and I do on the following day? We had previously had a conversation with Rob and Lindsey King where they mentioned a mountain bike route they had done from Aviemore to Forres following the Speyside Way to Grantown on Spey and then the Dava Way up to Forres. It sounded like a good idea at the time. The weather looked fair. An early start took us to Nairn Station to catch the train to Inverness and then Aviemore. The Aviemore train was crammed full – it was the one to Glasgow and the Cycle Championships were taking place. Standing room only. We only just got on.

Cycling out of Aviemore on the Speyside Way was really nice and good going. We were doing fine until the Abernathy Forest when all of a sudden we had a very heavy downpour and ended up soaked and sheltering in a bus shelter in Nethy Bridge. We did have a moment and thought “Should we turn back now or continue”? but decided that returning and then getting the train back was not a great idea. In the end the rain stopped and we continued slowly drying out. We met someone on the way but he was not very talkative, apart from that we saw very few people apart from a couple of Dutch cyclists who were cycle packing the Pictish Route.



Now it is a great route and I can recommend it but it would have been much more comfortable on mountain bikes. Pete and I had our hybrids and by the end of the 41 off road miles we were very tired. Having a bit of suspension on the bikes would have made it more enjoyable at the end. We headed to the rail station thinking we had a 35-minute wait for our train to find the previous train was 25 minutes late and arrived just as we did. We were so pleased! Back to the campsite for a well-earned meal (and the odd glass of wine 😊).



## 6 Day Report and Urban Event – Dave Alcock

This year's Scottish 6 Days used four technical forested areas – very enjoyable, but not quite the terrain I do better on – open fell, parkland, and urban areas.

Two years ago, I managed to be joint top, thanks to a smaller and less competitive M45 field, a lucky break in the way the field was split in two, and terrain that suited me. This year I was also two years older, and more hampered by achilles problems. So, I dropped to midway down the field on most days and finished outside of the top twenty overall.

At least my boys (and the juniors in general) did well: the decision by the organisers to issue white and yellow maps at assembly allowed for some nerve-calming discussion of parts of routes that may have proved especially challenging.

There was, however, one competitive high point for me: the urban race around Forres, where I managed to place 2<sup>nd</sup> MV40.

For what it's worth, here is why I think the urban race seemed to go better than the forest events:

- I looked at the previous map and worked out that getting the wrong alley off the main street could be disastrous
- I warmed up thoroughly, including a three-mile bike ride, a one-mile jog to the start, and stretches
- Given the chance, I took route choices that crossed the main road obliquely, so that I could time my crossing according to traffic flow, without slowing down or angering drivers (e.g. leg 12-13)
- I planned legs backwards and double (or even triple or more) checked for access (incidentally, I loved the way that EUOC, the organisers, used flour and seated marshals to signify areas which were temporarily OOB)
- If legs were 50:50, or even 55:45, I just went for either route, to save compromising on speed. If the main road was an option in these decisions, then I tended to take it, to save getting caught up in the off-road detail (e.g. legs 4-5 and 5-6).
- In the weeks leading up to the event, I had also competed in several urban races and also ran around Guiseley and Yeadon using the o map as training

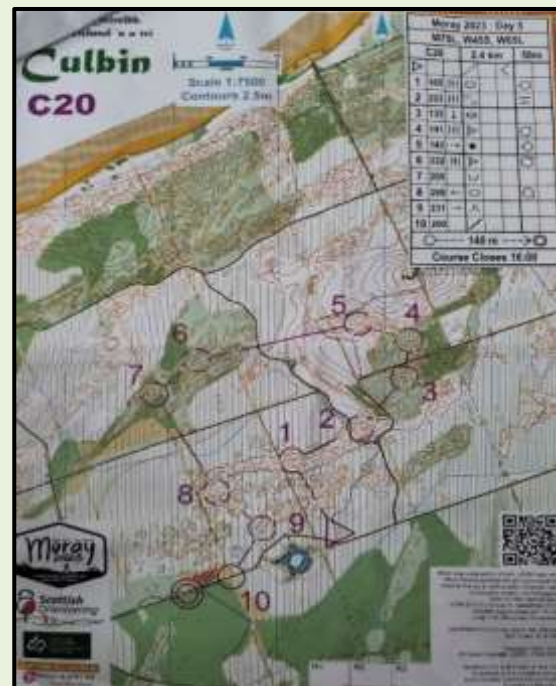
Route below (excluding the last two simple legs) – NB Look at the options from 8 to 9 (there was some OOB which didn't come up on Route Gadget but which I have added in purple):



## Twenty Three Minutes - Wendy Carlyle

I very much enjoyed Moray 2023 as what is not to enjoy running in/on forested sand dunes? Tony had already been in Scotland for two weeks, running a Coaching course with Ian Embrey in the Inverness area and then we were both at Lagganlia for a smashing week with a great bunch of 14 year olds, so we were fully immersed in the place we love to be. I had rebooked our favourite cottage in Findhorn two years ago (!) and we were looking forward to our Oxford family joining us for the orienteering and some holiday fun. This had decided me against taking lots of photos to free up beach time with three year old Euan. We were all set! The only fly in the ointment as the week began was my seeming ability to make a serious error each day, culminating in one control on Day 5 at Culbin West taking me 23.33 minutes.

This is the subject of my article. The first five controls' combined time was less than the next leg

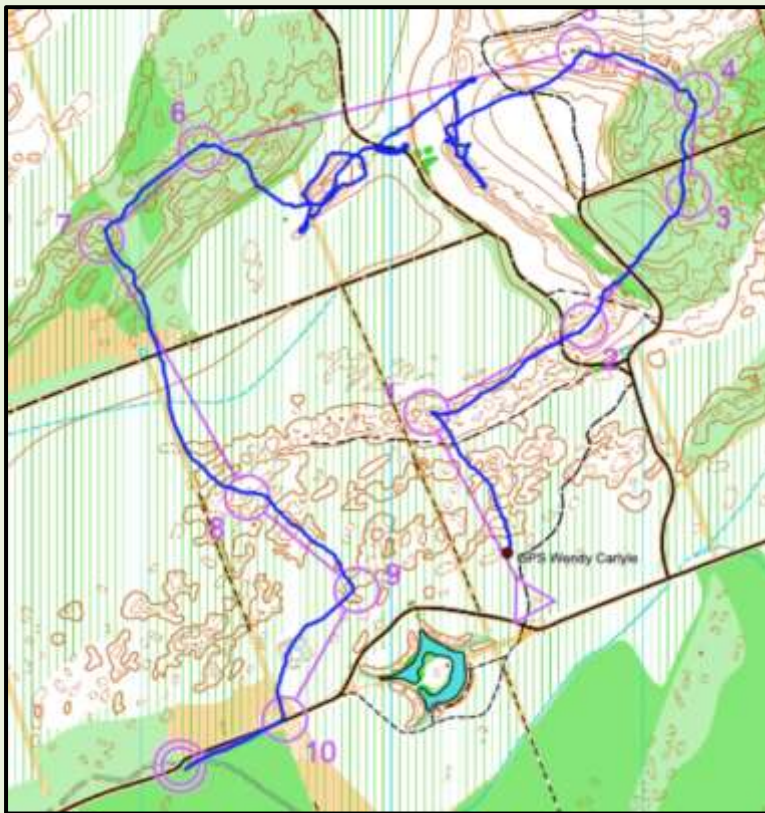






would be, and route gadget shows I was on target for each, if not necessarily following the optimum route.

At no. 5 I looked up I looked up from the control on top of the hill to take in the lie of the land, took my accurate bearing (or so I thought!) and headed downwards. I am struggling to explain what happened next. Indeed, I initially baulked at Tony's suggestion to include my route gadget trace because it's frankly embarrassing! But here you are and I hope it gives you some amusement. I had seen the clump of trees by the side of the path as I descended, which should have set me right, but did not compute them until much later in the adventure of finding no.6. Instead, I fuffed around on the ridge to the south east before deciding to go down to the path to relocate. There I met a similarly confused competitor but neither of us could make sense of where we were. I can see you shaking your heads at this point!



I compounded my error by then believing I had gone right across the area that contained control 6 and was in the rough area to the north and west of it, but could not see the path running along the mid/darker green area. Some further faffing ensued on the small hill until, light bulb moment just as I was about to work out how to retire. There was a single rhododendron below me and only one on the map. How many times have I stood in a forest telling myself how daft I am because suddenly it all fit!? I was on the southern side of the mid/dark green and my control was still ahead of me. Of course it was. The remainder of my course, albeit

slow, was without further incident. 2.4k took 50.15 minutes. Don't you just love getting those British Orienteering e-mails telling you that you dropped 59 places in the rankings after an event.....

And by the way, I've already booked the accommodation for Deeside 2025.



## MTBO at Scottish 6 Days – Lindsey King

I am not a super competitive runner at present as I walk courses to protect my knee. So we decided we would go for the endurance award at the Scottish 6 Days event: 3 mountain bike orienteering races (MTBO), 5 foot events, camping in all weathers and using bikes for travel as much as possible. We love hard work holidays and for me it is such a great antidote to working at a desk!

The MTBO events were linear rather than score but each very different in style. On the Monday we cycled to Darnaway, ran a middle distance race, cycled back to Forres soaking wet from the persistent rain. We took refuge in a cafe for an hour and then sheltered in the Coop until start of event. The MTBO event was in the wet, muddy woods of Sanquhar Hill behind Forres. The course zig zagged over and around the hill and I found it hard to follow the course without a rotating map board on my bike. I can't read a map upside down whereas Rob can which confirms why I don't appreciate the way his brain works!



Learning to orienteer on a bike especially on intricate tracks or paths requires intense concentration. Reading a map upside down at a faster pace than running and getting the gear changes right for the gradient all at the same time was demanding. Not surprisingly, when I downloaded I found I had missed control 3! Back at the campsite the dog-washing hose was well employed in cleaning us and the bikes!

The second race was in Quarry Wood Elgin at the end of the sunniest day of the week and my best foot race on Roseisle. So, I started in good spirits and was early enough to borrow a rotating map board which helped immensely. The course was physical up over and round the hill but planned to avoid too much climb. The course was a more straightforward figure of 8 so easier to follow. I successfully completed this course.

Wednesday was the rest day and so more orienteers entered the MTBO event which again started in Forres. We had not clocked that this race started 2 hours earlier than the others. A quick scramble got us there in time.

The race covered a larger area of estate tracks, paths and roads with a start over 3k away. No rotating board this time but it was easier to read the map and turn it when required although I still made one 180 degree error. This was because I thought a yellow linear screen was the light brown of a road but when I got there it was semi open strip beside the fence- grr!

There was one tricky control on top of a ridge with different routes up to it some were very steep. After scrambling up, hauling bike too I arrived at the same time as 2 other competitors. In my haste to revise my planned route down and set off in front of the other I didn't realise until it was too late that I may have not punched the control. Lesson: if in doubt always go back and punch again.



I thoroughly enjoyed my first adventure into MTBO and will certainly try and do more of the Yorkshire score boards in the future. Meanwhile I must invite Father Christmas to stock up on rotating map boards!

## Midsummer Madness – Swansea Bay style – Ian Marshall

At the British Sprints in Northern Ireland, we were persuaded by Joyce’s friend and rival Margaret Reynolds (SBOC) to enter Midsummer on the Gower 2023. This would mean that I missed a couple of Yorkshire Urban League events on the same weekend.

I weighed up the delights of Mirfield and Ossett against the beautiful South Wales coast and the Gower won. We have visited the Gower for several years each June enjoying its quiet beaches and relaxing atmosphere, so the opportunity to orienteer there was quite alluring.

The event venues were:

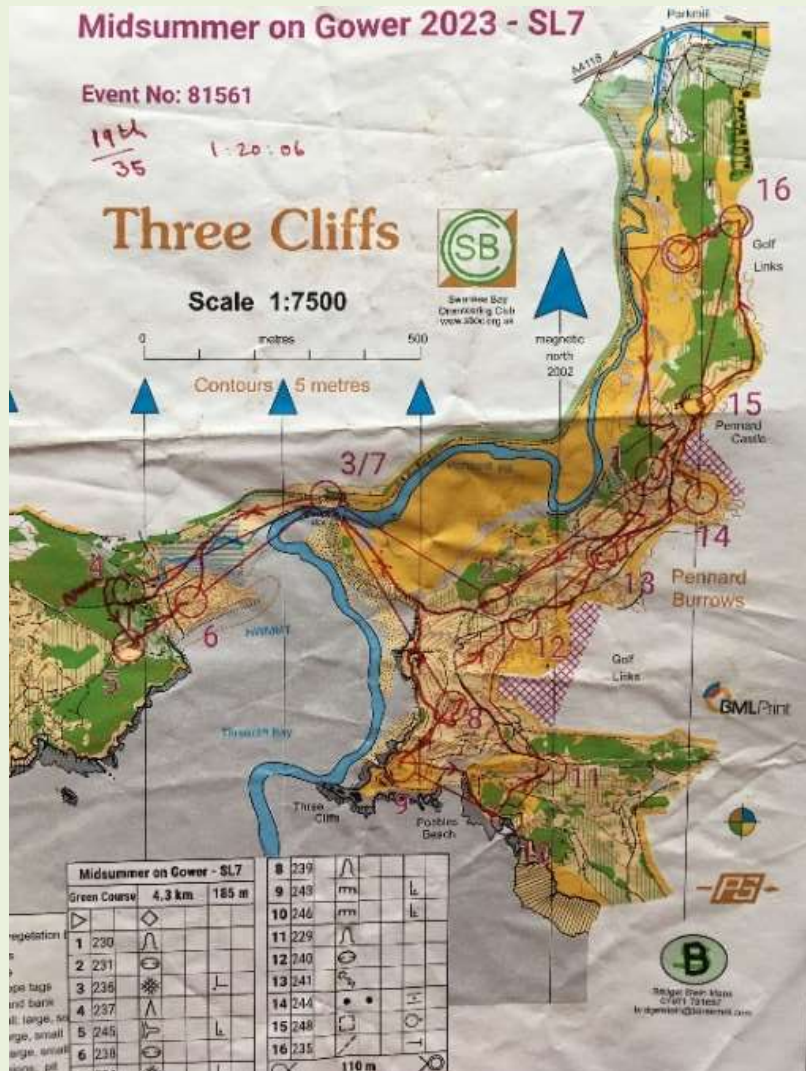
Friday evening – Three Cliffs Bay – Local Event (level D)

Saturday – Whiteford Burrows – Welsh League Event (level C)

Sunday – Oxwich Burrows – 2x2 Relay (level D)

Despite the low key nature of the events, they were attended by some pretty big names: Landels, Soulard, Medlock, Hallett etc. attracted by the technical challenge of coastal sand dune areas. Hence, competition on the colour coded courses open to all was fierce.

Friday evening was wet and under the trees looking for #4 on the Green course it was nearly dark. Control #1 had been approached up a steep sand dune path into head high vegetation. I’d struggled along the lumps and bumps in the bracken, missing the control on the first pass, doubling back to





find it. Then it was an out and back, using the stepping stones to cross Pennard Pill both ways, controls 4,5 and 6 being particularly challenging in the steep woodlands and sand dunes. #8 was higher up the slope than I had anticipated with #10 right on the beach amongst the rocks. Back alongside the golf course for #12 and then #13 I completely missed and spent a while ranging about looking for it. Still, a 'Well done' from organiser Niall Reynolds with mild surprise at download that I had completed the course – a good proportion hadn't.

The campsite was great – in Oxwich village – a large field with the area at the top reserved for the orienteers. Our van was in prime position for the view over Oxwich Bay and right next to the chosen

location for the Saturday night social and BBQ.



The weather steadily improved for the rest of the weekend, with Sunday on the warm side. Saturday's event at Whiteford Burrows was a classic sand dune area, approached from Cwm Ivy on the north coast of the Gower peninsula. The start official's script was quite novel: "Please avoid the part of the area that is on fire" and true enough, the grass in the woodland south of #10 was smoking and blackened. I wonder if the risk assessment included smoke inhalation. I'd bravely entered the Blue course, so was quite pleased to finish just outside the bottom quarter.

Saturday evening there was a barbeque and game of rounders in a field adjacent to the campsite for those with energy to spare + spacehopper races for the kids (of all ages). We hadn't known quite what to expect, but it was a good chance to socialise with the SBOC, BOK members and others who came along.



Sunday's event was within walking distance of the campsite, through Oxwich village and along the edge of the dunes. This was a fun 2x2 relay, again in challenging sand dune terrain. I went out first and third leg for 'Air Marshalls' (me and Joyce) and was surprised to find myself close to Oxwich beach when looking for #2 on leg 3. Unfortunately Joyce had a rare mispunch on leg 4. The Halletts of BOK were 3<sup>rd</sup> team and first non SBOC, as evidenced when Clive Hallett came storming past me on leg 3. Sunbathing between the short relay legs was a great way to end the weekend.

Results:

Three Cliffs: Green course - Joyce 11<sup>th</sup>, Ian 19<sup>th</sup> (23 finishers out of 35 starters) – some were delayed by an accident on the M4 and missed the Friday event.

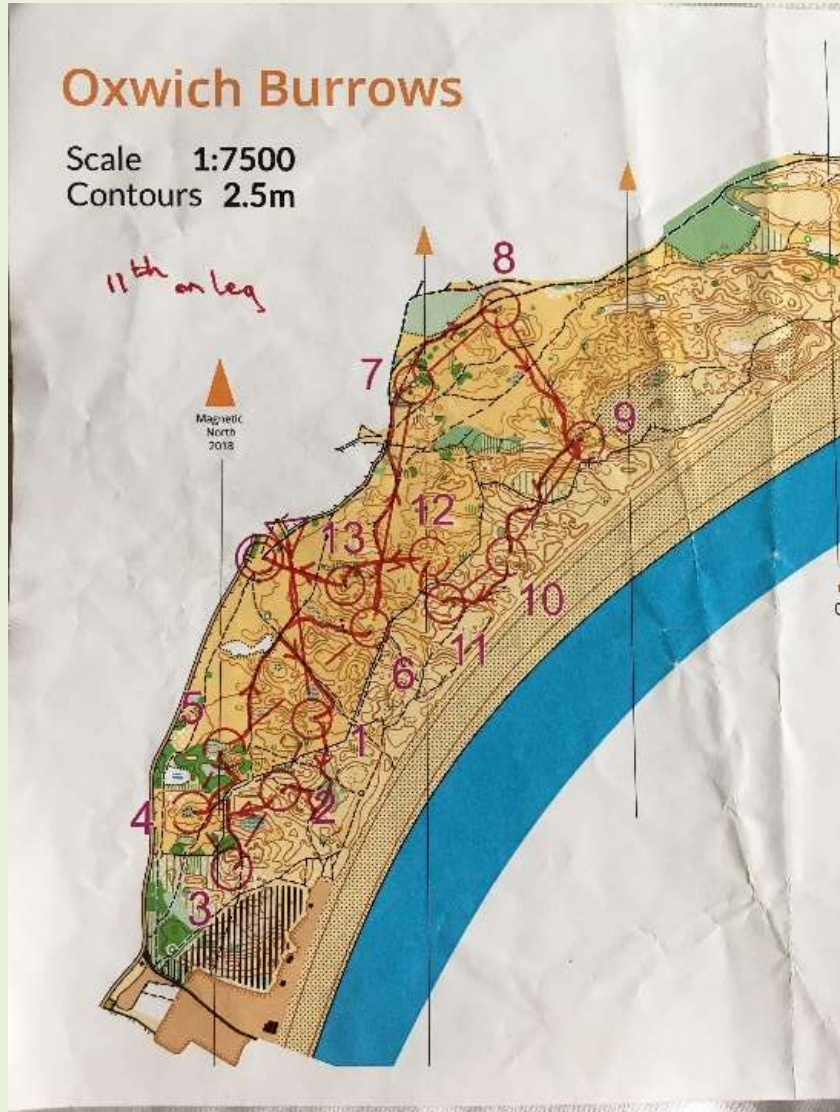
Whiteford Burrows: Blue course – Joyce 13<sup>th</sup>, Ian 24<sup>th</sup> (30 finishers out of 32 starters)

Brown course – Tamsin Moran (AIRE) 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Oxwich Bay: 2x2 relay – AIR-SOC – Tamsin Moran and Ian Moran 7<sup>th</sup>

AIR MARSHALLS - mp

Many thanks to Niall and Margaret Reynolds and the rest of the Swansea Bay OC crew (BO club of the year 2023) for a fantastic weekend. Niall has been organising this every year for the last 20 years!



*[Ed: If this has whetted your appetite for orienteering on sand dunes in South Wales, Day 1 of next year's Welsh 6 Day is on the classic sand dune area of Merthyr Mawr]*



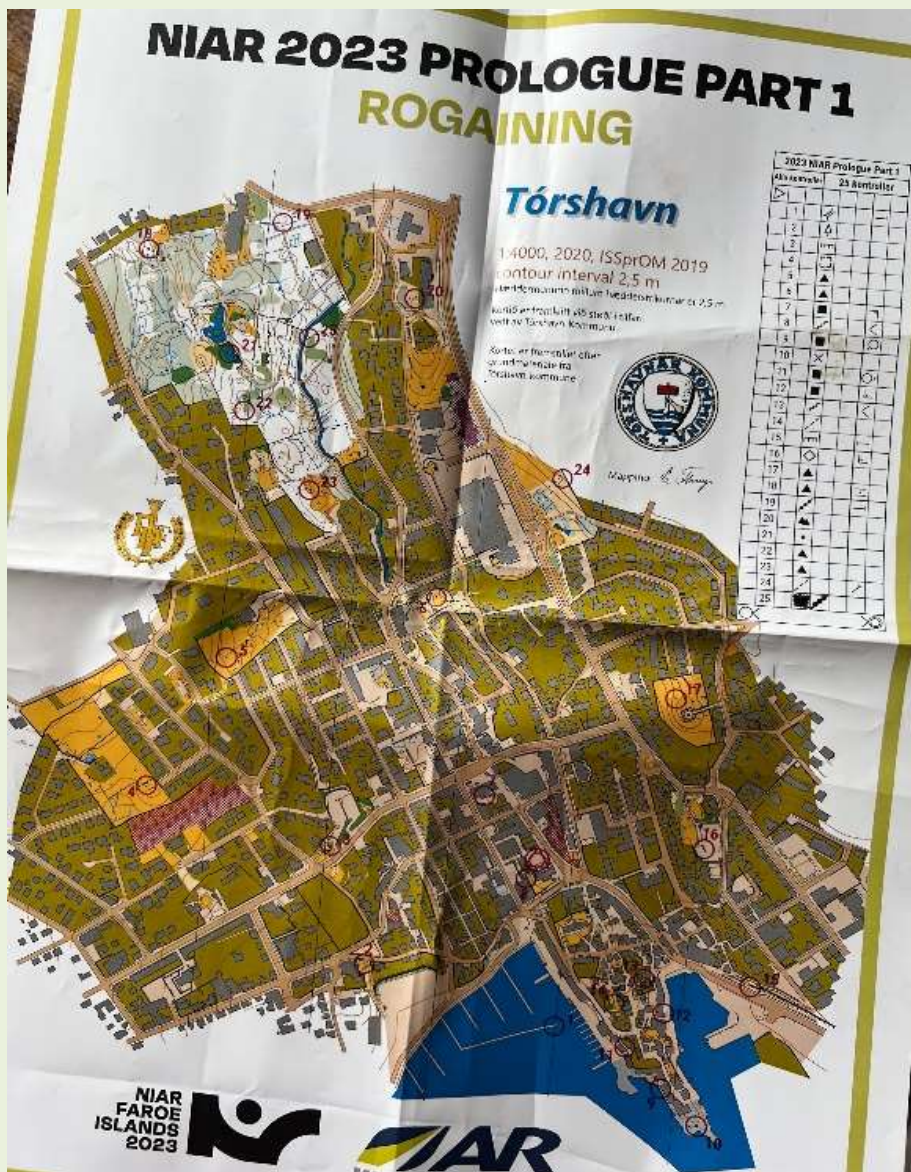
## NIAR – Nordic Islands Adventure Race – Ian Furlong

### Faroe Islands Adventure Race 2023

*The one with all the maps - 38 paper maps and a 3d wooden carving in about 12 different scales!*

The Faroe Islands were never really on my radar for a place to visit, but after I heard about an adventure race across the remote islands in the North Atlantic I thought this was the perfect opportunity to explore.

The race consisted of 12 continuous stages, including street orienteering, mountain biking, trekking, pack rafting and a cliff jump! The estimated finishing time was about 3.5 days, covering up to 500km and 20,000m of ascent, but for some teams it would take over 5 days.



### Prologue - Street-O (9am Sunday)

The race started with a prologue that all readers here would have been very comfortable with, street O. Our mixed team of 4 made light work of the narrow lanes and old town houses, emerging from the leg in first place. Not a place that we would remain for long, but it was nice to be leading some of the world's top teams into the mountain bike stage.



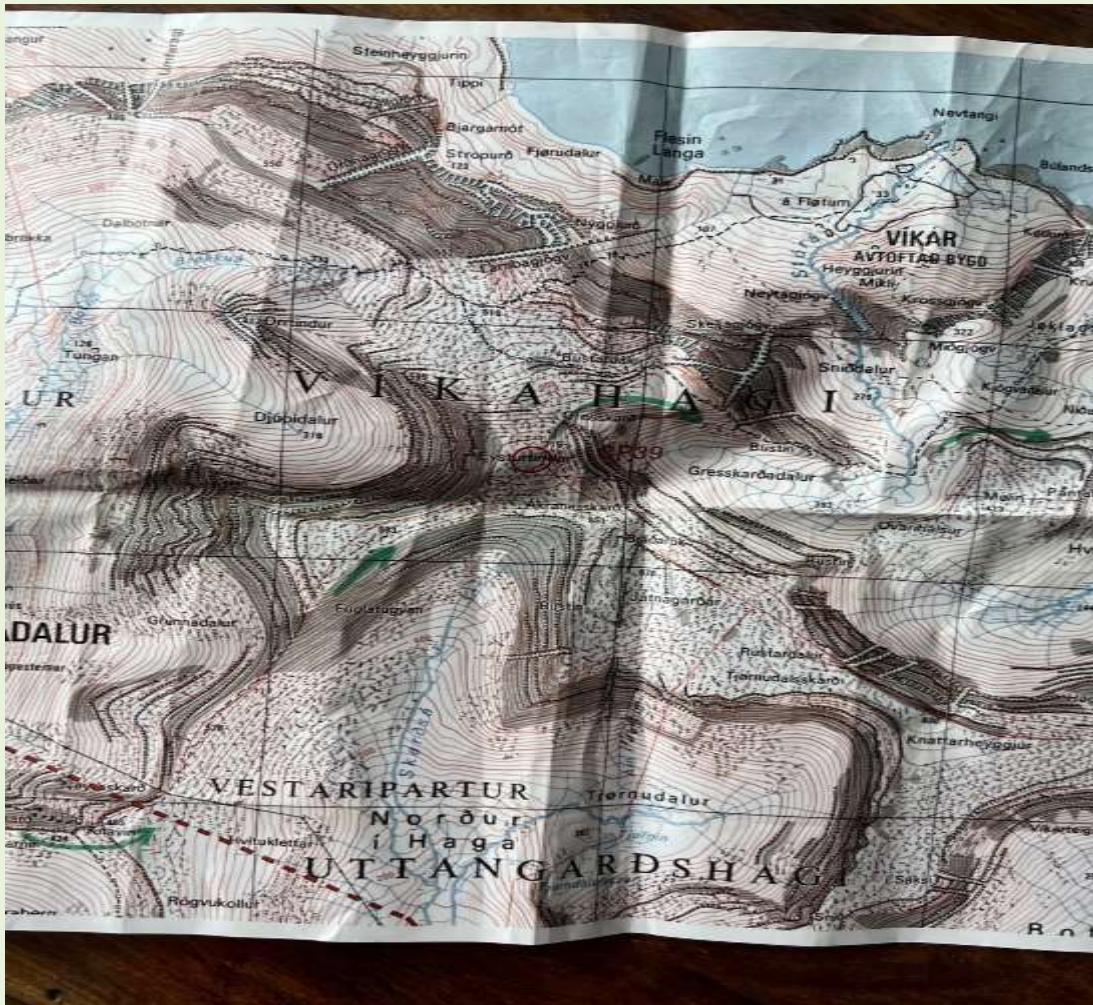
### Leg 1 - MTB (Sunday morning)

### Leg 2 - Trek (Sunday evening)

After 7 hours of cycling (and a fair amount of hike-a-bike) and our first of many tunnels, it was time for the BIG trek. 68km (including a short, midnight pack raft). The views were incredible, clouds rolled over the western peaks as we picked our way over ridge lines and through barely touched valleys. Although it wasn't until we returned here after the race did I notice a classic view was just behind us. Sometimes it's good to remember to look up from the map!



The navigation was not particularly challenging, although the misty tops did cause some teams problems, allowing us to stay in touch with a few teams around 6-8th place.





### **Leg 3 - Packraft (Monday evening)**

24 hours later we emerged into a small coastal village where our pack rafts were waiting to be paddled 40km through darkness to another set of islands. In the middle of the night, fatigue started to set in. With the sharp, rocky coast lines, finding a place to get out of our tiny pump up rafts was a challenge. But fortune was upon us - we paddled to a small jetty and found an old boat house suitable for a short 1 hour sleep.

The next five hours were some of the toughest, mentally, for us as a team. The distant lights on the horizon didn't appear to get any closer for hours on end. We battled sleepmonsters, boredom and a headwind, until the sun began to rise.

### **Leg 4,5,6 - Bike, trek, bike (Tuesday morning)**

Finally, dry land! Now time for some more cycling over to a cliff jump and a dive to an underwater checkpoint. Much to the amusement of the marshals, teammate Rickie overcame the buoyancy of the wetsuits provided by stripping off, before collecting the 2nd submerged control.



The next trekking leg was a new one for all of us, we were to navigate the rocky skyline armed with nothing but a 3d carved map! A challenge at the best of times, but with minimal visibility and huge, rugged crags and impassable terrain in almost all directions, this was more about reading the terrain than reading a map.

Then back to the bikes for a connecting leg (including a 6km underwater tunnel) to take us to the crux of the entire race - the packraft-trek.





## Leg 7 - Packraft/trek (Tuesday night)

Before this race I'd barely heard of pack rafting, let alone practised transitioning from water to trekking, carrying everything - including wetsuits, paddles and PFD. But that's the beauty of adventure racing - it takes you places you've never been before and challenges what you believe to be possible. The organisers



cut the first section from the course after the top 3 teams struggled with the currents, so we headed straight for WP3.

The first of 3 mountains was tackled in darkness, making the very steep and rocky descent hard to navigate accurately. After our 2nd (and final) sleep of just 90 minutes in a magical mountain hut that appeared at the perfect time, we were on the move again. We found our route down blocked by the classic steep cliffs of the Faeroes, but a minor traverse to passable ground soon had us back to the coast and pumping up our rafts again.



Inflate, paddle, deflate, trek.

Inflate, paddle, deflate, trek.

**Leg 8-12 - bike, trek, bike  
(Wednesday evening)**

And leg 7 was behind. Before heading back from the distant eastern islands we still had to visit the highest sea cliff in Europe, with a short out and back up a 800m mountain (sadly fully in the clouds and no final view to remember).

The organisers had cut the final

trek stage to help keep the event on schedule, so all that stood between us and a proper bed was a



100km ride back to the finish line in Torshaven. With a renewed sense of purpose (and 2 late night garage stops) we finished at 1am, 88 hours after we had started. We placed a very respectable 7th place (out of 25 teams).

The race was a beautiful way to see the incredible country of the Faroes. We were so lucky with the weather, barely a drop of rain during the event. The day we left, the heavens opened and the clouds descended. Visibility was varied throughout our race, but we snatched some unforgettable views. It was the luck of the draw. The organisers did a great job with gaining permissions to access hidden corners of

the mountains, again, making this a once in a lifetime experience. My teammates and I are so lucky and grateful to be able to do these things. I hope to make another video of the race in the coming months, so you can see more of the experience. Keep an eye out in a future edition for the link. And remember, there are 2 videos of previous





... races if you haven't seen them yet ... [https://youtube.com/@furiousfoggy?si=aarnKg1U\\_dBgrl9p](https://youtube.com/@furiousfoggy?si=aarnKg1U_dBgrl9p)

Finally, if you think this sort of thing could be your thing, there is a shorter 2-3 day event planned for North Wales next summer. <https://itera.co.uk/>. Any questions, I'm always happy to chat. Grab me at a local event or email me, [furlongis@gmail.com](mailto:furlongis@gmail.com)

### Classic errors:

When every col looks the same, it's vital to make sure you enter the right one! Team East Wind overshot the get out from the water and, unbeknown to them, had entered a col that was off the top of their map. The organisers had to send a rescue crew to find them and help them down to safety.

You can't knock them for perseverance though, they ascended back up the 800m mountain to find the correct peak and claimed the elusive checkpoint. The mistake cost them well over 12 hours.

### Race tracking / maps:

[https://en.follow.me.cz/tracking-en/?race\\_id=404&lang=en\\_GB](https://en.follow.me.cz/tracking-en/?race_id=404&lang=en_GB)





## British Sprint and Middle Championships

About 20 Airienteers made the trip to Northern Ireland for the British Sprint and Middle Championships in May. By all accounts these were tricky, demanding races – the Sprint races in Armagh, qualifier at the Hill of Infinity and final at St Lukes Hospital, and the Middle distance at (to me) a rather green-looking Drumkeeragh Wood.

Congratulations to Charlie, John, Caroline and Susan for placing in the top 3 in the Sprint Final, and to Charlie (1<sup>st</sup>), Alice, Jo and Susan placing in the top 3 in the Middle Distance race.

Here are all AIRE results from the A final at the Sprint, and top 10 places at the Middle Distance.

### Sprint

Charlie Alcock	2nd	M10
Andrew Stemp	13th	M Open
John Blatherwick	3rd	M35
Aron Fulton	5th	M35
Neil Conway	16th	M55
Chris Burden	5th	M75
Katie Buckley	4th	W16
Alice Leake	4th	W Open
Caroline Young	3rd	W35
Jo Buckley	5th	W45
Natasha Conway	5th	W50
Joyce Marshall	7th	W60
Susan Stevens	2nd	W70

### Middle

Charlie Alcock	1st	M10
Andrew Stemp	10th	M21
Aron Fulton	4th	M35
John Blatherwick	5th	M35
Dave Alcock	8th	M45
Neil Conway	6th	M55
Chris Burden	6th	M75
Katie Buckley	5th	W16
Alice Leake	3rd	W21
Caroline Young	5th	W35
Jo Buckley	3rd	W45
Natasha Conway	5th	W50
Joyce Marshall	6th	W60
Susan Stevens	3rd	W70



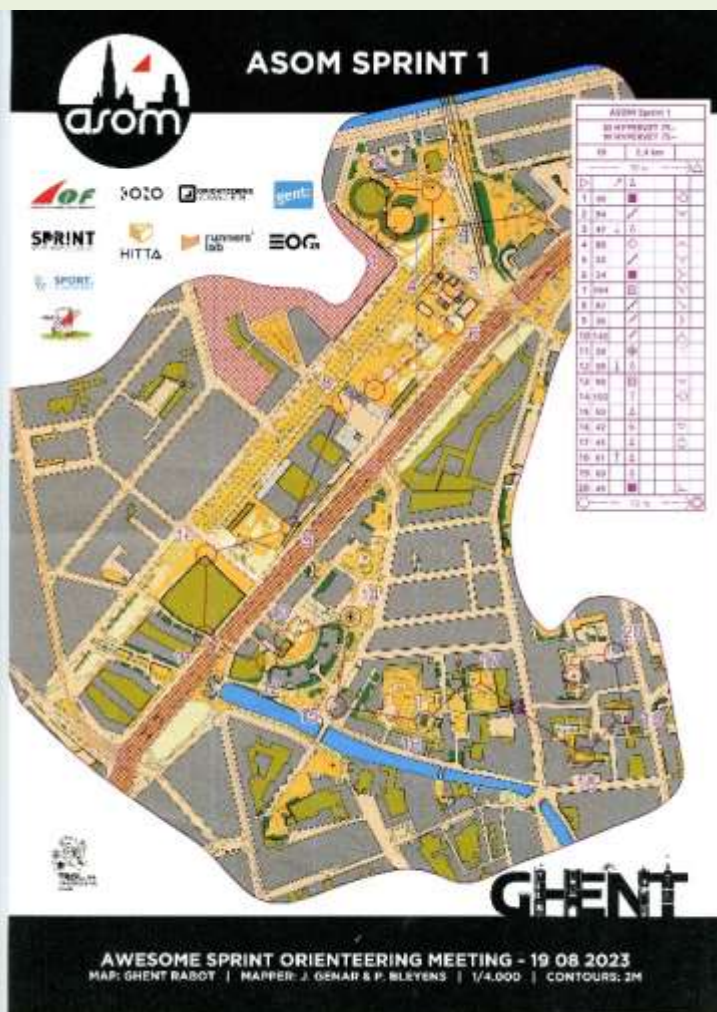
## ASOM - Ghent August 18-20 – Gerry Symes

It's billed as the Antwerp Spring Orienteering Meeting - and it's not in Antwerp and not in Spring - so they renamed it Awesome Sprint Orienteering Meeting ..

The actual location was the beautiful city of Ghent and the event comprised a Mixed Sprint Relay on Friday night from the Dr Guislain Museum formerly a 19th century mental institution (don't go there!) and its surroundings. Saturday was a two-part sprint around the Rabot and the St Lucas Hospital just to the north of the city centre. Sunday was the European City Tour Race in the old part of the city. Around these were two World Ranking Events for the Elite orienteers - a Knock-Out Sprint on the Saturday and a Sprint Race on the Sunday.

Friday: I didn't actually participate on the Friday but the organisers were trialling a different sort of relay. There were four maps on an A3 sheet - 4 different courses - The male ran Course 1, then the female ran Course 2, the male Course 3 and the female Course 4. Three Categories - Open, Mixed Youth and Mixed Masters (55+).

From the accounts I heard it was a mixed success - the start was delayed and didn't go off until 8 pm



which meant that a couple of legs were run in the dark. Whilst it was relatively easy for the Elite runners who went around in about 9 minutes for each leg the older runners were taking nearer 25 minutes - so nearly a two hour event for them and the organisers were putting pressure on them to retire as it was getting late! 22 out of 104 retired on the Open Course, 4 out of 13 on the Mixed Youth and 18 out of 41 on the Mixed Masters. The planning was good, the area was good but I did hear of one instance of a runner doing the first part of one course and, unwittingly, the second part of another course - and I'm sure they weren't the only one. Perhaps the idea needs some refinement!

Saturday. Two Sprint courses for us - Hypervets - only 2.4 km and 2.5 km based at the school IVV Sint Vincentius. The district of Rabot was

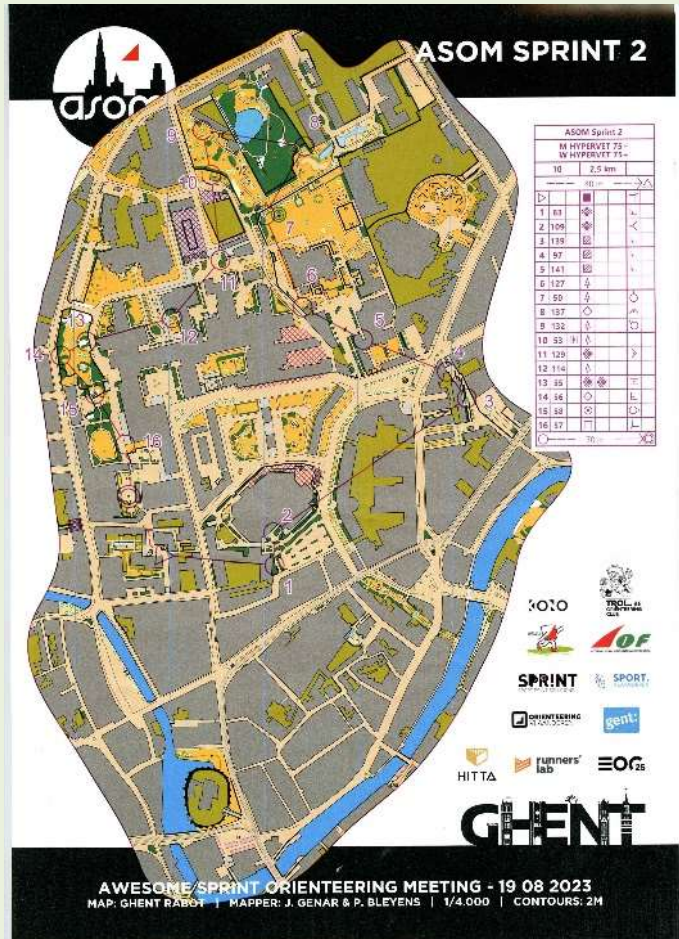


a linear park with two disused gasholders and some intricate urban housing with green spaces in between and also an artificial barrier which made you think a bit more. Made my first mistake straight away running off too fast and taking 4 minutes to find the first control which, ironically was on the south western side of a 4 metre high bank of one of the former gasholders! Pulled it back a bit to finish 6th but was frustrated with myself.

The next sprint - some three and a half hours later (why?) - was around a small park and the buildings of St Lucas Hospital. Fairly straightforward but well planned and also finishing in the arena inside the school which was a good location as you could also view the Elite Race Finishes and appreciate the speed these athletes were going at. I finished 4th and 4th overall.

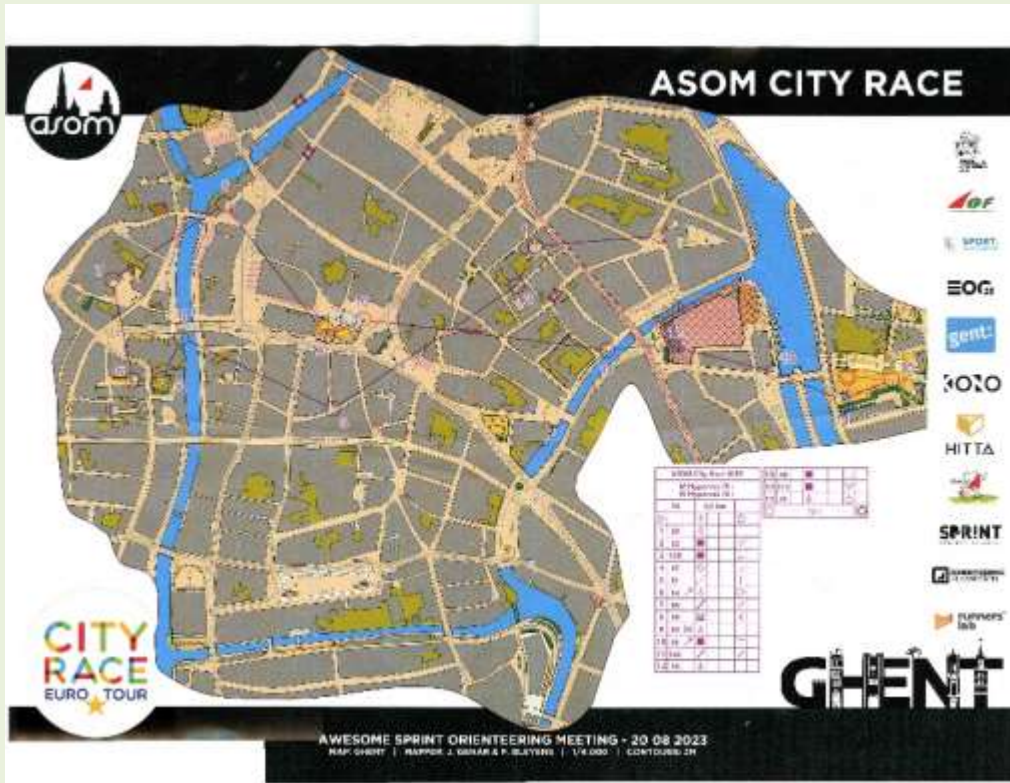
Sunday was the City Race, part of the CRET European Race Series which I am doing. Already had a 3rd in Cordoba, a 2<sup>nd</sup> in Ancona and a 4th in the recent Harrogate Race so I'm 2nd in the league overall. The scoring system is slightly different in that you are given a percentage of your time behind the winner - just means that you don't actually run for a position but you have to get as near as you can to the winning time if that makes sense.

The event centre was Coyendanspark just east of the centre. The course was around the old town which involved running past the magnificent churches and castles (one was Gerald the Devil's castle which I appreciated!) and over canal and river bridges. You had to look out for tourists and the really long trams which ran through the area plus all the cyclists - never seen so many bikes! I was fortunate to have an early start which meant less tourists but the temperature was still 27C. The course itself was 3.5 km for the Men's and Women's Hypervets and didn't pose too many problems - I would have preferred it a bit more intricate but didn't expect it to come up to the standard of the Harrogate event which is one of the best I have done. Once again, I came in fourth about 4 minutes behind the winner - Ian Cooper from



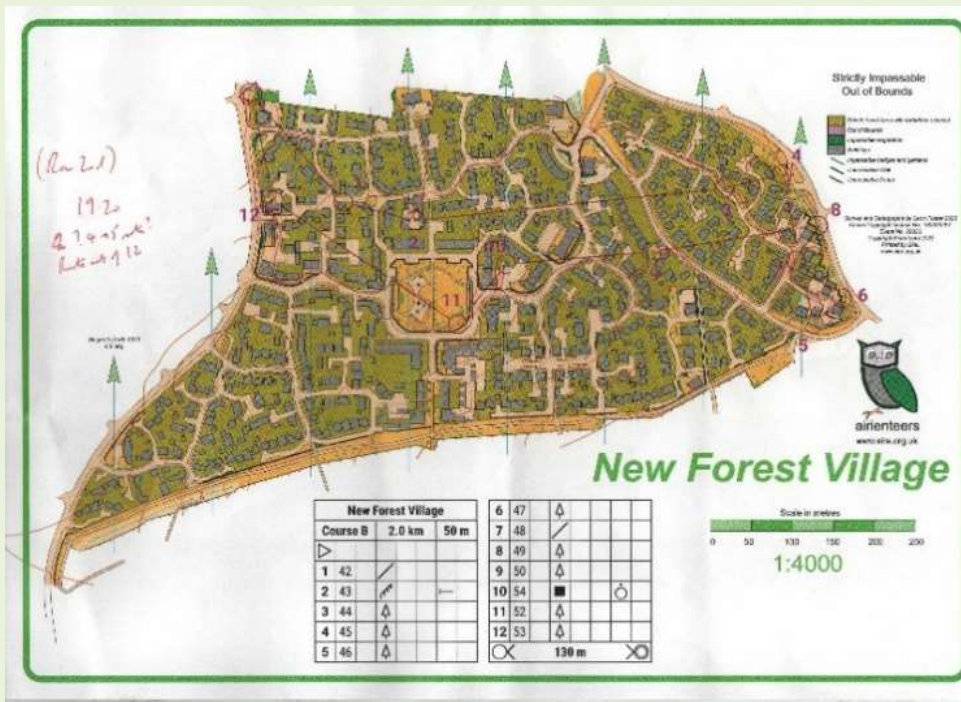


SYO. After that it was just relaxing in the shade around the city sporting the obligatory ASOM T shirt - this year's was white with a nice design of Ghent on it.



ASOM seems to be changing locations over the next few years to other towns in Belgium. Next year's event will be staged in Leuven 18-20th May - same format.

### AIRE Spring & Summer Leagues



### Middleton New Forest Village Sprints – 3 May

3 shorter, parallel sprint courses around a newly-mapped estate in South Leeds. We could run 1, 2 or 3 of these – about 20 of us there. This is Course B, which I ran 2<sup>nd</sup>, taking almost twice as long as Nathan.





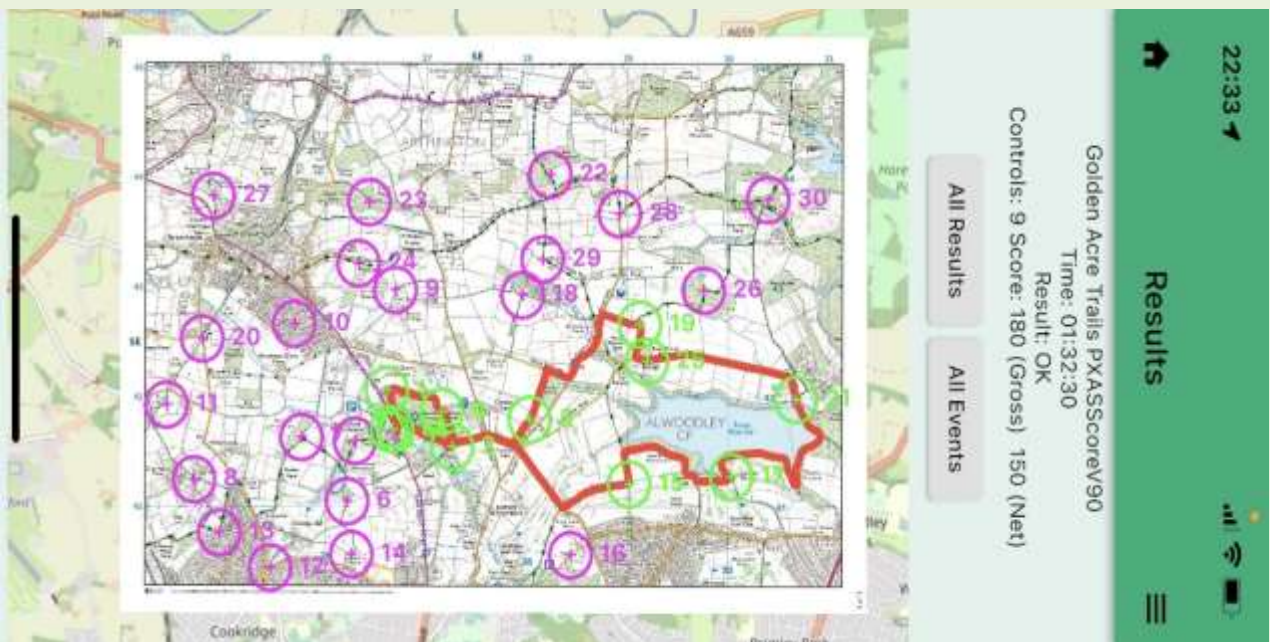
## Countryside Score – Golden Acre Park, 14 June

For some time now, I've been seeing posts about MDOC's Spunch Countryside Score events on the Orienteering UK Event Facebook feed. I was one of around 20 at Golden Acre Park for our first attempt at something similar – here's my experience.

On picking up the map I decided to go east to places I didn't know, rather than round Cookridge, Crag House Farm and Bramhope which I vaguely knew. After a few controls in Golden Acre Park then heading off east, I realised this was obviously a terrible plan and there were a lot more points available to the west and south-west. So I ended up with 2 challenges –

- could I run continuously for 90 minutes? (no, there was an uphill bit after about 70 minutes)
- could I run all the way round Eccup reservoir and back to Golden Acre Park in under 90 minutes? (no, about 2 minutes over)

Anyhow, despite my terrible strategy, I enjoyed a long run on a warm summer evening. I can't remember when I last did a training run for 90 minutes. Maybe could have had a few more controls near the start and finish, but well worth repeating as far as I'm concerned.



Countryside Score map with my route.

On the same evening MDOC held one of their Spunch events, and there were about 150 there.



## Airienteers in Action

With thanks to Wendy Carlyle for all pictures.

### Knarborough – EuroCity Sprint





## Harrogate – EuroCity Urban





## Orienteering - a poem

By an unknown student on the Leeds Uni PGCE Outdoor Activities course in 1998 – courtesy of Will Patterson.

