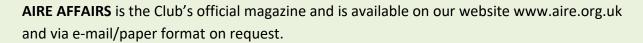


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(All email address have @ replaced by AT)

Cover: Emily Gibbins at the JWOC Sprint Event in Italy – picture by Eszter Kocsik



Braemar in Royal Deeside - Dave Murgatroyd finishing Day 3 at the Scottish 6 Days

Picture by Wendy Carlyle – all event pictures are Wendy's unless stated otherwise.

EditO – Peter Jones

My thanks to Cathy, Sam, Bethan, Emily, Caroline, Rob, Lindsey, Ian, and David for their contributions.

A warm welcome to new member Stephen Forster

In this bumper issue, we have reports from junior and youth championships, training camps, and from orienteering events as different as Coast and Islands, Race Across Edinburgh, OO Cup in Slovenia and Italy, and the White Rose.

Some of these events are new, but there were also many AIRE members at summer events which have been in the orienteering calendar for many years. Last weekend was the White Rose in North Yorkshire (see David's report) – the 50th time it's been held and still getting a good attendance. And a few weeks ago, over 2,200 orienteers



competed at the Scottish 6 Days which started in 1977. I make that 25 times it's been held (maybe some AIRE members have been to all of them?)

All of which prompts a few thoughts on where orienteering is going in the UK. At the last AGM Peter Brooke, the new Chief Exec, said 'As a sport, we need to be brave, take risks and be prepared to change the norm', and British Orienteering recently advertised for a new Events Development Officer*. He has also talked about 'challenges in a crowded marketplace jostling to capture new audiences'. This looks to me like a serious attempt to move the sport in new directions, with new types of events that we haven't tried yet — maybe more use of technology (like Maprun, SPunch) or sponsored events with a TV or cultural tie-in (like Quid Games**) or finding ways of creating an interesting event where the navigation is fairly straightforward.

On the flip side some traditional events may not survive. The 5 or 6 day events at the start of August still look to be going strong, and I was at the White Rose on the Saturday and I'd say it will keep going as long as EBOR, with help from neighbouring clubs, have enough manpower to run it. But I can't see the Harvester, for example, continuing much longer.

And some orienteers will be fine with these changes to the norm, and some won't.

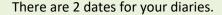
- * From the British Orienteering website, it doesn't look as if anyone has been appointed yet
- ** Some may already think that going orienteering is like being on Destination X

Message from Julia Crook: A very big thank you to the many Airienteers members who donated to my Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge for Alzheimer's Research UK. I raised over £800 including all the gift aid contributions, and due to the training I did for it, I am now a bit fitter for orienteering!

Chair Affairs – Cathy Dawson

The last few months have been really successful for some of our junior members (Sam Crook - Lagganlia Camp, Bethan Buckley - Deeside Camp & European Youth Orienteering Championships, Katie Buckley and Ewen Wilkinson - Stockholm Camp, and Emily Gibbins - Junior World Orienteering Championships. There are some reports from these events in this copy of Aire Affairs.

We are looking forwards to hosting the Dales Town & Country weekend on 19th and 20th September. The Sunday event sees a completely new orienteering area - an exciting opportunity to explore Moughton and Sulber on the SE slopes of Ingleborough. Entries are open via the website.





Wednesday 24th September is **the AGM**, which will be upstairs in The Oxford Tap (previously the Potting Shed), Guiseley at 8pm. There will be free pizza & some short presentations from your committee about the last year. Please do think about coming along - we need our club members feedback and input to help shape what we do as a club in the future.



Please indicate whether or not you can attend and any dietary needs or requests via the survey (QR code and link here). Kindly do this by Mon 22nd Sept.

https://forms.office.com/e/NUpKPv6BjN

There will be a pre-AGM urban sprint race, starting at Parkinson's Park (500m from the AGM), which is also race 5 out of 5 of the summer midweek sprint league. Pre-enter and get details for this on the AIRE website.

The second date is to celebrate being awarded BOF Club of the Year 2025, Saturday 22nd November in the evening at St Chad's in Headingly. Full details to follow but there will be a bar, some food and hopefully a ceilidh - I hope that is enough to entice as many people along as possible. For those who need an O-event to come to an O-social, the Beckett Park permanent orienteering course is right on the doorstep - so it's win win.

Hope to catch up with you at the September weekend/AGM & as always get in touch at chairATaire.co.uk with any ideas or issues.

Cathy

Wanted – for YHOA roles

Mike Cope has created and distributed mementos for the YHOA SuperLeague, Night League and Urban League for many years. Also, Chris Burden has coordinated the YHOA Urban League for many years.

Mike and Chris need to step down from these roles as soon as possible and new people are needed to carry them out on behalf of YHOA. It is perhaps time for new ideas. Maybe some YHOA members who have received mementos in the past or who have avidly followed the Urban League results could step forward to do their bit for a few years.

Anyone willing to consider either job should contact Mike initially - mike.cope1800@gmail.com.

For the over-55s

The club has received this email from the Compass Orienteering Project at the University of Vienna –

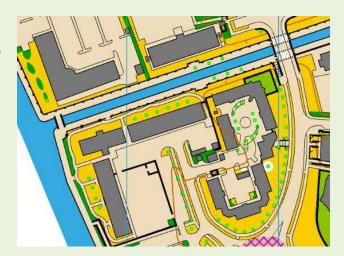
** My name is Peter Gröpel from the University of Vienna, Austria, and I run an EU Sport project in orienteering. The aim is to promote orienteering as a great sport for health, as the combination of exercise and navigation not only enhances physical fitness, but also stimulates brain and prevents cognitive decline in older adults. We want to promote it evidence-based and run a study with older aged orienteers. Therefore, I would like to ask you to forward this email to senior orienteers in your club (aged 55 years and older). If you are 55+ years old, please complete a short survey about your health, lifestyle, and well-being. The survey takes ca. 10 minutes. For participation, click here: https://sosci.univie.ac.at/compass2025/

Thank you for helping us to promote orienteering! **

Cleveland OK event on September 13th

We're a large club with a very strong nearneighbour, so we aren't one of the 30+ clubs who have qualified for the CompassSport Cup and Trophy final. Which is a shame, not least because the final is being held by CLOK on South Gare – sand-dunes and a great area.

But, on the Saturday (13th), CLOK are also holding a Middle-distance urban event at Stockton Riverside (which was scheduled to host JK Sprint in 2020 ... before Covid intervened).



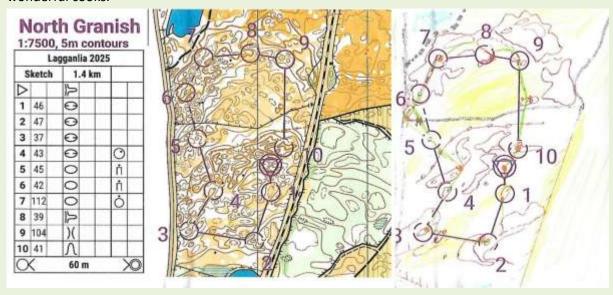
Link to entry details and flyer here - https://www.clok.org.uk/events2025/250913 Stockton.htm

Lagganlia – Sam Crook

Towards the end of July, I caught the train up from Leeds all the way to Aviemore. Many of the participants met up on the journey. Coaches met us and drove us to Lagganlia outdoor camp, our accommodation for the next orienteering filled week. 23 upper year M/W14s had been selected to take part in this prestigious training camp based in the East Highlands. Lagganlia is a yearly event, each year taking up to 24 new juniors. We arrived on Saturday evening and were soon getting to know other people through icebreaker activities. Friends were already being made and we could tell this was going to be a very fun week.

Day 1: After an 8 o'clock breakfast we headed out to Heath Field for a day of map practice, rides and wasp nests. In the afternoon we headed a little way down the track for a star relay. One person would take a tag out to control 1 then come back. Person two takes it from 1-2, person 3 takes it from 2-3, and so on until we had completed all controls. Some people were keen to head home after a large Scottish wood wasp invaded our camp. Luckily, they don't sting so it was a pleasurable rare sighting.

Day 2: We took the minibus to North Granish for the second day. A trip filled with songs such as Combine Harvester, which turned into a daily tradition, although some coaches weren't as keen on our loud singing. North Granish was an excellent area with loads of small rolling hills and birch trees, and it almost seemed like a magical landscape. We had a variety of exercises including long and short legs, corridor, handrails, hills, and depressions. The most interesting, though, was the sketch course. That morning, we were given a course and set amount of time to draw our own sketch maps that we had to use to do the exercise. For most of us, we were able to complete the course using our maps, and I think most people learned a lot about simplifying through this challenge. We finished off the day with an odd and even relay where two people were running at once, and we had two maps: one with even-numbered controls and the other with odd. You could get one control at a time, and first team back with all controls wins. We finished off day 2 with a wonderful evening meal from wonderful cooks.



Day 3: For day 3 we changed it up a bit and headed to pine forested sand dunes at Roseisle, a unique type of terrain that many hadn't run on before. We got a large selection of courses which included some technical green sections. The maps had most of the paths removed and some people decided to try navigating without a compass. I found this useful because I've improved on picking off detail features and orientating the map from them, which I did in the green.

After lunch we took the long route round to the relay start which didn't seem necessary although the coaches said it was. After a morning of the forest pretty much to ourselves, the afternoon was filled with people. This relay was a distraction relay, we were all given a number and then the coaches handed over to us, so it was like we had the last leg in the relay by calling out our number. The race was filled with gaffles and coaches running around trying to distract us. They would shout things like "do you know what control you're going to?" or "I'm lost can you help me" or "it's that way". Sometimes what the coaches were saying was correct, but you could never know. One of the

controls wasn't turned on so we had to use the pin punch. And to add to all this, there was a disused railway running down the middle of the area. And not to mention one of the coaches' siblings turned up and ran around filming us. Luckily for me I knew exactly where I was going so I was overtaking people rather than looking lost.

Overall, I think I improved a lot from that day. My attention to detail, planning and route choice where what stood out to me as improvements. I am particularly proud of one leg on the relay where I took much superior route choice and saved about 20–30 seconds. Then back to the Lagganlia it was for cake, warm food, lots of games of hide and seek, a presentation by the coaches, and our beds which were quickly becoming the primary thing we were looking forward to after each day.

Day 4: Wednesday was the day of the sprint orienteering. Firstly, a short drive brought us to

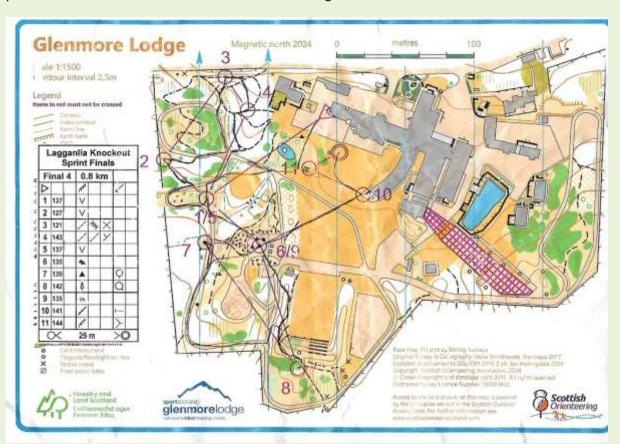


Aviemore. This was the sprint qualifiers and the sprint championships. It was a gaffled, timed-start, urban event with a little bit of forest. The course was made challenging by using artificial barriers. Some people got caught out by these and it cost them time or even their place in the results. Near the end there was a complex butterfly section near the golf course. Unfortunately, this was my worst result of the trip but I learnt from my mistakes as you'll read in the next section.

After the morning qualifiers, we headed to another outdoors centre called Glenmore Lodge. Everyone participated in the knockouts where we started off with 2 gaffled butterfly loops and then

explored the rest of the site. This was my favourite location of the whole week which is partially because I won the knockouts. Our course was only 1.4km long for this but it still had some fairly steep hills especially the road alongside the ski slope. After this, the top 3 boys and top two girls from the two heats moved into quarantine for the final. There were slightly more boys than girls so that's why there was a difference. For those who don't know, quarantine is an area where competitors wait; you can't see the start, you are forbidden to leave, strictly no electronics and there is a toilet, so you don't have to leave. We were told that in some events people have had to wait up to 8 hours in quarantine so people often sleep.

Luckily, we only had to wait for about 15 minutes. For me and another athlete, this was going to be a very interesting race. For the final we had only 800m, 11 controls on a 1:1500 map! It was a very fast paced race and for me and the other athlete our first gaffle was the same. For the second one he



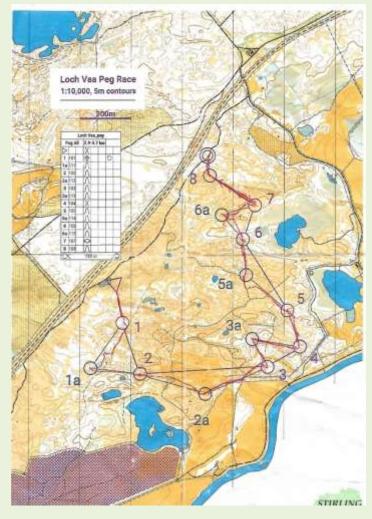
completed it slightly faster than me, meaning for controls 9 onwards he had a head start. Between 9 and 10 it was very intense and I managed to overtake him. Everyone was cheering us on not knowing what was about to happen as I ran into the finish in first place. I had beaten my competitor by seconds or so I thought until I downloaded. Mispunch! On the last control. I thought it was an error until I checked the map and saw that we had both missed control 11 (see map). Only the planner knew what had happened. Both me and the other athlete were so focused on the sprint finish that we had not noticed the final control. This meant that we were both disqualified but I still enjoyed it and it was such a fun event to do. And to finish the morning we had a game of volleyball. Then we headed back to Lagganlia to rest before the night.

At around 21:00 we headed to Spey Valley golf course for a selection of night courses, 2 Light Greens and an Orange. Most people took this fairly easy. It was a good idea to include this event as it gave a range of different types of events. The golf course had fairly distinct features, so it was very safe. Because of this we did have quite a late bedtime, but everyone enjoyed it and it was a good chance to practice Night-O.

Day 5: For day 5 a load of tired and grumpy athletes had to go to Loch Vaa. Here we had lots of smaller exercises so back to normal again. Unfortunately, the map was a bit out of date and the whole place was covered in uneven heather which would normally be ok but just after a Night-O you can guess it's not pleasant. We had a few simplification exercises which were good as there were lots of controls. There were also lots of unique forest marsh and contour features and the group learnt lots about planning and execution here.

In the afternoon was of course the competition event, a peg race. Eight main controls which all had an unknown number of pegs attached. There was a mass start and if you go to a control and there is a peg, you must take it and then complete the extra control. So, you do 1 to 1a to 2 rather than 1 to 2. The finish also had pegs on it. The person with the most pegs wins. If 2 people both have the same number of pegs it's based on time. No control has enough pegs for everyone. This type of race is

designed to make the better people get the pegs at the first control so the not so good people can get ahead. With no pegs it was 2.9km, compared to 3.7km which I did, and got back 2nd by about 0.25 seconds. This meant I won though because I was the only person who got all 6 pegs which is quite rare. I got the last peg on control 3 and there were people right behind me so at first seemed my win was very close but then Don (coach) reminded me I wouldn't have had to do the extra control at 3. This was probably my second favourite event of the week, and I am particularly proud of some of the legs. 1 to 1a there was a large group following an earth wall, but we came off too early. I was first to relocate as I had been able to spot a tower - a skill I learnt earlier in the week. 3a to 4 lots of people were at the wrong end of a depression but using a spur at the correct end I was able to find the control effectively. 5 to



5a I saw people were going a lot slower through the heather and so I cut almost 90 degrees away from the control to reach a path and overtook around 3 people while also having a feature that led me straight in. Finally, 7 to 8 I went pretty much straight on this leg because there were lots of visible features and I am fast at running up hills and it paid off meaning I caught up to the person who was in first place. Little did they know, I had one more peg.

Day 6: By now we were all shattered but this day was the most important of all. It was the tour championships. Located in Culbin Forest, a much harder version of Roseisle, 5.5km and 20 controls. The true test of skill was what the coaches planned by control 4. There was a big chain led by me and 2 other incredibly good orienteers. We used our skills from the past week to successfully find most controls, on some our bearings were slightly off. It was a really physically challenging area so it was important that we used the skills we learnt effectively. To finish off the race there was a section through dark green full of complex contours. What a pleasant surprise! On this race we had start intervals of 3 minutes, meaning although we all finished together, we were just in reverse order of our starts. The girls had 4.5km with a few less hills to climb with the same technical level. We also had quarantine about 600m from the start which made it feel like a real event. I secured a strong second place but first would have been a touch nicer. We then took the minibus back and almost half the people fell asleep, luckily not the driver.

That afternoon we did our final bit of orienteering. A relay on site. Two out of 3 runners out at once, there were 18 controls. You could get one each time. Some of the controls had a bag with an acrylic puzzle piece. They were coloured corresponding to our teams and the first team to complete the puzzle was the winner. Not everyone competed due to minor injuries that the coaches didn't want to get worse just before the Scottish 6 days. They didn't do nothing though, as one decided to organise our team from the start flag. With his help and our running combined we were able to win both competitions. However, the finish box wasn't on the flag because one of the coaches had it and we had to chase him down to get it!

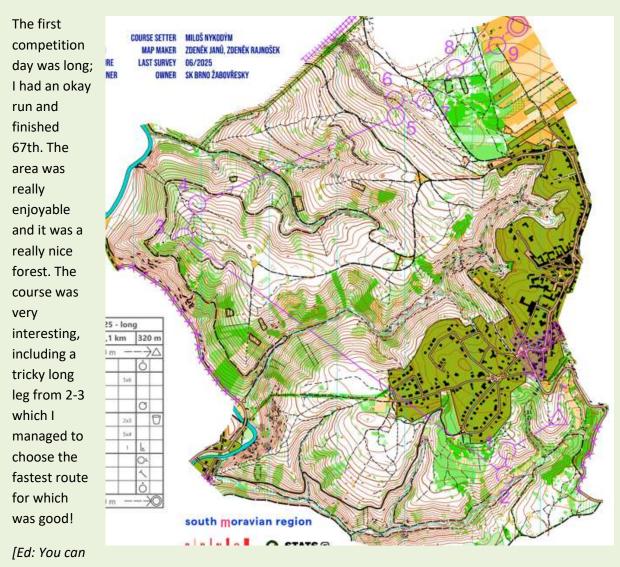
To finish off, in the evening we had a big party meal, 3 excellent courses by the cooks. This was followed by the ceilidh, a traditional Scottish country dance. It was a lot of fun and a great way to spend the last evening. But wait... it wasn't over yet because at 22:30 we all had to sneak out and hide without the coaches finding us. They were supposed to come out at 22:30 but they were enjoying themselves relaxing in their hot tubs. I think we should get them next year. Anyway, this meant that everyone got to their hiding spots fine. Maybe it was our practice playing lots of games of hide and seek throughout the week, the coaches weren't able to find us. However, one person handed themselves in because of the cold and another thought they had been found when they misheard the coach so got up and were spotted. Everyone else was out there until exactly 23:50 when we headed straight to the coaches' cabin for a chocolate. What a great way to finish, a nice late night before some of us had a complex train journey home.

I had a fantastic week and very much thank the coaching team, organisers, selectors, cooks, and other helpers for making this possible. I massively improved my orienteering skills and made new friends and am looking forward to my next year of orienteering. Finally, I thank JROS, British Orienteering, Airienteers, and the Jack Bloor fund, for their very generous financial contributions.

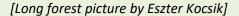
EYOC – Bethan Buckley

From the 15th-20th of July this year, I competed at the European Youth Orienteering Championships (EYOC) in Brno, Czechia. I really enjoyed my week of both competing in interesting areas, and meeting lots of new people from all over the world. Overall, it was a great experience and I learnt a lot about international competitions and really enjoyed the nice Czech terrain for the first time.

The first 2 days were training days so that we could get used to the areas and mapping style. On the first day, we did some sprintervals to practice for the sprint and later on we went to a lovely forest and did a short course there. We were told to jog slowly or walk so as to not tire ourselves out. On the second training day, there was a forest and a sprint model course. The model courses are designed like a real course with all the same things as there would be in the competition (start layout, mapping) and were really fun to do.



try and pick a route from 2-3 from this map, or skip to the last page to see how Bethan did it ...]





The second day was the sprint which was what I had been aiming at the most. I had a really good run and managed 27th place which I was extremely happy with. The course was really fun and the atmosphere was amazing.

The final race was the relay. I didn't make the GB team for that, so I was put on a mixed team with a Hungarian and an Austrian which was really cool, it was also good as I didn't have as much pressure. My

run wasn't the best (lost 21 mins on 1 control) but I still enjoyed it and my overall racing was very successful! Team GB did very well on the relay day, with 3 podiums (top 6) for W16, M18 AND W18! I really enjoyed my week at my first international competition and hopefully I will be able to

experience it again.

550 Wildus

[Sprint finish picture by Jiří Mrkvička]

Thank you very much to AIRE for helping with the costs and to all the coaches who have helped me get up to this level in my orienteering.

JWOC – Emily Gibbins

In my final year as a W20, I finally managed to secure selection for Junior World Orienteering Champs (JWOC) - following two consecutive years as a reserve and earning my first GB vest at the Junior European Championships in October last year.

JWOC - this year held in the Trentino region of Italy - consists of five races: three individual and two team relay events. The first two are sprint format, followed by three races in the forest.

I joined the team a few days before the official competition began in order to squeeze in some training. We visited several forests in the region with similar terrain to what we'd be racing in the following week. The first day of training didn't go quite to plan - while running between two controls, I managed to roll my ankle twice! Thankfully, a miraculous recovery followed, and my ankle was ready to race by the start of the competition.

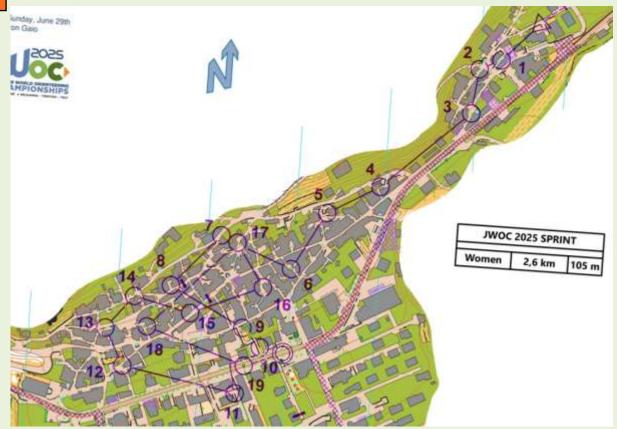
Bring on the competition!

The week kicked off with my favourite discipline: the sprint events. First up was the mixed sprint relay, which began at 3:30 p.m. peak heat - during an Italian heatwave. Standing on the start line as the first leg runner was toasty, to say the least. Running in the second of three British teams, I was happy to come back as the first Brit in 13th place, handing over to my second-leg teammate out of more than 80 teams.

The course was split roughly 60/40 between an intricate Italian town (Levico Terme) and a nearby park. The town section was technical, while the park was particularly gruelling, with minimal shade and the full force of the afternoon sun. It was tough going, and many athletes were visibly struggling by the final controls.

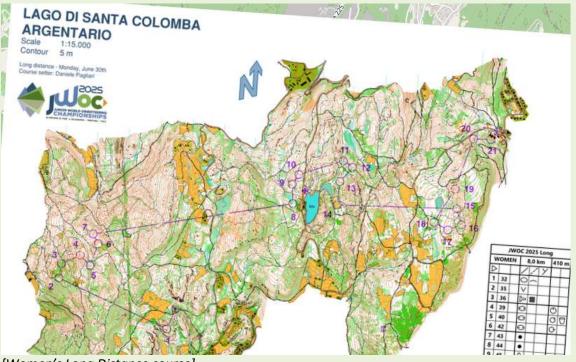
The following day was the individual sprint in a previously unmapped town called Cembra. Its centre was even more complex than Levico Terme - the site of the mixed sprint relay the day before. Luckily, my start time was in the morning, so the temperature was a more manageable low 30s (compared to the mid-30s the day before).

The town was filled with small streets, underpasses, and alleyways - some so dark I couldn't read the control numbers! Barriers had also been added across main streets to encourage use of the narrower routes. I made a few small route choice errors but was very happy to finish 37th out of over 160 competitors. A great day for GB overall as well, with James Hammond finishing 4th in the boys' competition and a couple of other top 20s!



[Women's Sprint course]

On to the forest...



[Women's Long Distance course]

Next came the long-distance race: a brutal 8.0 km course with 400 m of elevation. Hot, hilly, and highly technical - it was safe to say I was absolutely exhausted by the finish. The terrain, belonging to the local club's renowned area, contained over 6,000 pits remaining from historic silver mining. Accurate bearings and solid attack points were essential to avoid what was dubbed "pit bingo" while trying to locate controls in densely pitted terrain.

After a much-needed rest day, we moved on to the middle-distance race in Laghestèl forest, just outside our base in Baselga di Pinè. Thankfully, this area had far fewer pits than the long-distance forest and offered fast, runnable terrain. With a winning time expected around 25 minutes for 3.7 km, it was a physically demanding course that really suited my running background - I thoroughly enjoyed it.

The final day brought the forest relay, held in the same forest as the middle. I was handed over to in 22nd and managed to maintain our team's position through to the finish, despite a slightly stressful sprint finish (which I'm proud to say I won!).



[Emily finishing the Relay – picture by Marco Moser]

"All in all, it was a great week - also filled with plenty of pizza, pasta, ice cream, and lake swimming. Onwards to life as a senior!"

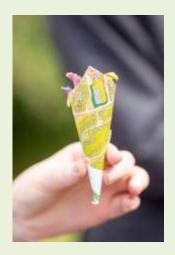
Lindsey has added :-

On the back of Emily's performance at JWOC and with my encouragement to go for senior selection she entered the Sprint Scotland races in August and has her first selection to the British senior team already before she reaches 21! She will represent GB in sprint races at the European Orienteering Championships in Belgium in September. Well done Emily!

Race across Edinburgh – Caroline Blatherwick

This article is long overdue - we've been meaning to write (for over a year now) to say thank you for the kind donation of spare orienteering maps that we fashioned into confetti cones for our wedding last June. This wasn't the only nod to orienteering at our wedding – we named the tables after orienteering symbols and included contours and a compass on the seating plan. Orienteering is clearly close to both our hearts!

Fast forward to the present, and what better way to celebrate our one year wedding anniversary, than to spend it racing as a pair in the Edinburgh orienteering ESOC race across Edinburgh challenge (June 21st, 2025). The traditional one year wedding anniversary gift is paper – so an orienteering map fitted the bill nicely.



The race across Edinburgh challenge was modelled on the BBC TV series 'Race across the world'. If you're not familiar with it, it's available on iPlayer and definitely worth a watch. It follows pairs that must race on land or water between designated checkpoints for the price of a direct aeroplane ticket. The pairs are equipped only with a map and are not allowed mobile phones; they frequently rely on the kindness of strangers to help them navigate as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. The programme showcases spectacular sceneries and local cultures, while following the emotional highs and lows of the contestants throughout the journey. The pairs carry backpacks, and not uncommonly they are seen discarding them and sprinting towards the final checkpoint for the dramatic climax - they open a guestbook to see whether they have won, and how far ahead/ behind they are from the other teams.

Race across Edinburgh had all the components of Race across the world, only on a smaller scale and budget! The start of the race was at the Heriot-Watt campus, which hosted the recent WOC relay race. We registered first thing in the morning and received our racing pack (comprising an A-Z and

bus map of Edinburgh) - we took this back to our accommodation for 45 minutes of studying. Fortunately, John was familiar with how to use an A-Z..... it had been so long since I'd used one that I'd forgotten!

70 pairs gathered on the start line. The race would comprise six separate Sprint races in parks across Edinburgh. We would only be given the name of the next park on completion of each Sprint, and true to the TV programme we had to race



as pairs, mobile phones were not allowed, and we could only use our A-Z, bus timetable, public transport and the kindness of strangers to navigate. The winners would be the first pair to reach the finish line & sign the guestbook.

The first orienteering race was a score event around the campus and the rest were linear races, and all only had 10 controls. It took a little bit of getting used to the old-school pin punching of paper we weren't to using being relatively newcomers to the sport. We decided to abandon running backpacks at the start of each park, and then to collect them on leaving the park. We divided roles - with only one map between us, John took the lead navigating between controls while I followed, and I dibbed the final control and collected our backpacks while John started looking up the next park in the index of the A-Z. Mapping the location in the A-Z to an approximate position on the very large-scale bus route map was challenging, but worked.

The journeys between parks were enjoyable, exhausting and tense. With over 70 pairs competing, often there were 5 or 6 orienteering pairs on the same bus. Whilst this can't have been pleasant for the other passengers, on several buses they cheerfully got involved, answering questions about which would be the best stop to get off at and wishing us luck. One pair chose not to



use public transport at all and instead ran between each park (covering a distance of over 20 miles).... a cheer went up on the bus as we passed them. Similar cheers went up when a pair pressed the bell to get off the bus... making those remaining on the bus question their decisions and sometimes follow them off in a panic. There was a great sense of camaraderie but also friendly competition.

We were the first to exit the first park and were within the top 5 pairs for the first 4 parks. We established a rhythm – sprinting, quickly checking the A-Z and bus timetable while on the move, and then running with our backpacks to the next bus stop. Our natural British sense of reservedness quickly evaporated, and we started asking members of the public to help. They willingly used their phones or local knowledge to advise us on the best bus to get and when it was due. On the bus we frantically drank water and ate sugary sweets to maintain our energy levels..... we weren't prepared

for how exhausting six back-to-back 10 minute sprints, with additional running in between, in the middle of June, with maintained high adrenaline levels, would be.

Our setback came between parks 4 and 5. We left the park with three other pairs, but unlike them we paused to plan our next move using the A-Z and bus timetable. We set off running up the hill, but saw the other pairs approximately 300 metres away flagging down a bus.... we couldn't make it in time. The next bus didn't come for another 15 minutes - by that point many of the pairs that we had been ahead of had completed the sprint and joined us, decimating our lead. Just like the TV programme, this is the fickle nature of the race.

We raced the final Sprint and left the park with two other pairs. All three of us started running uphill to the bus stop. We planned to catch a direct bus to the finish

line, however the bus wasn't due for another 11 minutes and therefore we all decided to continue running on to the main road where there would be other bus routes. John and I decided to wait 7 minutes for an alternative bus that would take us half the way there. The other two pairs set off on foot. We caught the bus and travelled as far as we could. On getting off the bus, we waited for the original direct bus to arrive. 3 minutes after it was due to arrive, with still no sign, we





decided to set off on foot and started running the 1.5 miles back to the Heriot-Watt campus where the finish was. Fortunately, we'd done our homework by watching the most recent series of race across the world prior to the weekend, so we knew what to do; just as they do in the TV series, we ditched our backpacks in the woods for the final push towards the finish. We crossed the line and found our position in the guest-book. We were 12th overall, 2 minutes behind the two pairs that had decided to run all the way to the finish, and less than a minute in front of the hordes of orienteers that had piled off the direct bus for an en masse sprint to the finish.



There was a podium presentation, and we were delighted to learn that we were First Visitors (the category created to recognise the fact that locals have an advantage as they are more familiar with the geography and bus routes). That evening we attended the ESOC ceilidh and pizza night to celebrate ESOCs 60th birthday - we had a wonderful time and felt very welcome.

This was a truly fantastic event - a huge congratulations to ESOC for the amount of planning, effort and creativity that must have gone into it. As so many people are familiar with the TV show Race across the world, it was an excellent way to make orienteering relatable and accessible to those not familiar with orienteering..... it begs the question whether Aire could host a similar event?



Coast & Islands

Rob & Lindsey King

Back in 1993 we risked two weeks cycle-touring and small-tent camping in the Shetland Islands. Result: Mediterranean weather and a memorable trip. The only hitch: our deciding to marry! With Shetland chosen for the 5th edition of Coasts & Island Orienteering, it seemed a great chance to rerun our trip 32 years on.

So, dump the car outside Aberdeen and pedal direct to the harbour via the Deeside cycleway, a panflat, dead-straight gentle slide of a ride into the city.

What with zero trees or hedges for shelter and no Plan B, we'd have been undone should Shetland's notorious stormy weather have greeted us. Instead, we were accompanied by Britain's latest heatwave. We only had to don rainwear for 10 minutes, twice over two weeks.

Was there a hitch this time? Well, yes. Nothing to do with being on the same bike as 32yrs earlier but, within the first mile, my chain snaps. Doh! From experience, cycling calamities usually result in friendly encounters - and so did this. Freewheel back into Lerwick to find the islands' one-and-only cycle repair shop, a friendly community project. With new chain and cassette fitted by a recovering alcoholic care of his new-found bike maintenance skills, I was back on the road.

Having explored the north-eastern isles of Whalsay, Fetlar, Yell and Unst back in '93, the 2025 C&Is O areas enabled us to focus on the NW Mainland, including the parishes of Nesting, Lunasting, Delting and Northmavine. Wonderfully unfamiliar names.



Sure, pedalling a laden bike can take a bit of effort on occasions, but gentle cycling enables so much. Intimate contact with the weather, heightened awareness of the birdlife around, an excuse to refuel at almost every catering establishment we pass and easy contacts with locals.



Having explored the Lunna Ness peninsular, the site of secret operations to support occupied Norway during WW2, we headed north to explore the wild coastal scenery of Fethaland.

Pedalling needs fuelling. Shetland's crofting communities are quite scattered, with shops and eating venues few and far between. So, each community-run shop, plate of mussels, ice cream, scone or pint was fully seized and appreciated.



We chose to base ourselves out west, near the rugged cliffs of Esha Ness, for the first three O events. A simple campsite c/o Braewick cafe. Access to water, loo, shower, kitchen, WiFi, with views of splendidly named sea stacks; The Runk and The Drongs. What more do you need?

C&Is O aims to present low-key but quality orienteering in areas unlikely to develop the sport mainly due to their low population. Superb terrain usually comes with zero parking capacity so C&Is O participants are encouraged to cycle. The usual limit of 200 runners was extended to 300 for Shetland with a minibus shuttle from Brae to aid commuting. Organisation is minimal, comprising competent officials, a tent shelter, an iPhone, a first aid kit and a volunteer. Course options are simply long, medium, short, orange ... and string! All delivered with a relaxed holiday atmosphere. Days 1 to 3 comprised long and middle-distance events on newly mapped areas called Nibon, Islesburgh and Hamar. Wonderful coastal scenery, fast-running sward, lots of rock and contour detail with slightly rougher moorland inland.

Thanks to perfect visibility, navigation wasn't as tricky as it might have been. Nevertheless, Lindsey managed to misinterpret the mapped lakes at the start of the very first event, running off the map and taking 47' to the first control!

After the usual post-run discussions, orienteers dispersed to make the most of visiting this far-flung edge of the British Isles. For us, a gentle pedal home via either the 'vintage' St Magnus Bay Hotel in Hillswick for scones, cream, jam and a pint, or a 'cake-fridge'. Well-suited to cyclists, these latter innovations comprise an unplugged, seemingly fly-tipped, roadside fridge containing local home baking plus honesty box, usually an honesty card-reader too!

Day 2 was the toughest. Not for the distance. Our medium middle-distance course was a modest 3.6km. But for the baking temperature with many finishers heading straight for the sea!

Following the C&Is Ceilidh in Brae Community Hall, we upheld the orienteer's interpretation of a 'Rest Day' by cycling, fully-laden, the 25 miles to Easter Skeld, our attack point for Day 4.

A scenic rollercoaster 12 mile pedal to West Burrafirth saw us at the Day 4 area, Muckle Hoo. This

was the best coastal terrain. Intricate, runnable, inspiring and thoroughly enjoyable. So why did I do what I did? Leg 5 to 6. Having just overtaken Lindsey, how could I have happily interpreted that large lake as the small pond?! I have no idea. And



it took me until No12 to overtake Lindsey again!

With a breeze behind us, it's a 26 mile cycle, past firths, sunds and voes, to the outskirts of Scalloway. A brand-new campsite presents fantastic and welcome indoor facilities for our first and only encounter with one-too-many midges.

A hilly pedal into Lerwick for Day 5 - sprint orienteering the old town's steep and narrow alleyways. Fort Charlotte proved an exciting arena - including cannons for control sites on the string course!

Joyce turned in strong performances each race, but this was lan's day to come out on top. After a final seafood chowder in downtown Lerwick and a visit to the Shetland Museum, it was aboard the overnight Northlink ferry to Aberdeen - then some downtime at the Scottish 6 Days!?!

Thanks to Alastair Pedley, Joe Hudd, Mairi Eades and all the C&Is O team at Masterplan Adventure.

Ian Marshall

This year's event was on Shetland. We booked the return ferry from Lerwick to Aberdeen early as most of the orienteers would be travelling on to the Scottish 6 Days on Royal Deeside. We had a 4 berth dog friendly cabin for Rob, Lindsey, Joyce and I, plus our two dogs.

For the outward journey we'd left it late, so the latest ferry we could get was on 9th July: a 12 hour direct sailing from Aberdeen to Lerwick, with the dogs sleeping in our van overnight. This allowed plenty of time to explore the Shetland Islands before the orienteering started on 20th July.

First, we went south from Lerwick, seeing puffins and lots of other seabirds at Sumburgh Head. The Jarlshof archeological site at Sumburgh was worth exploring, occupied over a 4000 year period, though the name was a 19th century creation by the novelist, Sir Walter Scott.

We then took ferries to Yell and Unst, stopping off on Yell to walk to 'The White Wife' – the replica of a figurehead from a 1922 shipwreck.

We camped at Hermaness Nature Reserve and walked the duckboard paths all the way to the northern tip of Unst, with a view of the Muckle Flugga lighthouse and teeming gannet colonies on the rock outcrops. On the walk we saw Great Skuas – large menacing dark brown birds with a wingspan like a fighter plane. These are locally known as 'bonxies' and it's wise not to get too near their nests.

Travelling south again we camped at Uyeasound (pronounced Oysound) and saw an otter in a freshwater lagoon late in the evening. Temperature in the daytime was 19 degrees c – a record for Shetland. Joyce cycled the length of Yell as I drove the van and we met up at South Nesting with Rob and Lindsey, who had arrived with bikes and tent on the 13th July ferry. Margaret and Niall Reynolds from SBOC were also at South Nesting. There was more exploring on foot, cycling and swimming over the next few days including West Burra, Fethaland, Eshaness and Braewick Café, all in balmy

conditions.

We arrived back at Delting Boating Club near Brae, our camping spot on the quay for the first 3 days of Coast and Islands on Saturday 19th July. The club bar was open, and the quayside was populated by orienteers including Arne from the Netherlands, who was bike camping and was pleased to have been allowed to pitch his tent in a nearby boatshed, which he was keen to show us, shared with some seagulls and their droppings. Arne kept us entertained for the rest of the week with his positive outlook and Henklike sayings (for those of you who know Henk van Rossum).

Coast and Islands is staged by Masterplan Adventure – a small group of orienteers who keep the organisation simple, the maps top | Nibon | Coast & Islands | Co

quality and the orienteering excellent. Just 3 courses: Short, Medium and Long plus an Orange,

catering for around 275 orienteers – the entry limit this year was up to 300 for the first time ever. Joyce and I did the Medium, and it was fine for us. If you find your chosen course too challenging however, you can just ask at the Start and downgrade at any point in the week. You can start anytime within the Start period as well. The organisation is so low key and relaxed.

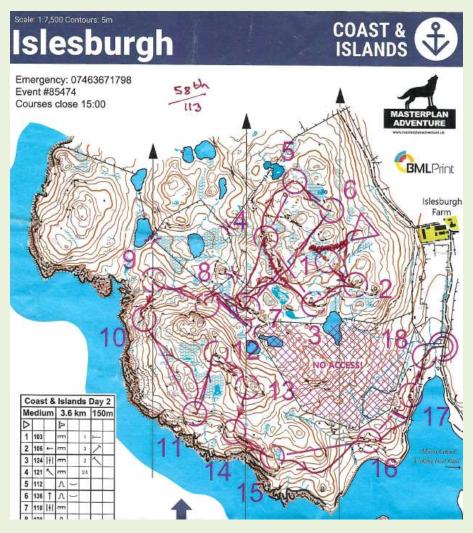
Mappers this time were Alasdair Pedley, Martin Bagness and Joe Hudd. Mapping quality was excellent and I found it hard to tell the difference between their styles. The areas were all coastal, with the shortest grass and best runnability near the shore, where the grass was closest cropped. One hazard was the Arctic Terns. If you got too close to their nest they would swoop and screech at you. At least one orienteer was attached and pecked on the head.

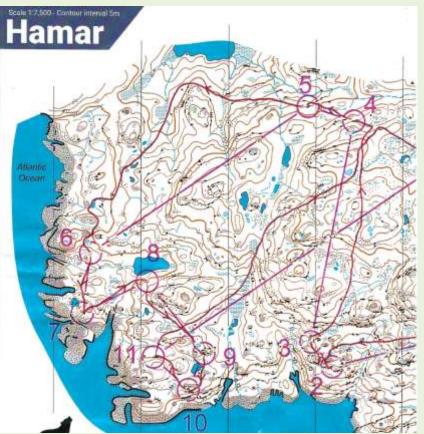
Such was the attention to detail that at the Start of Day 3, there was a warning of a 'plastic boulder'. This turned out to be a black bin liner over a control stake, with other boulders near my attack point for number 1. Alasdair had got slightly over-excited with his boulder mapping, but realised this was a key area for navigation, hence the 'plastic boulder' where the black dot appeared on the map.

Day 1: Nibon . This was a 10k bike ride from Delting Boating Club, which used up some of my energy. That's my excuse anyway: 63rd out of 114. Joyce was 39th. I overshot one control (no.15 near the end).

Day 2: Islesburgh
Middle Distance. A
much shorter cycle
ride and short courses:
58th out of 113. Joyce
was 28th. Rain early
and late, but dry for
our runs.

Day 3: Hamar. 10k bike ride to the event again and a 6.5k course: 72nd out of 110. Joyce was 26th. I wandered about too much on the long legs.



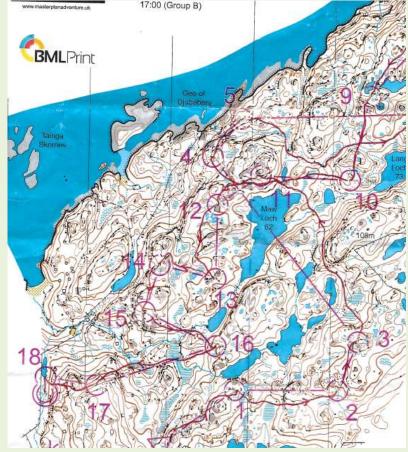


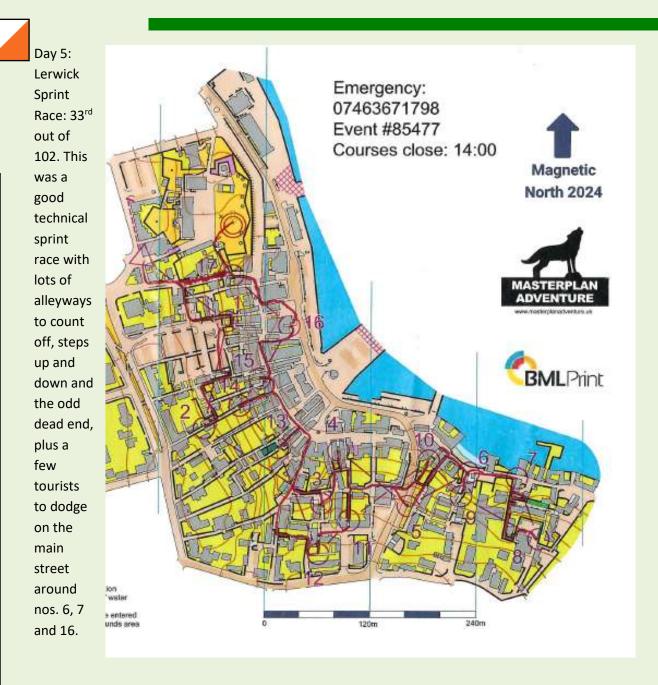
That evening we had fish and chips in the most northerly chippy in the UK, Frankie's in Brae – a short cycle ride from the Boating Club. Then on to Brae Community Hall for a Ceilidh organised by Coast and Islands. The orienteers only really mastered one dance, so towards the end of the evening that one was more or less played on repeat!

Wednesday 23rd July was a genuine rest day, unlike S6D, so no orienteering. We travelled to Easter Skeld, our next campsite and walked to Skelder Ness and back. There was a local

rowing race, like English gigracing with teams of young people in the evening, which finished at Skeld.

Day 4: Muckle Hoo. This was probably my favourite area of the week, although they were all good. For this one we parked at the Papa Stour ferry terminal with a short bike ride to Assembly – the only time I got rained on in the whole two and a half week Scottish trip. 50th= out of 109. Joyce was 14th. These were our best runs of the week so far. That afternoon we travelled back to South Nesting and met Andy and Mel Bradley from WCOC. This campsite, based at a community hall, was handy for Lerwick.





After a leg stretch for the dogs at Clickiman Broch (an ancient dwelling house bizarrely opposite Tesco) we were on the ferry back to Aberdeen at 5.30pm. There were good views of Fairisle from the decks in the evening sunshine. This sailing went via Kirkwall on Orkney, docking around 9pm. We were up from our shared cabin for breakfast at 6.30am and off at Aberdeen 7am to drive to Ballater for the Scottish 6 Days starting the next day — a very different orienteering event with crowds of people, compulsory number bibs, timed starts and lots of rules to follow.

The Shetland adventure had been like a dream.

Orienteering Online Cup – David Alcock

At the start of this year, we were all set for our biennial trip to the Scottish 6 Days. Several Airienteers families had been communicating about logistics, most notably the search for large group accommodation within an hour's drive of most, if not all, of this year's areas.

Note the logistical mistake – this was the start of 2025, not August 2023. Most such accommodation had been booked up within months of this year's location having been announced.

It's not as if we hadn't been organised before: in September 2021 we had even latched on to a booking made by Faye's friend, and we were rewarded with a well-located static caravan for the 2023 Scottish 6 Days event. But as spring 2025 crept up, the prospect of accommodating 12-16 people in a reasonably priced house dropped away. Even the keenest orienteers in the group (including me) balked at the idea of driving a two- to four-hour return journey on some of the days of the competition from the nearest available house that wasn't like the location of the Traitors (and necessitating a prize-pot type outlay to afford it). What were we to do? Ditch the idea of a summer orienteering break? Unthinkable!

Heading abroad

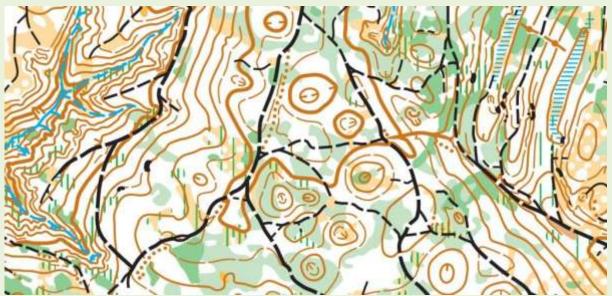
Helen and I had only done two non-UK multi-day orienteering events before — both of which were organised by 'OOCup' team (OO = Orienteering Online, the entry processing organisation which sponsors these events). As it happens, Faye, whose parents live in France, told us that the Pinker-Hulls had entered the 2025 OOCup, which was happening near the Slovenian/Italian border, in the last week of July, at the same time at the 6 Days. This kick-started another burst of online activity, and a decision to go abroad.

We found an apartment block which could fit three families - the Alcocks, Ricketts, and Carrs - in Kranjska Gora, midway between the five events. Meanwhile, the Pinker-Hulls were staying nearby, and the Roscoes found somewhere for part of the week. Then we planned various routes to get to the event: two families flew, one got there by train and hire car, and us and the Ricketts chose to drive (we tested out the EV charging infrastructure en route – to our relief it was generally excellent, but that's another article!). Three of the events were just over the Italian border, which gave another angle to the event.

Landscape

The areas all had elements of limestone landscapes. On three of the days, one of the main challenges was locating 'sink holes', which are often several metres deep and wide, caused by water dissolving and/or eroding underground layers of limestone and the subsequent collapse of surface rock or soil layers. Variations of these are common in the Dales too, only there they are on open

fellsides. Imagine lots of these depressions, covered by forest, and you have some idea of the challenge which awaited us! Some of day 5's terrain is shown below:



On two of the days, limestone pillars were the more dominant landform. These features, of up to around 5 metres in height, have been left standing owing to localised areas of resistant rock and/or the existence of fewer joints exposed to solution. The forest floor on all days was sometimes quite pleasant, but often it was broken and hard to negotiate. The path network was not totally absent, and the course planning cruelly made whatever paths there were hardly worth considering as even a part of a route choice for the hardest TD courses. An extract from day 4's map is below:



Learning points and experiences

The seniors and juniors in the group found some of the courses tough! One or two lapses in concentration, or a failure to scan the landscape thoroughly, meant that mistakes were often costly.

Nevertheless, each junior had some purple patches, and Sebastian Carr showed great consistency to get to fourth place overall on M10 – a remarkable attainment in an international field! I was humbled by several legs on most of the days. On the hardest day – day four – even my 'best legs' barely scraped the top ten split times, and on one occasion I bumped into Helen on a path and asked her where I was, as I could have been almost anywhere in about a 200m by 200m area! Even on my 'best' day I did fairly well in the sinkhole area, only to fall victim to the simple mistake on a later leg of miscounting blocks of forest, leading to a loss of around ten minutes.

The scenery in the area was stunning, especially around the Laghi di Fusine; the photo below shows the forest we navigated around (or at least tried to) on day four:



We also did a fair share of 'non-orienteering' activities too, including walking up to the tri-point of Italy, Slovenia, and Austria. This doubles up as a linguistic dividing point between the Germanic, Romance, and Slavic languages.

Of course, heading abroad meant that we missed catching up with Airienteers and others in Scotland, but it gave us a great hook to extend our travels, and the five families separately took in various places on the way to and from the event, amongst them Venice, Lake Garda, the Austrian Alps, the Dolomites, the Black Forest, and lesser-sung but interesting destinations along the way.

So, what advice might we give to other groups planning future orienteering adventures? They might seem contradictory, but amongst two lessons we learned were:

- 1. Plan together and book early many of us have already booked static caravans for the next multi-day event in Scotland: the JK in Easter 2026
- 2. Change your plans every now and again you'll see some incredible places and still spend time with your closest pals

The next OOCup is in Ireland in July 2026, but in direct contravention of lesson 1, above, we have not planned anything yet and we certainly haven't booked anything, so it looks like we'll have to follow lesson 2 instead!

White Rose - David Alcock

The August bank holiday weekend may be renowned for clogged-up roads and the last of the summer sun, but it's also home to a firm diary fixture for many orienteers in Yorkshire and beyond: The White Rose. For over fifty years, Eborienteers – now assisted by Cleveland Orienteering Klubb – puts on four events in as many days in a value-for-money event centred around a basic campsite. The location moves around North Yorkshire every year.

We have made most events in the past decade or so. They provide a great chance for the children to play, and for cars to generally stay put, as most events are within walking distance of the campsite, or within a fairly short drive. There are also extra events like a very short hill sprint challenge, a maze, a pace-and-bearing competition and a quiz. This year's location of Dalby Forest provided the opportunity for several bike rides and a couple of hotly-contested parents-and-kids football matches too!

Friday at 9pm saw the fast and furious 30-minute night score event, which this year saw George Ricketts get a fantastic second place in the MYJ category. I navigated well but made the wrong choice of order, to come third in MV. Many others chose to settle in at the campsite.

Saturday saw the middle-distance event, and, in common with Sunday's classic event, the forest floor was mostly rutted and difficult to cover at pace. North Yorkshire's 'white forest' would make most of the rest of the country's mappers reach for the light green ink. Walking was a great strategy for navigating accurately, and many members of our group did just that, and were rewarded with consistently commendable results.

I had a couple of 'desolate forest trudge' moments on the Saturday, but more solid use of a compass, and running in front or behind another competitor in the first half meant that I had a much better **Sunday**, with just one significant blooper caused by running on a rough bearing for far too long.

Monday saw a forest sprint event on good quality paths and even forest surfaces, around Adderstone Field. I was orienteering at a good pace until I 'blew up' two-thirds the way through, with oxygen debt and over-competitiveness resulting in me dropping a ridiculous four minutes on one leg as I ran down the hill to a track over 100m away from the control.

Results

All of the many juniors in our group all had at least one 'good day', with most of them having several stormers. A hallmark of the White Rose is the mugs for top three positions and Toblerone bars for winners. At the risk of missing people out or getting things wrong, here are the results for Airienteers:

Night Score:

MYJ: George Ricketts 2nd, Charlie Alcock 4th



MV: David Alcock 3rd, David Bowman 5th, Rolf Crook 11th (Isobel ran with Leon in her first ever night event and came 16th Men's Vet!)



[AIRE juniors on the podium]

Saturday and Sunday combined:

M10A: Sebastian Carr 3rd, Alfie Alcock 4th, Joby Pinker-Hull 5th

M10B: Matthew Needham 1st

M12A: Keir Roscoe 2^{nd} , George Ricketts 3^{rd} , Charlie Alcock 5^{th}

M14A: Sam Crook 1st

M21L: Jack Walton 10th

M45L: David Alcock 1st

M45S: Leon Ricketts 2nd

M50L: David Bowman 1st, Rolf Crook 3rd

M60L: Greg Hull 19th

M75L: Roger Lott 2nd

W10A: Isobel Ricketts 1st

W12A: Penny Pinker-Hull 2nd

W14A: Alethea Carr 4th

W40L: Lucy Needham 3rd

W40S: Helen Alcock 3rd, Gemma Ricketts 4th

W55L: Julia Crook 3rd

Sprint:

MYJ: Charlie 1st, Sebastian 2nd, Keir 5th, Joby 6th, Alfie 7th, George 8th, Matthew 9th

WYJ: Penny 1st, Isobel 13th

MJ: Sam 3rd

WJ: Alethea 2nd

MO: Rob Groves 12th

WO: Robin Culshaw-Groves 9th

MV: Rolf 6th, David 9th

WV: Lucy 3rd, Helen 20th

WSV: Julia 5th

Hill Race:

Penny was fastest female, and Sam was third fastest male.

The White Rose comes extremely highly recommended as a great value and fairly local weekend away, with time to socialise and play, depending on your age! Why not pencil it in your diary now for 2026?

AIRE Achievements

Congratulations to:-

Emily, on selection for the British senior team at the European Orienteering Championships

Scottish 6 Days (Royal Deeside - July/August)

Overall Results:

1 st	Bethan Buckley	W16A
	(1st on all 5 Days)	
	Peter Haines	M70L
	(either 1 st or 2 nd on all 5 Days)	
6 th	Katie Buckley	W18L
	Joyce Marshall	W65L
8 th	Jo Buckley	W45L
	Ewen Wilkinson	M18L
12 th	Sue Stevens	W70L
14 th	Roger Lott	M75L
1 st	Dave Murgatroyd	M35S
2 nd	Mary Fleming	W21S

Also:

Tony Thornley -5^{th} in M75L on Day 2

Andrew Hobson – 8th in M40L on Day 3

Rest Day Sprint:

Bethan Buckley – 1st on Women's Junior

Jo Buckley – 1st on Women's Veterans

Joyce Marshall – 1st on Women's Ultra-Veterans

Selected AIRE Results

Saltaire & Lower Baildon Double Sprint

Combined Results:

Course 1: 1st Ewen Wilkinson, 4th Alice Leake (1st Woman), 5th Jack Walton, 8th Jack Smith, 9th David Alcock, 12th Steve Webb, 14th Dave Murgatroyd, 18th Rebecca Gray, 23rd Mary Fleming, 26th Jeremy Wilkinson

Course 2: 3rd Chris Gibbins (2nd MSV – M55+), 16th Tom Woodham, 17th Robert Bumstead, 23rd Helen Alcock, 25th Sophie Brown, 26th Nicola Parkinson

Also: Nathan Martin 2nd in Race 2

Course 3: 8th Mike Cox (1st MHV – M75+), 16th Gerry Symes, 18th Peter Jones (*Editor*), 19th Peter Jones, 27th Valerie Gilleard

Course 4: 1st Alethea Carr, 2nd Charlie Alcock (1st MYJ - M12-), 4th George Ricketts

Also: Kate Parkinson 6th in Race 1, Alfie Alcock 4th in Race 2, Lauren Martin 7th in Race 2

Bradford City Race

Course 1: 1st Jack Walton, 2nd Alice Leake (1st Woman), 6th Nathan Martin (1st M40+), 7th Dave Murgatroyd, 13th John Blatherwick, 17th Rebecca Gray, 24th Caroline Blatherwick, 25th Brian Hanley, 27th Matthew Gray

Course 2: 1st Chris Gibbins, 20th Helen Alcock, 24th Jeremy Wilkinson

Course 3: 4th Tim Mosedale, 11th Peter Haines, 23rd Peter Jones *(Editor)*, 24th= David Shelley, Sarah Haines

Course 4: 6th Ken Patterson (2nd MHV – M75+), 7 Gerry Symes, 10th Susan Stevens, 11th Sophie Brown, 16th Valerie Gilleard, 18th Liz Carter

Course 6: 1st Alethea Carr, 2nd Ronan Hanley (1st MJ – 14-), 5th Kate Parkinson

Course 7: 1st Charlie Alcock, 2nd Sebastian Carr, 3rd Alfie Alcock, 4th Eamon Hanley, 5th Arlo Watkeys, 7th Lauren Martin

Airienteers in Action

Scottish 6 Days

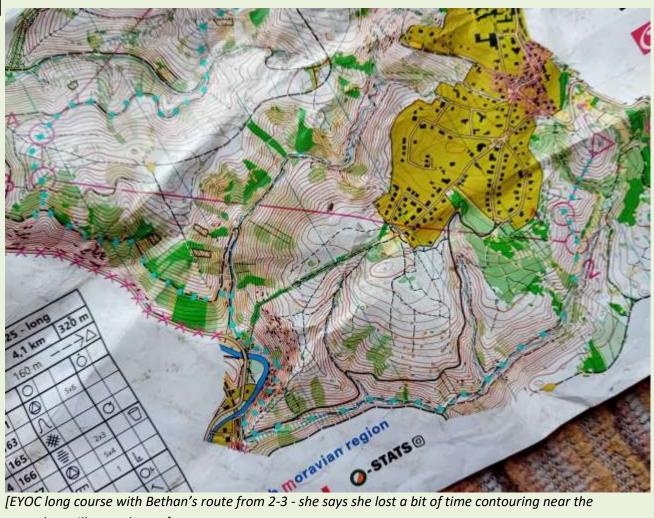












town, but still a good route]