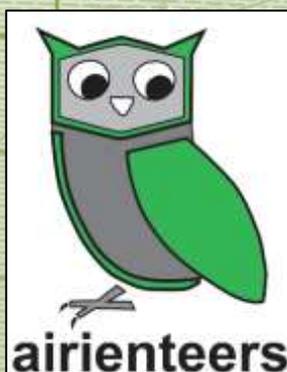


# Aire Affairs



**September 2021**



**Airienteers**

Orienteering in Airedale and Wharfedale

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



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**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.

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The cover photo shows Airienteer Alice Leake competing in the Sprint Event at WOC in the Czech Republic. Alice finished in Joint 4<sup>th</sup> Place. Photo: ©Jiri Cech



## Edito – Wendy Carlyle

On a personal level I have had mixed fortunes with my orienteering since the last issue. I very much enjoyed the Fat Rascal Weekend, despite the heat. Indeed it was so very hot on the first day that



Richard Payne returned to his car to hear a gurgling noise. It was his coffee boiling in his flask! I record my splits from the Saturday races here because they are unlikely to be repeated!



It was good to be back in Scotland, even for a much reduced Six Days Event, and all power to the Scottish clubs and the organising teams for providing a quality, safe experience. The views from the starts at Ardchattan on the first day were breathtaking, and orienteering in and around Fort William golf course on Day 2 a novel experience. My third day of competition was something of a disaster. After spending fifty minutes on the hillside trying to find my first control in the pouring rain with steamed up glasses, I threw in the towel, retired and took lots of photos instead.

On one of our rest days, we drove just up the road to Glenfinnan to revisit after thirty or so years. It was heaving with folks, including young women in teaching gowns. A passer by pointed out the Harry Potter steam train was due! We found a spot on the hillside above the viaduct, duly waved at the folks on the train and sat there till the hill emptied out again, then had a quiet walk further up the glen before the carpark once again filled up for the return of the train, bonkers!

A huge thankyou to David for all his hard work as Chair of our Club over the last three years, never an easy role even without a pandemic. David has very much been a 'hands on' Chair and I imagine he will be looking forward to attending events as a competitor when he is back to full fitness. All the best, David!

I had intended this to be a 'tartan' edition and I have had S6D contributions from two or three members, thank you to them and to all this issue's contributors (and huge congratulations To Alice on her fourth place at WOC in the Czech Republic!) It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract copy and each issue I do wonder if it is time for a newsletter overhaul or if folks are getting their AIRE news and stories from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram? I would be very interested to know your honest opinions, to [wendy.carlyle@btinternet.com](mailto:wendy.carlyle@btinternet.com)



## Chair Affairs - David Williams

This will be my last Chair Affairs as my three year term is up.

I am hoping that the trials and tribulations of the last 18 months that have made it a very strange period to be at the helm do not impinge too much on my successor's term. I don't know whether it has flown by because there hasn't been as much happening as normal or it's because I've enjoyed undertaking the role, helped particularly by the Committee members who spread so much of the workload around. Thanks to all.



The format for this year's AGM is still to be finalised. We are looking to have it on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, tying in with the Night Score League event in Otley, and hope to have a venue to meet in Otley but also allow for participation online. Please keep an eye on the website for further detail shortly.

Having had to sit out the resumption of competition due to a knee injury (finally on the mend, fingers crossed) has been frustrating but at least I've been able to come out to some of our events to help and see Aire members get back into action. I do make a point of looking in detail at the Routegadget courses that I would have been doing - hardly the same - but I don't seem to make as many silly mistakes!

There have been a lot of great performances by Aire members, many Congratulations to;

Alice on her amazing 4<sup>th</sup> place in the World Champs Sprint, followed up by becoming British Champion.

David Alcock - British Sprint Champion M45. (See photo below. Ed.)

Peter Haines - British Middle Champion M65.



I also have to mention the great performances and effort put in by the Juniors going to the Yvette Baker Trophy Final coordinated by Lindsey King.

Hopefully that team competition spirit can be replicated for the whole club at the Compass Sport Cup Final 17<sup>th</sup> October, now nearby at Tankersley with the club paying the fees for all Aire members participating on the day.



## World Orienteering Championships – Alice Leake

The build up to the 2021 World Orienteering Championships was unusual to say the least. I was in the best shape of my life at the start of 2020 and was prepared and expecting to compete in the first 'Sprint Only' World Championships in Denmark when the pandemic hit (2018 was the last 'joint forest and sprint world championships', with the events alternating from 2019 onwards starting with forest).

Although disappointing that all the races were cancelled, I used the lost year to enjoy training with no pressure - getting stuck into all the local MapRuns (which were brilliant - until I twisted my ankle doing one!) and exploring the trails and hills more than I usually would. I went into 2021 with no idea what kind of shape I was in. I definitely did fewer intervals and hard running sessions in the build-up to the season than I would usually do and was quite nervous as I had no racing in my legs at all. I didn't perform very well at the first GB test race in Nottingham in April and realised that I really needed to get my act together quickly and spend a lot more time with a map. The good thing was that orienteering was still great fun and I absolutely loved racing.

Airienteers really delivered with the weekly sprint races over the Spring and Summer. Although a bit longer than a traditional 15min sprint race, the park and urban ones proved to be the perfect preparation and there was always a bit of added pressure trying to beat the men 😊! (A really big thank you to everyone who took the time to plan or help with one of these. There are so few opportunities to practise sprint racing and it made such a huge difference having proper maps and controls). Despite not having the luxury of a fancy training set-up, I figured that if you can orienteer well in any number of random parks and housing estates across Leeds then you can cope with whatever challenge a fortress in the Czech Republic throws at you.

The second and third test races in Scotland in May went much better and I could feel my confidence and flow was starting to come back. However, living in England meant I was unable to compete in the European Championships two months before WOC due to travel restrictions, and had done no international races or training camps for almost two years. We had some great Team calls in the months leading up to WOC though which helped with getting myself re-engaged and thinking about the terrains we would face and the type of challenges the planners might throw at us.

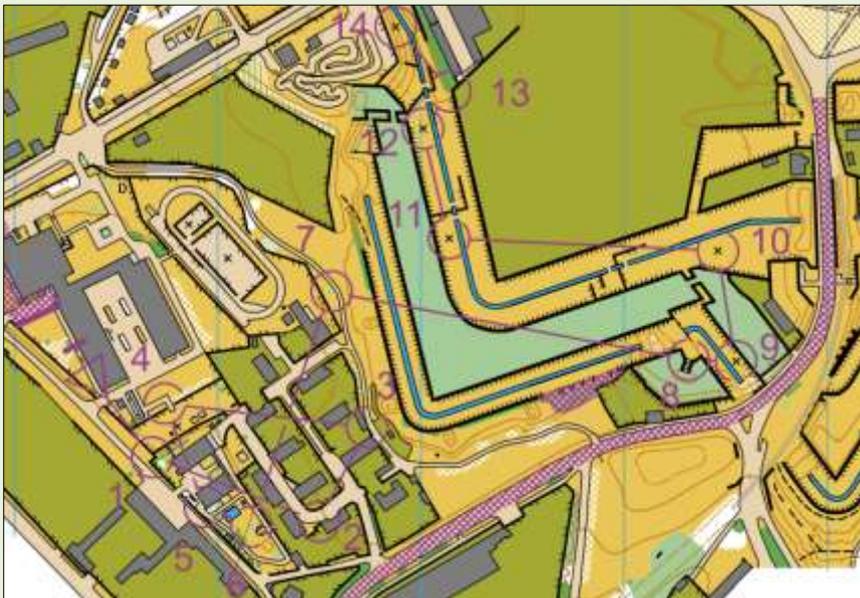
By the time WOC actually came around I was just really excited and grateful to be able to go to a race and travel abroad. I hadn't been to a WOC since my 8<sup>th</sup> place in 2018 and, although I didn't realistically expect to do better than that, I was just ready to get out there and do what I love doing.

I only travelled out a couple of days before the races and, because of the 'WOC bubble', we weren't allowed to go training on the day we arrived as all the athletes and coaches had to



take a Covid test and quarantine at the hotel until the results came back negative. The next day we travelled to Terezin for the Model Event. I can't say that I was particularly thrilled by the steep slopes, brambles and absolute mud bath we encountered! I'd pretty much decided that the sprint wasn't going to suit me at all and to just enjoy being there and see what race day brought.

Race days are always long with a qualification and final in the same day, and a lot of hours spent in quarantine in between. (Quarantine in this case was a school hall. No phones or internet are allowed, and no one is allowed into quarantine once it has closed, so that you can't receive any information about the race / results / maps / route choices / arena layout etc. We didn't know what had happened in the men's race until after we had finished the women's race, and you don't see the start/finish area until one minute before your start time). Luckily, I've done this a few times now and knew what to expect. I was confident about getting through the qualification in the morning with a safe and steady race. After a slightly nervy start around a school trying to spot the gaps in the fences and a massive panic on the first leg into the fortress (7-8) that I'd gotten myself stuck on the wrong side of a ditch (I hadn't), I settled myself into the race and actually enjoyed the area a lot more than I had expected to. The fortress wasn't muddy and full of undergrowth like the model event and, although it was grass rather than tarmac, it was still fairly runnable. The course had quite a few artificial barriers and a really fun tunnel to run through that was pitch black inside – a good taster of the afternoon to come.



*Qualification map*

There were seven hours between the qualification race and the final to recover, stretch, refuel, and fit in some all-important colouring books. Then it was time to warm up. I definitely got that sick nervous feeling at this point, but by the time I was being fitted with

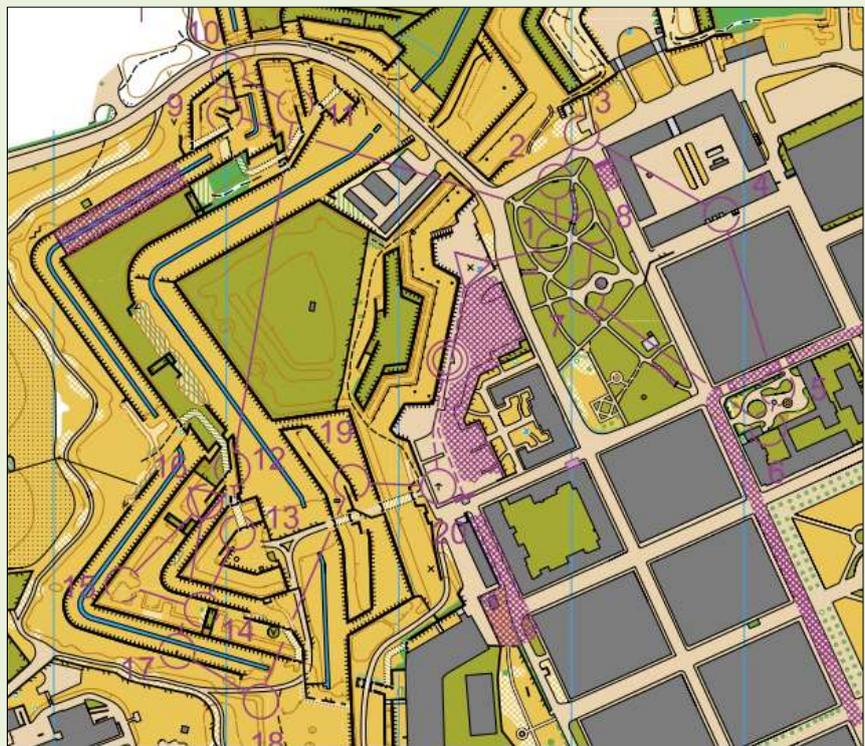
my GPS tracker and getting ready to enter the pre-start I was enjoying myself and feeling focused and calm. At the end of the day I am just going orienteering - the same thing I have done hundreds of times before. On the long jog to the start I felt relaxed and made sure to soak it all in. I don't know how many more opportunities I will get to race on the biggest stage of them all – the pinnacle of moment of being an athlete – and I just wanted to have fun and do myself proud.



It's always really fun standing up on the starting stage and looking out across the arena, trying to stay focused with a TV camera pointing in your face and keep all of the anticipation and adrenaline under control. With the long run to the start kite I was expecting a long route choice leg into the fortress, so I was really surprised when I picked up the map and saw that they'd created a bit of a labyrinth in the park by making the grass 'Out Of Bounds' and putting up artificial barriers – definitely not something that I had expected! It looked awesome though and I took my time to plan the first two legs and settle into the race. I almost made a route choice mistake to number 4, taking a couple of steps left out of the control towards the underpass in the building before spotting the much shorter route back through the park and doing a U turn.

### *Final map*

I finally started to get into my flow on the way to control 7 and run with more certainty and aggression. Decisions started happening fluidly and naturally rather than being conscious choices that I was making, and I stopped triple checking every single thing that I was doing and started to trust myself to get on with things. I felt confident leaving the park that there were two tunnels that would take me straight to



number 9, but I knew from the morning that they would be very dark, that I wouldn't be able to read my map in them, and that I needed to know where I was going at the other side before I got there. Whilst on the long road run to number 9 I saw that it was possible to get from 9 to 10 by going back on myself and round the ditch, so I chose to do that and also double checked the exact location of the controls whilst I could still see. When I popped out of the second tunnel near 9 I had a quick look to my right so that I knew where I was coming back to and could flow nicely through that part of the course. It's hard to explain but I just felt like I was having so much fun at this point, like I was on a training camp in some crazy cool terrain with underground orienteering – it was definitely a different vibe to a normal city/town sprint!



*In the tunnel to number 9 (photo © Petr Kaderavek)*



I knew there was a long route choice leg coming up (11-12) but I didn't have the time to plan ahead whilst remaining on top of my navigation, so I ended up doing what feels like the worst thing ever in a sprint race and standing still at number 11 to read the map. I'm actually really proud of myself for doing this as my entire mantra for the race was 'read the map' and I ended

up picking what I think was the best route – definitely worth investing the extra seconds. (The front cover photo shows Alice pausing at no.11 Ed.) At the time though I was absolutely convinced that I was having an awful run and had made a terrible choice when I was scrambling up a slope to get out of the fortress and then running through loads of horrible, rutted grass. I also ran past a TV cameraman coming back into the fortress who completely ignored me, so I was doubly convinced that I was having a bang average race. I was actually in the lead at this point!

The only part of my race that I'm disappointed with was 12-13-14. 12 to 13 was a really easy leg where I didn't read my control description. I just expected that it was going to be trickier than it was, and that the control would be on the level above. I got really flustered when I popped out of the tunnel and it was there because I was expecting to have a lot more time to make my route choice to 14, and I ended up having to stop still again because I hadn't been able to read my map in the tunnel. There was definitely no sense that I was having a good run at that point with all of the hesitations, but in hindsight the hesitations were probably a good thing as it meant I didn't rush into doing any silly route choices where I lost big chunks of time.

Running up the slope to 14 I felt like I was doing a cross country race and not a sprint race. I probably just felt horrible because I was running right on my limit, but at the time I felt conscious that I wasn't going fast enough and that things weren't going very well. We had a map flip coming up at 16, but I turned over the map after leaving 15 to make sure I had enough time to plan whatever was on the other side. I found a decent route to 17, put my foot down, and tried to get every last bit of energy out of my body.

I didn't have a clue that I was fighting for anything close to a medal at this point (or at any point during in the race). I technically lost a medal on the final run for home (I was in equal 2<sup>nd</sup> place at control 18/20), but I ran as hard as I could run, and it is what it is. Maybe if I had gone right instead of left to 19 things would've been different (my tired brain thought that the artificial barrier was only blocking the right route choice and not both of them), but if



Maja Alm (4 x world sprint champion who almost made it to the Olympics) takes five seconds out of me in the last two controls, then so be it. I physically didn't have anything left to give.

I still didn't know that I was having a good run until they announced that I was running into 2<sup>nd</sup> place about 2/3rds of the way down the run-in. "Oh amazing there's nine women starting after me, at worst that's an 11<sup>th</sup> place finish. Absolutely thrilled." I had a little sit down to recover, made my way to download and then over to find the rest of the team. I was really excited, asking how everyone's races had gone, not a clue what else was happening in my race, and then someone said, 'Alice you're going to be on the podium', and I burst into ridiculous level tears. I think it was just the disbelief and shock of it. There were a few minutes of drama where we thought Tove Alexanderson had blown it and that I might get a bronze medal, but she is on another level and, despite losing 50 seconds to number 12, still won! I ended up just four seconds from a medal, four seconds that I can find in countless places throughout the course, but absolutely on top of the world. These women are professional sponsored athletes with multiple World Championships medals, and I just run round some parks in Leeds and try to squeeze in training around my full-time job. 4<sup>th</sup> place felt like winning to me.

It was so sad that my family couldn't be there to see, but standing on that podium was a truly 'pinch me' life moment. A culmination of years and years of pouring everything into a sport that has given me some of the best moments of my life. I've been trying to think what it was that made things come together on that particular day. Obviously, the training and experience, but I think it was also the relaxed and stress-free approach that I had to racing this year - just being grateful to be at a race after such a crazy 18 months, and not having any particular pressure or expectations. Orienteering used to be my sole focus, but I feel like I have a really nice life balance at the moment where I choose to put my efforts into training and competing because I genuinely love doing it, regardless of the results. It wouldn't make me any more fulfilled as a person to have a medal, and I'll always be proud of the race that I put together on that day.

The following day was the Mixed Sprint Relay which was also brilliant fun and where we finished in 6<sup>th</sup> place, and then (because of Covid) I had to fly back to the UK the next morning. A whirlwind four days in the Czech Republic! It was very surreal to be back at work on the Tuesday, following the rest of the WOC week from a laptop screen instead of cheering for my teammates in person. Maybe not quite the same experience





as a 'normal WOC' but definitely a memorable one. (Photo shows Alice finishing the Sprint Race ©Tomas Bubela) Thank you Alice, and many congratulations from us all.

The Scottish Six Days Festival was a strange beast this year, with many of the usual trappings missing. However, it was still an opportunity to catch up with orienteering friends and enjoy the beautiful Scottish countryside and welcome, with more leisure time and less washing of kit! Thank you to folks for sharing their thoughts on the week.

## Ode to the Scottish 6 Days – Liz Carter

**O**ff to Bonny Scotland

**R**eturning this time to orienteer

**I**n terrain that challenges.

**E**ntered for six days

**N**ow sadly only three ... but now

**T**ime to cycle, walk and climb as well

**E**njoying our time away.

**E**vent organisation good but shame no traders.

**R**unning didn't feature much!!

**I**nspired to continue doing this sport

**N**ot getting completely lost was a bonus

**G**ood to get the brain and body going again.



(Photo: View from the Blue Start at Ardchattan, Day 1, ©Richard Wilson)



## Better nor nowt! – Richard Wilson

Like many, Anne and I start planning our next Scottish 6-Day as soon as we get back from the last. Reckless at our age, but who cares about a lost deposit when you're dead! We booked the same log cabin we'd had 20 years ago, next to the Caledonian Canal, three miles out of Fort William.

By spring this year we were adjusting to the probability of being able to visit the Highlands in August, Sturgeon permitting, but for a walking holiday. And it's a great tribute to the S6D organisers that they managed to salvage any kind of O event from the Covid wreckage.

The differences this year were marked, but (personal view) not all for the worse. First, we only got 3 O-days, not 6. As the week approached, we waited to see whether we'd get to run on my all-time favourite area – Arisaig. Sadly not, so I'll content myself for now with memories of the views to the Outer Hebrides we enjoyed in 2001. But we did get Ardchattan as compensation, on a perfect, sunny, clear Day 1 morning.

Our cabin afforded a view over the canal to the north face of Ben Nevis, which looked so inviting in the Sunday evening sun that, with a good Day 2 forecast, we decided to skip the O (which seemed to involve quite a bit of sprinting round a golf course) and go for a walk up Carn Mor Dearg, where we met some friends from a Group B club, enjoying their second "rest" day, and curious to know why we weren't running. As if it wasn't obvious!



The next three days were "official" rest days for Airienteers. When I look back over my many S6Ds, it's the rest days that I remember best (sacrilege?); so more rest days felt like adequate compensation for the shortage of races - opportunities to walk in Glencoe, and visit friends near Mallaig.

We liked the low-key feel of the events, and live-streaming of results. Parking was less fraught and assemblies were peaceful, but we missed the equipment traders. Some of the finishes were "remote", supposedly to avoid crowding and Covid dangers, but with the spin-off benefit for planners (and older runners) of avoiding ludicrous amounts of dead running simply to finish in the assembly area. The remoter the better, if it means we get more of the real terrain!



Our luck with the weather ran out on AIRE's final O-day (day 5) at Creag Dhubh near Newtonmore. The wetness was slightly offset by a fantastic technical area and the fact that the courses had been run the previous day by Group B; provided you were going the right way, you'd always find a ready-made elephant track through the bracken/tussocks. And it did brighten up later.

Final "like" for Lochaber 2021 was not having to run on day 6. Too many bad memories: trying to change in an overflowing car after getting soaked; retiring because we had a deadline; getting home at 2 next morning!

But, as for every Scottish, we had a brilliant week, and are already plotting our Moray 2023 holiday.

## Scottish Six Days – Steve Webb

Forty years of orienteering and I'd never been to the Scottish 6 Day; how did that happen? It's mainly down to the fact that I've tended to treat my orienteering season as September to May. I like to take a break from overgrown forests over the summer and go fell running, ideally on areas above the bracken line. Summer orienteering for me was generally long O events like the late lamented Phoenix MM in the Cheviots or the Capricorn MM. But this year I took the plunge and entered the S6D for the first time, although as it turned out it was ultimately a Scottish 3 Day: Six Day Lite!

The 6 day was split into two parallel events and as I was staying and travelling with some other SPLOTs I ended up in their half of the draw. I had days 3, 4 and 6 whereas almost all the other AIREs were running on 1, 2 and 5. In fact the only other AIREs I met during the week were Andy and Julie who I bumped into at a car park near Loch Laggan on the rest day; they returned from climbing just as I was setting off for a hill walk. So to that extent the event organisation succeeded in its Covid policy of avoiding people congregating in event car parks!

### Day 3, Arisaig

After generally good weather beforehand it was disappointing that it rained hard just as we turned off the road to the Isles and into the flat fields on the coastal strip just below the competition area. I had one of the last starts of the day and it was dry and sunny by the time I climbed the hill to pre-start to be rewarded with tremendous coastal views.

I had 6.0k, 250m of climb and just 9 controls on a rugged open area not unlike some of the Lake District such as Caw, Place Fell and Pike O'Blisco. I was generally happy with my run, although on some of the longer legs I did tend to find myself drifting off my originally planned routes to seek easier runnability, requiring readjustment as I neared the control sites. I got round in 61.40 which ended up as the highlight of my 3 day.

On the way round I heard the whistle and chuffing of a steam train plying up and down the railway line to Mallaig. The railway line divided the competition area from the car park and



the photo is evidence of this. No controls in view: the courses were generally the other side of the ridge.



#### Day4 Creag Dhubh

We got first use of this area which was also the venue for identical courses on Day 5. I have to say this was not my favourite area. On a couple of occasions as I was fighting through bracken covered vague semi-open slopes trying to stay upright while attempting to navigate to a boulder in a boulderfield I did have the thought “this is why I never go orienteering in the summer in Scotland!”.

On the upside at least it was a nice day, whereas it rained on day 5 and that must have made the underfoot conditions more treacherous for the other AIREs. On the other hand it fell to early starters like me on day 4 to carve elephant tracks through the bracken. I had a nightmare: a well- executed route choice to number one gave me misplaced confidence in my ability which was then destroyed completely as I lost 20 minutes on a control 2 debacle. I then massively overshot control 3 (a criminal mistake given how tough it was underfoot in that area) and by then I'd well and truly lost my mojo. My 6.1k with 275m took me a painful 112.04.

#### Day 6 Creag Meagaidh

This was a middle distance race on a craggy, marshy and very tussocky ridge north of Loch Laggan. The walk to the start and back from the finish was longer than my 3.8k, 95m course, which is never ideal. I got the navigation spot on this day apart from running straight past the flag at control 2 because I thought “my” boulder was further on and didn't want to be so amateurish as to check the control code in hope as I ran determinedly past. Doh!

Unfortunately my run was soon blighted by kit failure. Between 2 and 3 it felt as though my left shoelace had come undone, but a quick check confirmed terminal delamination of my Walsh fell shoe. Progress through the deep tussocks became





increasingly laboured and painful, but at least my time of 43.41 was a better result than day 4. I also didn't need to worry about having to pack my shoes for the return journey – they went straight in the bin, see photo!

After the 3 day we headed for a week at our favourite cottage near Gairloch.

The next 6 day is in Moray and I will probably give it a go as I have heard about the high quality forested sand dunes over there. (We can testify to that Steve! Ed.)

## **A tale of rarely tasted orienteering success! - David Alcock (first year M45)**

I don't like boasting, but I have been asked to write about some recent successes, and I hope that readers may take something from how I - a late starter to the sport, with middling running ability, a dodgy achilles and a number of other commitments - nevertheless managed to nudge my way to the top of the age class podium on four occasions this summer.

### **Scottish 6 Days 2021**

Having three days of racing rather than the usual six not only focused my mind, but also freed up a lot more time to spend doing things other than orienteering. This mainly involved biking, walking, and car trips near the cottage in South Ballachulish which we shared with the Ricketts and the Pinker-Hull families, but it also meant that I could nip up and bag the two Munros behind the cottage one morning.

I had maintained a good level of fitness prior to the event, but I was just coming out of a period of a few months of treatment for my achilles, which involved visiting a sports doctor and two podiatrists, one of whom performed six rounds of extracorporeal shockwave therapy over two three-week bouts. The treatment continues, but I can now run at pain levels of 2/10 to 4/10 rather than the 5/10 or more I had become accustomed to in the last few years. And I never want to be reliant on ibuprofen ever again!

I managed one almost clean and two acceptable runs over the three days. The 'almost clean' one was on **day one**, at Ardchattan – in perfect visibility and on fairly runnable ground, akin to some of Baidon or Ilkley Moor – see below. Contour hugging and using compass bearings to varying points in the distance, combined with a lot of ticking off of features all helped in this terrain. I was really pleased to have had my cleanest ever S6Day run. Nevertheless, I was



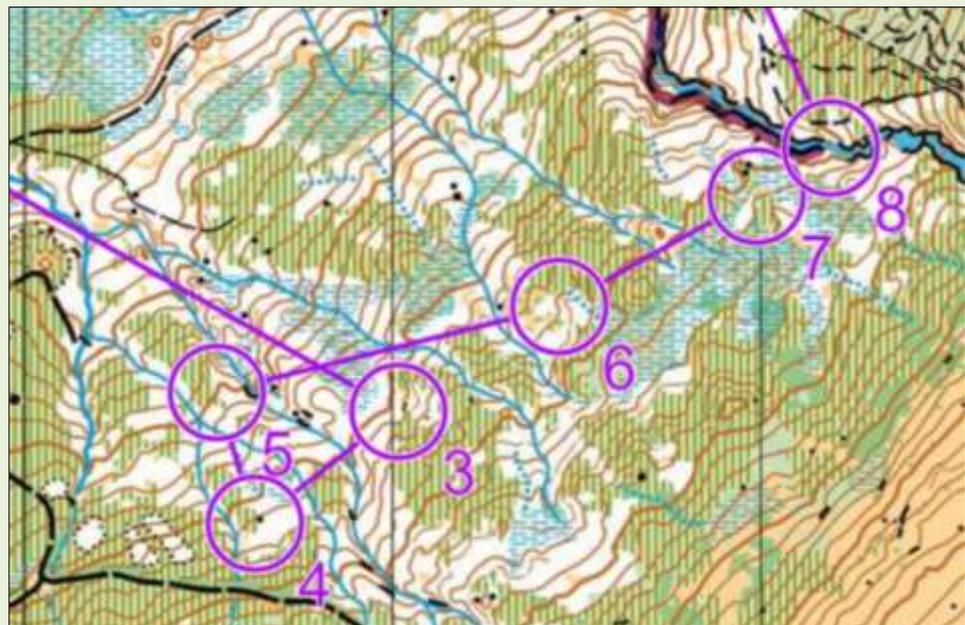
still surprised to come out on top, even though it was a smaller field than usual (with no foreign competitors and with the UK entrants split between two waves).

### Ardchattan M45L course extract

On **day two**, we travelled to the golf course and wooded slopes of what the organisers called 'Inverlochy' (they admitted that to label it as 'Fort William Golf Club' might not have been quite so inviting!). I was less clean here, but I managed to keep my mistakes to less than a minute on my worst legs, even in the close-knit vegetation of the slopes (legs 3-8 in the excerpt). Nevertheless, I was surprised to be the winner again. So, I was in the weird position at the end of day two of having already won the overall competition. This is especially weird as I am normally pleased with a top ten finish on any one day of the 6 Day, let alone overall!

### Inverlochy M45L course extract

Anyhow, it was off to Craig Dhubh for **day five** (our wave's day three). I shared a lift with fellow Airienteer Leon Ricketts, who I have known for 25 years - we travelled the world together in 1999-2001 and we were each other's best man,

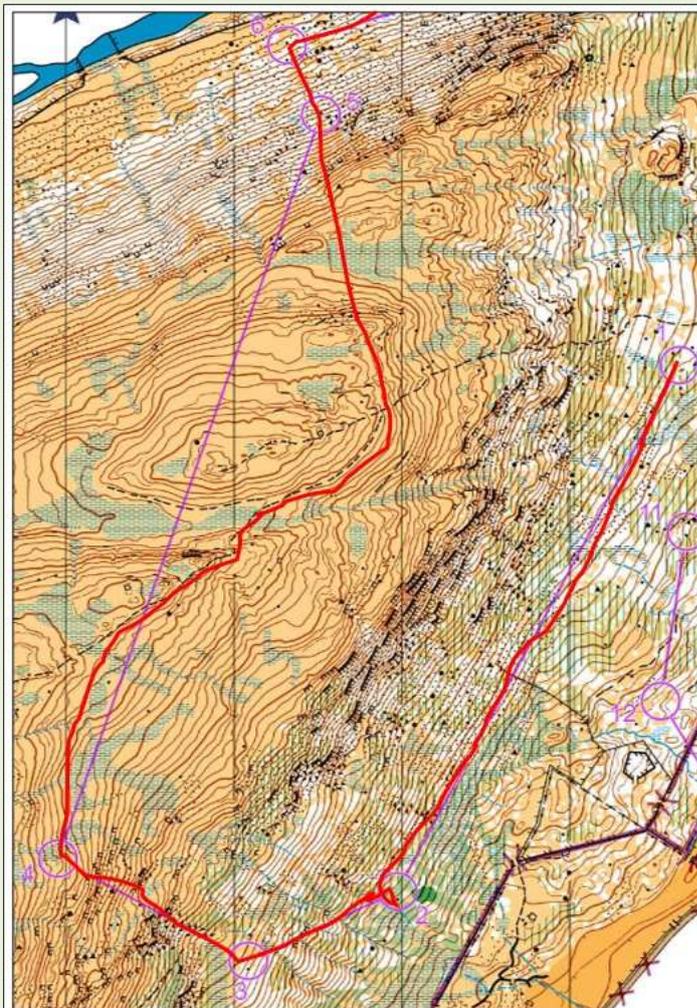


plus now we live in Guiseley with children of the same age. He usually beats me in the pool



and on the run-in in orienteering races, and it was no different today, with his 'last blast' being faster than mine. But he had nabbed his dad's number and ran Light Green, so he had a bit more energy than me at the end!

The M45 course took us along some patchy woodland and then above the slopes and into some more patchy woodland. I had heard some tales from Faye Pinker that her brother Marcus had found it tough the day before, when the previous wave had tackled it. If he found it tough, I was certainly going to have to gear up for a very long outing! However, the torrential rain stopped a few minutes before my start and there were a number of criss-crossing elephant tracks, which, together with close attention to the map, confidence from days one and two, and a good dose of grit (literally, in the case of my shoes), helped me to my third win in a row. I shared the overall M45L title with Roger Goddard, who won two of the three events in his wave, and indeed on the previous day, he finished the Craig Dhubh event eight minutes quicker than me, putting my victory in some kind of perspective.



#### **Craig Dhubh M45L course extract featuring my hand-drawn route\***

*\*I am still too technologically inept to work out how to transfer GPS traces from my watch to Routegadget; hand-drawing combined with Strava trace analysis is also a useful tool for post-race analysis*

I would never have thought I could have won one S6Day race, let alone three in a row. Being a first year M45 helped, as did the split field, and reduced numbers. I have also continued to spend time in terrain since I started orienteering in my mid-20s, and perhaps I now have about as much experience as someone who started as a young junior and is competing in *their* mid-20s? Spending time coaching, both in and out of school, has also helped to boost my hours in terrain and with

a map. And my podiatrist's advice to continue with my Achilles treatment and exercises also paid off: thank you, Lee Short. My overall message to others who want to do well in the veteran categories is to persevere, to never have more than two days in a row without having some kind of exercise, and to spend time on the ground orienteering and at least trying some



self-training. (For instance, after messing up some of the Danefield score event in July, I returned the next day at dusk to rerun half of it in the opposite direction.) You can do it!

## British Sprint Champs

Later in August, I pipped Roger Goddard and Richard Mawer in the final of the British Sprint Championships at Skelmersdale to win my first age class gold medal ever in any orienteering discipline (having won a silver and two bronzes over the last decade, as an M35 or M40). Carol McNeill's advice to 'orienteer fast, rather than run fast' helps in urban and sprint orienteering, as does Alice Leake's advice to say 'map!' to yourself if your mind wanders. So does having a coffee an hour or so beforehand, and a caffeine tablet and a consuming a sachet of sports carbohydrate powder dissolved in water before jogging to the start. Achieving the ideal start-line state of 'energised focus' (can I copyright that term?!) comes from what you consume as well as your mindset!

But perhaps the main thing that you can do in urban races is to trust the ground more than you would do on off-road surfaces, so you can spend more time 'getting into' the map – I



wonder if any research has been done on the ratio of time spent looking at a map and looking away from the map during different orienteering disciplines?

Thanks for reading my accounts, and I'll say it again: I find it hard to 'boast' about winning. However, perhaps an increase in self-confidence, and taking the opportunity to evaluate one's experiences by writing about them, are two other parts of the recipe for doing well - at any age.

(David emerging from one of the tunnels on the fiendish Sprint Champs Course. Ed.)

## British Sprint Championship Weekend – Skelmersdale - Peter Haines

Skelmersdale? The sort of place you drive past on the way to Liverpool.

I'd never been there so that was one reason to enter. Developed in the 1960s as a second wave new town housing overspill for NE Liverpool, Skelmersdale's claim to fame is that it has



no traffic lights and is made up of roundabouts including one of Europe's biggest. The largest roundabout - dubbed the 'Hope Island', probably because drivers hope they find the right exit before it gets dark, features a multi-geometric shape with a flower sculpture in the centre named the Gateway artwork as a tribute to cancer sufferers.

It sounded promising for urban sprint events, rather like a mega version of Holt Park in Cookridge. And so it proved to be. The relays were held on Saturday on the western side of town, with the two stage individual competition on Sunday on the south and east side. The housing layouts were all very similar, with a network of intricate alleys, courtyards and cut through walkways. Although there were no particular uncrossable barriers to catch you out with route choice, intense concentration was required to make sure you were running down the right alley and into the right courtyard. They all looked the same, so any lapse in concentration was severely punished. Like all urban events, the navigation looks really easy from the comfort of an armchair ( and of course it is if you walk round slowly), but when you are running at your maximum aerobic capacity, rational thoughts don't always occur, leading to the mistakes we all regret.

Disappointingly, Aire only managed one team in the relay, but a total of 14 turned out (including one new member) for the individual events which were in standard BO age groups. The individual consists of a qualifier event in the morning, with finals held in the afternoon depending on your relative placing from the qualifier.

Airienteers now have two British Orienteering Sprint Champions!

Alice Leake in Women's Open and Dave Alcock in M45. Congratulations to them!



We also welcomed a recent recruit to the Aire family. A new member called J. Bond esq.



When I asked him about his previous orienteering experience, he claimed he had been competing for over 50 years, and his orienteering exploits were recorded in numerous books and films. I was fascinated by the stories of his adventures, which challenged my credulity, so I looked up his resume, replicated below. It seems he was telling the truth with 26 orienteering related films to date!

- 1.1 Dr. Dib (1962)
- 1.2 A Dibber with Love (1963)
- 1.3 Golddibber (1964)
- 1.4 Thunderdib (1965)
- 1.5 You Only Dib Twice (1967)
- 1.6 On Her Majesty's Secret Dibber (1969)
- 1.7 Dibbers Are Forever (1971)
- 1.8 Dib and Let Die (1973)
- 1.9 The Man with the Golden Dibber (1974)
- 1.10 The Spy Who Loved Dibbers (1977)
- 1.11 Moondibber (1979)
- 1.12 For Your Dibber Only (1981)
- 1.13 Octodibber (1983)
- 1.14 A Dibber to a Kill (1985)
- 1.15 The Dibbing Daylights (1987)
- 1.16 Licence to Dib (1989)
- 1.17 GoldenDib (1995)
- 1.18 A Dibber Never Dies (1997)
- 1.19 A Dibber Is Not Enough (1999)
- 1.20 Dib Another Day (2002)
- 1.21 Dibber Royale (2006)
- 1.22 Dibber of Solace (2008)
- 1.23 Dibfall (2012)
- 1.24 Dibectre (2015)
- 1.25 Time to Dib (2021)
- 1.26 Never Dib Again

If you still don't believe me, I have his photograph to prove it!



It was a really well run and efficiently organised event with the NWOA volunteers (ably assisted by our very own Tony Thornley and Tony Carlyle as controllers) producing a memorable event. Just what we needed after the past 18 months.



Next year it is Aorienteer's turn to organise in Leeds, though whether Mr Bond is available to run for us, we will have to wait and see! There is a rumour he hasn't actually paid his membership fee, but bearing in mind his reputation, I'm not going to be the person to remind him.



(Alice with her British Sprints Trophy and Peter heading towards his final controls. Ed.)



(And now for something, not completely but, a little different. Ed.)

## Lakeland 3 Days – Carrick Armer

Over the August Bank Holiday weekend, I ran at the Great Lakeland 3-Day event - I'm in training for the Lakes in a Day ultramarathon in October and so a three-day mountain marathon style event seemed like a good shakedown for both my legs and my equipment choices. Unlike the traditional MMs like the Saunders and the OMM, the GL3D allows you a transported 60l dry bag to fill with your tent, sleeping kit, spare clothes and spare food, meaning you only have to carry the essentials on the hill during the day. There's also hot water and cake provided at the end of each day, and catering and a bar available at the overnight camps, so it's obviously a lot closer to the 'comfort' end of the spectrum than some events. Both nights were in the same location this year as well, meaning we also didn't have to de-camp every morning to move, so we were blessed with positive luxury!

This year there were four courses available, Expert, Wainwright Long, Wainwright Short and Cafe, and they varied in quoted average daily distance from 20km for the Cafe course up to 40km a day for the Experts. You could mix and match and step up or down each day, but you only get an official course ranking if you run the same class each day. Myself and my running partner had debated for a good while as to which we'd do - on the 2019 map we'd seen, the first and third days of Cafe course looked far too short and easy. but the first day of the then-sole Wainwright course was 37km, which was more than we really wanted to start with. With me running this as a shakedown event and running mate Steve still recovering after tearing his calf earlier in the year, we opted to stick with Cafe and just enjoy it this time round, hiking the ups, jogging where we could on the flat and running where we could on the descents..

We started from Chapel Stile, and the first day took us up over Silver Howe, down and back



up again onto Helm Crag, then we held height along the ridge over Calf Crag and into my one and only nav error of the weekend. While we were headed for Ullscarf, we missed a track off to the right and followed the trod we were on up onto High Raise, adding about 3km and a couple of hundred metres of unnecessary ascent onto the day - though at least I managed to bag another trig pillar. I can't even blame claggy weather or low visibility, just inattention and not checking the

bearings on a long leg. Once we realised the error we set off in the right direction and bagged the Ullscarf checkpoint before a long traverse and descent round Blea Tarn and over to



Watendlath, where we grabbed a cold drink at the tearoom - well we were running Cafe class! - before the last control on Grange Fell and then down to the overnight camp at Rosthwaite with 26km and 1,500m of ascent in the bag.

Sunday dawned greyer and more overcast than Saturday, and our course for the day was a lap of Buttermere, with a steep start onto Castle Crag and then straight up onto Dale Head just to warm us up nicely. A



lovely traverse of the ridge round past Hindscarth and onto Robinson then dropped us down

very steeply to Buttermere village, where we headed for the cafe at Syke Farm to grab a bite and a brew as we'd been up in the clouds for a couple of hours - very good sausage rolls, by the way. A gentle trot along the back of the lake led into the steep grind up onto Fleetwith Pike as the cloud burned off and the day warmed up. Down to Honister on the old pulley line was a joy to be able to run, as was some fine nav - tricker than I liked on a 1:40k Harveys map - and the lovely jog through



the woodland footpaths along the riverside back to base. Another 25km and 1,490m ascent





under our belts, and the evening to recover, eat, stretch, and maybe have a pint of liquid anaesthetic or two.

Monday was a shorter day and a little easier - though an earlier start as the campsite got noisy with runners wanting to get home up at 6am - with the long drag up from Rosthwaite to



Stonethwaite to Langstrath and over Stake Pass as the main event. The last time I'd been up that valley was 20-something years ago as a teenager on a D-of-E expedition, in a howling gale and horizontal rain, so I was very glad of the mild, dry conditions and lightweight race pack. We'd soon got the climb out of the way and passed a few people as we ran as much of the descent as we could, down into Mickleden and down to Dungeon Ghyll. A quick and slightly cheeky coffee at the hotel - they were only serving residents as the pub wasn't open yet, but poured us a cafetiere anyway! - set us up nicely for the final hurdle, the last drag around Side Pike and up onto Lingmoor summit before the headlong hurtle down off the fell and back into Chapel Stile to the finish.



We'd had a great three days, with 22km on the last day bringing us up to 73km and 3,900m of ascent in total. Much to our surprise - especially after the leisurely approach and our dedication to the 'cafe' element of the Cafe Course - we finished 4th and 5th overall out of the 65 who'd run the same all three days. Maybe with more

training and less coffee, we could podium next year - but maybe that would spoil some of the fun...



Carrick Café Class!



## Spotlight on Carrick Armer!

### *Carrick, how did you get into orienteering?*

I've been orienteering most of my life - I grew up in the Lakes and my parents were very early members of both Lakeland OC and Border Liners. I ran for BL as a kid, captained Leeds Uni (LUUOC) as a student, but stopped orienteering in the mid-2000s due to injuries and other interests. I came back to it a few years ago, running an AIRE event in Meanwood (and winning on Long Orange, which was a pleasant surprise), then the Autumn and Winter Night Score-O events and found I was enjoying it again, so joined the club.

### *Do you train specifically for orienteering? What form does your training take?*

I don't. I'm training (though I use the term loosely) for some long running and multisport/Adventure Race events at the moment, but my 'training' is more just trying to keep myself in decent shape generally. I mix running, mountain biking and kayaking with some yoga to help stop bits of me seizing up too regularly!

### *What are your personal orienteering targets for the coming year?*

In the immediate future I'm running my first OMM at the end of October, in Medium Score, so finishing that is my first priority! Otherwise, I'm a person who orienteers for pleasure rather than anything else, so just to keep enjoying it and pushing myself.

### *Which has been your most satisfying/enjoyable orienteering event to date and why?*

Strangely, the Northern Night Champs on Ilkley Moor a couple of years ago. I'd not long started running again, had enjoyed the 1hr Night Score events so threw an impulse entry in since it was local. My pace wasn't spectacular, but I had a really clean run navigationally on the Brown, which was great for the feeling of "maybe I'm not as bad at this as I thought I was..."

### *How would you define your 'perfect' orienteering run?*

I don't think I've ever had a perfect run. I'd say for me 'good' means minimal nav errors and moving steadily for the entire run. I track almost everything on a smartwatch and like the 'move ratio' statistic (ratio of moving time to stopped time) - the closer that is to 1, the less time I've spent dithering over route choice. Whether I'm moving in the right direction is sometimes debatable, but at least I'm moving.

### *What are your three favourite orienteering areas and why?*

Near where I grew up, Whinlatter Forest (Combe and Masmill) - lovely pine forest with plenty of elevation.

Closer to Leeds, probably Ilkley Moor - though normally I'm not a fan of open moorland I've



had good fun and some decent runs on there.

Further afield, the coastal dune forest areas like Lossie and Culbin - the last time I was there I was in great shape and made so many mistakes as I could run faster than I could navigate, but they're just beautiful areas and so complex.

### *How else do you like to spend your spare time?*

Adventure racing, mountain biking, whitewater kayaking and photography, quite often combining the last one with the other three.

(Thank you to Carrick for agreeing to be 'in the spotlight'. If you would like to feature in a future issue, just answer those questions above! Ed.)

## **M45 YHOA Long Distance Champion 2021**



Many congratulations to David Bowman who, last month, became M45 Long Distance Champion following the Championships held at Skipwith Common. No trophy or medal but David was very happy with his bag and chocolatey prize!





## Airienteers Juniors News – Lindsey King

AIRE juniors are proud to announce that Tom M16 is now a full member of the YHOA Regional Squad, along with Emily and Jake. He has shown excellent progress in his recent races at the Northern Championships and British Middle Distance Championships, as well as the Yvette Baker Trophy heat and final. Tom is really enjoying orienteering at the moment and so I asked him to tell us a bit about himself.

**How long have you been orienteering and how did you start?** I have been orienteering for four years. I started when I was in Year 6 as my primary school entered a few local events which my grandad encouraged me to attend.

**What makes you excited about orienteering?** I love the way that orienteering involves having to use your brain as well as running. I also enjoy the feeling that I get running through fells or woods by myself.

**Which event has been most challenging and why?** The most challenging event so far was definitely the British Middle Distance Championships in the Lake District early last month. The forest contained a lot of features, making it difficult to find the exact location of the control and it was steep and full of obstacles which made running fast tricky.

**What other sports do you do?** I do a few other sports, playing hockey for West Yorkshire, golf for Ilkley and tennis for my school.

**What do you do to chill out when not doing homework or sport?** In the little time I have to relax, I like to play snooker and chess with my dad or play the violin.

**What is your favourite food?** I like a lot of food so it is hard to choose, but I would say that my favourite is pasta with pesto and peas.

Thanks Tom. Congratulations on your selection to the Regional Junior Squad!

**Lindsey King, Coach.**



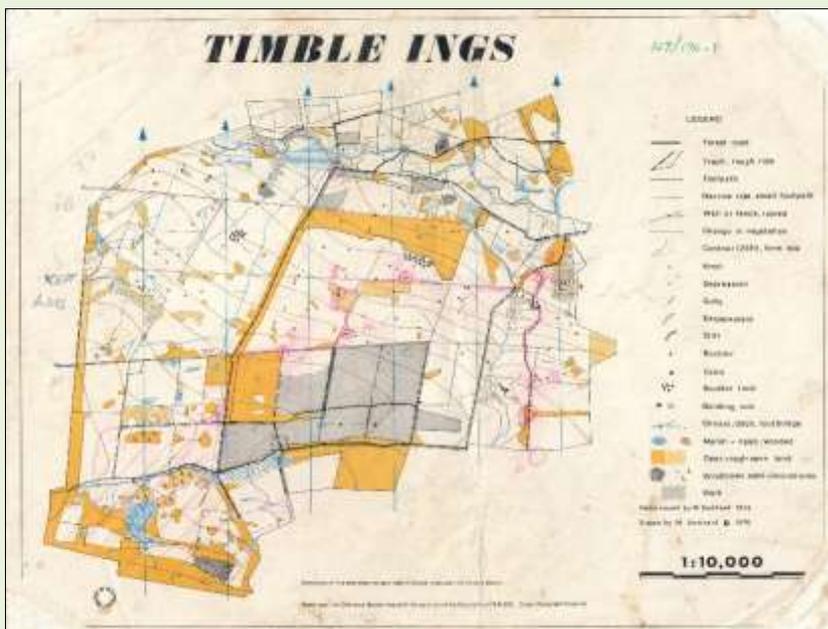
Tom in action recently at the Yvette Baker Trophy  
(Photo: Scott Bailey)



## Timble in the Dark Ages – Roger Lott

I write this before heading out to Claro's event at Timble, vaguely hoping but severely doubting that the elephants will have been at work before I venture around a course. Timble holds a special place in my heart because it is where I first went orienteering. The event was a central Yorkshire Scouts 'Championships' organised single-handedly by Frank Milner on 10th March 1968, The black and white photocopy of an OS map featured lots of Christmas tree symbols, some walls from that part of the Ings that had been included in the plantation and form the south-western area of the forest, but nothing else useful for navigation such as the forest roads and rides. My diary tells me that 23 competitors started and 15 finished, with the winner (one R Lott) taking 1 hour 37 minutes 30 seconds for the 2½ mile course. Despite taking 25 mins/km, I was hooked. In the following few months Frank was good enough to have me as a passenger to events in Lancashire and West Cumberland. I recall one trip over Wrynose and Hardnott passes where Frank let his dog out of his Landrover at the foot of the climb, it ran up the road in front of the vehicle, to be picked up at the top. After a couple of hours accompanying Frank around Setmurthy forest, the same was repeated on the return journey over Hardknott but the poor dog decided it had had enough when offered the opportunity of a repeat over Wrynose.

In June of that year, I persuaded a few of the school cross-country running club to enter a team in the Walton School (precursor of the Walton Chasers club) orienteering event on Cannock Chase. An introduction to the sport was needed for them, so I re-ran the March event for my schoolmates. All I remember of putting on the event is hunting around in shoulder-high bracken and at one stage staggering along the top of a wall using adjacent trees for balance Tarzan-like, as this seemed to be faster than fighting the bracken. Hence my scepticism about the running conditions to be encountered today.



After AIRE was formed in 1970, an orienteering map of Timble was made by Mike Smithard. His map says 'resurveyed in 1976' so I am not clear whether the 1976 map was the first o-map of the area or a revision to a previous one. I used Mike's map as the



basis for a significant revision in 1981. The revision included interpolating the 25-foot contours Mike had taken from the OS map to a 5m contour interval (metric contours not having made it to the local OS map at that time, still at 1:10,560). I had access to survey equipment and Annette and I spent a couple of weekends with me at theodolite and recently-invented electronic distance measuring equipment and



Annette with target prism staggering along the ditches in the recently felled southwestern area in snow. I still have a full set of course maps from the event, although I have to say the planning for the M/W 10 and 11 courses leaves an awful lot to be desired - more like something between today's orange and light green standards. The longer courses had map exchanges - two of them for M21 and M35. The longest course without a map exchange was that for W50 and M62; ages grouping for adults had not yet adopted the IOF standard and were M/W 21, 35, 43, 50, 56 and 62. The map was used for two further AIRE events.



The Timble o-map was next revised in 1984 by Martin 'Bilbo' Bagness, in conjunction with an extension eastwards across the Blubberhouses-Otley road into Beecroft Moor plantation. When Claro was formed in 1990, Timble was amongst the areas originally mapped by AIRE to be transferred to the new club. The map has subsequently been revised on several occasions by Claro members.

These various editions of the Timble orienteering map exhibit differences in style as o-map symbology has matured and in detail mapped. Some detail difference follows real change on the ground - vegetation most obviously, but also the deterioration of walls largely due to



forestry operations. Boulders and ditches have come and gone and some have reappeared, exhibiting the decisions that mappers have to make as to whether to include marginal features.

**Postscript to the 2021 event.**

My fears of bracken infestation were ill-founded. The planner avoided the worst areas - at least on my (Green) course - and made best use of the runnable forest. But runnable is a relative thing, and what I once considered to be really nice open forest was a bit of a struggle today. In this respect it is not the mapping that has changed.

Roger competing, sadly not at Timble Ings, but at the S6D recently.



And now, several important items to note for the orienteering months ahead! Please do check your calendars and volunteer where you can. Ed.

**Aire needs your help at events – Chris Burden**

A few dates for your diary.

**On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022** Aire are hosting The British Orienteering Sprint Championships at Leeds University. This is a complex event which will require a very large volunteer involvement. We will require helpers from all three helper teams. The more volunteers we have the easier it is to ensure that every helper can have a run. Please put this date in your diary now – and even better – let Chris Burden, the Event Organiser, know you can help. (Contact details at the end of this piece.)

We need a few folks to put out controls at this event, which will, of course, disqualify those folks from competing. If you are able and willing to do this please contact Chris Burden, asap.

The other larger events which Aire are staging in the following year, which require a high volunteer input are:-

- 14<sup>th</sup> Nov      Esholt      Helper Team 3
- 8<sup>th</sup> Jan      Gotts Park (YHOA Night League) We try and run this just using regular night orienteers.



9 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Calverley Woods	Helper Team 1
19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	British Night Championships – Ilkley Moor	Helper Team 2
20 <sup>th</sup> Feb	National Event – Ilkley and Burley Moors	Helper Teams 3 and 1
15 <sup>th</sup> May	Buck Wood	Helper Team 2

If you make note of these dates now, it makes life so much easier for the event organiser to assemble their event team.

You can check which Helper Team you are in on the Aire website.

In addition, we still need the following main officials for some of the above events.

Gotts Park – Organiser required

Calverley Woods – Organiser and Planner required

Ilkley and Burley Moors – Organiser required. (Ilkley Grammar School has already been booked as the venue)

Buck Wood – Organiser and Planner required.

Finally, the following events from the Autumn Night League still require a volunteer(s) to stage them.

10 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Meanwood Park
17 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Bramley
24 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Peel Park
15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Roundhay Park

Please send your offers of help to [fixtures@aire.org.uk](mailto:fixtures@aire.org.uk)

Many thanks,

Chris Burden, Fixtures Secretary

## **WE'RE UP FOR THE CUP – CALLING ALL AIRES! – Steve Webb**

As you hopefully all know we are through to the final of the CompassSport Cup.

The final is on Sunday 17 October and will be hosted by SYO at Tankersley and Hesley Woods.

It's great that SYO stepped into the breach as the original venue of Sutton Park, the replacement venue of Chatsworth, and the second replacement venue of Sutton Park (again!) fell through.

**Good news for us:** it's easy to get to the event, just down the M1 between Barnsley and Sheffield.



**Better news for us:** the club will pay the entry fee for everybody who runs in a competitive class at the final! You do need to compete on the day to get your free run. I shall be putting in a block entry for the club so please sign up to secure a place in the AIRE team.

**Closing date:** please sign up with all your details by Sunday 26 September on the spreadsheet linked from the AIRE website: <https://tinyurl.com/aire21>

Look forward to seeing you all buzzing around the bell pits of Tankersley on finals day! Let's have a big turn out and see what we can do!

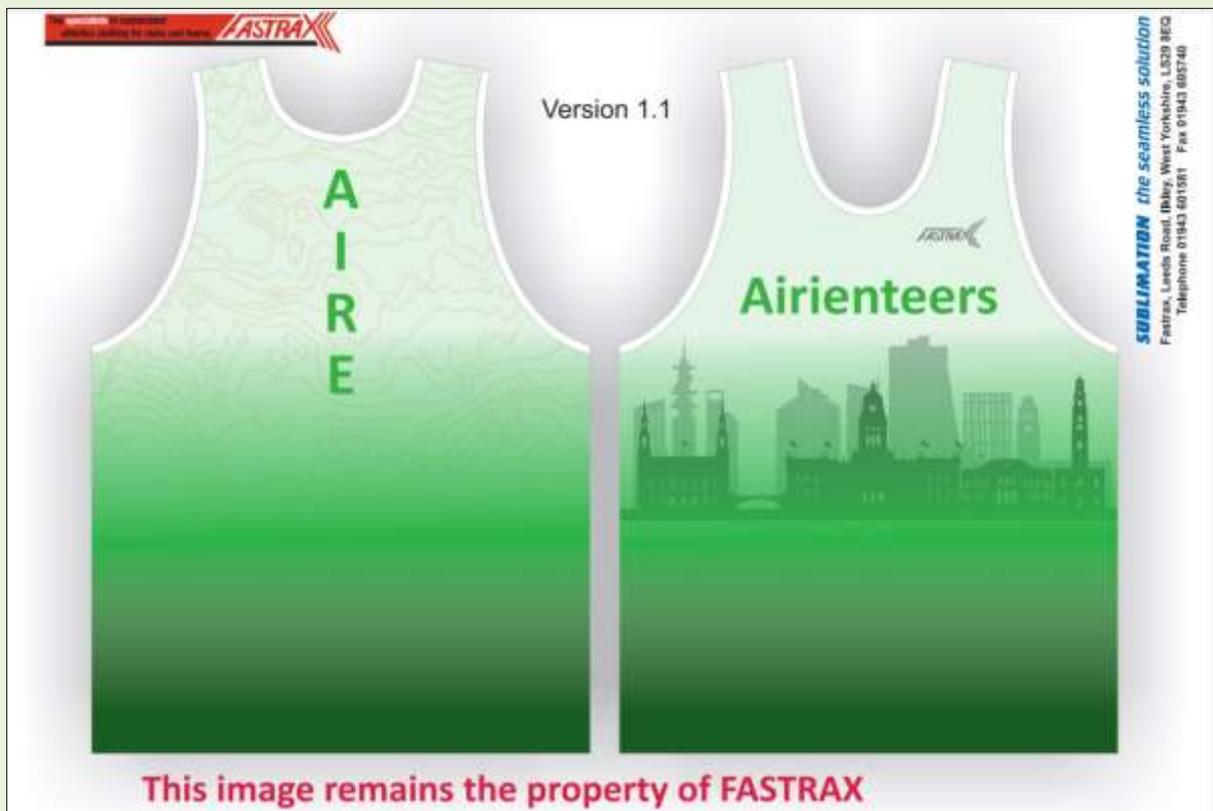
Steve

## Look the Part in your new AIRE running vest - Leon

It's been a while since we've had some vests ordered so we are looking to order some new ones in an updated design as you can see below.

Price will hopefully be £21 providing we get sufficient orders

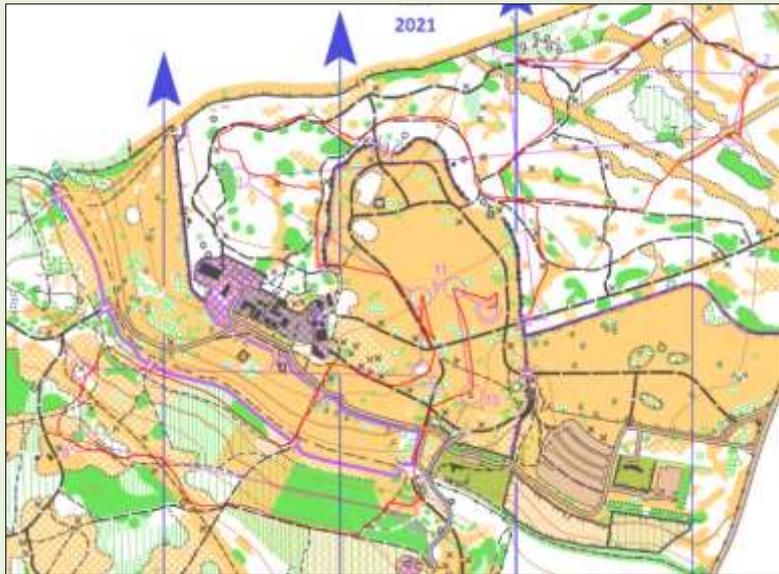
If you would like one, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/airevests> and fill in your details by **Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> October** please.





## Yvette Baker Trophy – James Woodham

I thought that competing in the Yvette Baker trophy was a fun, interesting experience, especially as we were competing as a team. The National Arboretum was very pretty and nice to orienteer in, but I found that it wasn't really suited to more difficult courses, as there weren't really any interesting terrain features or places to hide controls. My course itself wasn't as difficult as I had thought it would be,



although some parts of it were still quite challenging, especially in areas where there was a large amount of undergrowth to fight through, as this made getting to the controls quite a lot more difficult. This is the first time I have used RouteGadget and it has helped me see where I've made mistakes and could have made better route choices.

### (Map shows James' route and course)

AIRE's junior team travelled to deepest Gloucestershire for the Yvette Baker trophy this month. The race was held at the beautiful Westonbirt National Arboretum. It was a closed junior event for the qualifying clubs and parents/drivers. Unfortunately, the AIRE team was 'pinged' a couple of days before the event meaning that Katie and Bethan had to isolate. Fortunately, we encouraged Eleanor to brush the dust off her compass and enter yellow course for us so we were only one short of a full team. Tom was first off on the green course and had a great run coming 16th out of 70 runners. We had 3 runners on light green: James M14, Annie W16 and Megan W14 who all finished in the top half of the results. Kate, Jack, Charlie and Eleanor all ran a very tricky and long yellow course scoring more points for the team. Kate enjoyed her day, "The course was fun and the treetop walk was cool because it was so high up." Thank you to all parents who supported the event. The table shows the points scored for Aire -we came 10<sup>th</sup> overall. Lindsey King, Coach.

Name	Class	Score
Charlotte Beavers	Yellow Girls	95
Megan Robinson	Light Green Girls	94
Annie Faulkner	Light Green Girls	92
Jack Beavers	Yellow Boys	92
Tom Threlfall	Green Boys	89
James Woodham	Light Green Boys	88
Eleanor Robinson	Yellow Girls	88