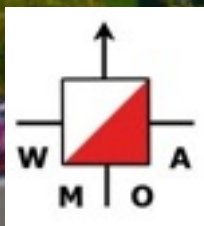


The West Midlander

Autumn 2014



**The Newsletter of the
West Midlands Orienteering Association**

Association Officials

Chairman	Bob Brandon (OD)
Vice-Chairman	Ray Collins (WCH)
Secretary	Delia Kingsbury (WRE)
Treasurer	Barry McGowan (HOC)
Fixtures Secretary/Rep.	Allan Williams (WCH)
Newsletter Editor	Rod Postlethwaite (WRE)
Coaching Rep.	<Vacant>
Colour Badge Awards	Hilary Simpson (OD)
Controllers' Co-ordinator	Henry Morgan (POTOC)
Data Privacy Officer	<Vacant>
E-mail Tree Co-ordinator	<Vacant>
Handbook Editor	Rod Postlethwaite (WRE)
Junior Squad Co-ordinator	Melanie Elkington (OD)
League Results Co-ordinator	Lesley Ross (OD)
Webmaster	Lesley Ross (OD)

Club Representatives

British Orienteering	John Woodall
COBOC	Barry McGowan
HOC	Barry McGowan
OD	Barry Elkington
POTOC	Brenda Morgan
WCH	Ray Collins
WRE	Graham Hardy
All Committee/Officials	

Website: <http://www.wmoa.org.uk>

Cover Photo: Finish at the British Sprint Championships at Keele University

Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the 'West Midlander.' Thanks to everyone who has sent in articles and photos - it makes my job a lot easier and makes the newsletter a lot more interesting.

Thank you to Peter Jones (WRE) who answered my request for old copies of the 'West Midlander' and lent me some issues from 1977 - 1983. Are there any earlier copies existing out there? If you have any would you be prepared to lend them to me please?

Since the last issue the region has seen a successful British Sprint and Middle Distance Championship weekend held by POTO and WCH (see page 24). I was particularly pleased to have been involved in the mapping of Keele University for POTO and thoroughly enjoyed my two runs there (albeit non-competitively). Hopefully we'll be able to run there again sometime in the future.

One of the stalwarts of the West Midlands, John Bennison, has been suffering ill health recently and has had to step down from his positions as the E-mail Tree Co-ordinator and Data Privacy Officer. May I, on behalf of the Region thank him for his efforts and wish him a full recovery.

The AGM is almost upon us (see page 9) - please come along and support the Region. A reminder, too, that there are vacancies for John's former posts and also for the Region Coaching Representative.

The Autumn has a full orienteering calendar with the conclusion of the first Urban League and also the West Midlands League where it looks likely that Octavian Droobers will win another title. Who will be the Runners-Up?

Happy Orienteering
Rod

Copy date for the next issue:

14 December 2014

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WMOA Chairman's Report October

Bob Brandon

I am sure that you all have had a good Summer. Next on the WMOA agenda is the AGM in October (Monday 13th) at the Great Barr Hotel.

Maybe not the most exciting night out, but I am hoping to see you all there! We had a respectable turn out last year, which resulted in some good discussions - enabling the creation of a WMOA Urban League and changes to the format of the WMOA Relays. Both were successfully implemented in 2014.

At the recent Committee meeting I was grateful to note that those with roles within the region were willing to continue in 2015. All that is, apart from Mel Elkington, who announced that she is to hand over the Regional Junior Squad to the safe hands of Sarah Dredge (WCH). Whilst it is sad to lose Mel, it is good to have some young blood working for the Region. Sarah is a former successful member of the Squad who will have plenty of new ideas.

Congratulations must go to the Potteries and Walton Chasers clubs, who at the beginning of September, staged the very successful British Championships weekend. Potteries, a relatively small Club, staged the Sprint event on the Keele University campus. Organising the event was Brenda Morgan, whilst husband Henry planned the two rounds of courses, enjoyed by over 800 competitors.

Next day 1,200 turned out at Brereton Spurs near Rugeley, where it was the turn of Walton Chasers to put on the Middle Distance event. Andy Yeates, competently organised a efficient team of helpers making the day a success. Cath Williams' vision to use Brereton Spurs came to fruition with good courses, each with plenty of controls.

All officials for this weekend, plus those in the frame for BOC2016 have been encouraged to attend the BOF Major Events Conference at the end of September - to pass on what worked - to pick up good ideas.

Octavian Droobers hosted the WMOA Park Championships at Brueton, a short distance from Solihull town centre. Organiser, John Middler, was pleased to report a turnout



Bob at the JK Relays at Pwll Ddu

Photo by Margaret Willdig (OD)

exceeding 100% of that in 2013. The 50+ control sites benefitting from Controller, Robert Vickers' 'beady eye!'

Read elsewhere of the Junior Squad and their trip to the Swedish 5-Day event. Thanks to all who helped make this trip so memorable for those who took part. Several other Juniors were selected to go to several exotic locations. Feedback is that all enjoyed their experiences, and each have learned improved orienteering techniques as a result.

The annual BOF Association and Club Conference is being held at Stratford upon Avon on Saturday 25th October. This year the focus is on Local Orienteering Events - quite timely as I've just signed up to be OD's Summer evening events co-ordinator. If you would like to come along with me to Stratford, please let me know!

Finally, a reminder that Walton Chasers are staging the WMOA Championships at Chillington Hall on November 30th.

Minutes of WMOA meeting on 8 September 2014, Great Barr Hotel

Present: D. Kingsbury, R. Brandon, J. Woodall, R. Collins, B. McGowan, A. Williams, B. Morgan, T. Craig, R. Postlethwaite, H. Morgan, M. Elkington, B. Elkington, G. Hardy

1. **Apologies:** E. Brown
2. **Declarations of Interest:** None
3. **Minutes of previous meeting:** Point 11 was corrected. Information had been received from D. Olivant but not from Silva. Otherwise, the minutes were accepted as a true record.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - Actions at points 7 and 8 had been completed by B. McGowan and A. Williams respectively.
 - Details of events had been included in West Midlander by R. Postlethwaite.
 - D. Kingsbury had checked the circulation detail and discovered that little was known about how to access the West Midlands email tree.
 - The Planners course was scheduled for 20th September. Attendees from WRE, POTO and COBOC were expected. Other clubs were to take the information back and canvas for additional attendees. There was no Organiser course as there had been no demand for this.

D. Kingsbury to request information from John Bennison about how to access the WMOA email tree.

5. **Correspondence:**

Request from Ernie Williams for feedback relating to a training materials review had been circulated to H. Morgan, A. Callow and R. Brandon who had been asked to respond to him directly.

6. **Chairman's Report:**

See page 4.

7. **Treasurer's Report:**

The final accounts for the year showed a loss of £1227 with a balance of £1765. This is in context of a non SinS / major event year where a loss was budgeted. Levies were down due to 2 major events earlier in the year being cancelled. £2000 had been drawn from the deposit account. Monies had been paid to the Junior Squad. The EOC donation was less than for previous years.

At the last meeting it had been realised that no levies would be due from the Sprint / Middle Championships as these were National events and BOF agreements were with the individual clubs rather than WMOA. This had led to a reduction of £1000 in anticipated levies. B. McGowan suggested that once the balance sheets were finalised, that if there were significant profits, a donation to WMOA by the organising clubs would be appreciated. WCH and POTO were asked to bring their balance sheets to the next meeting.

T. Craig suggested that this issue of what BOF expected in terms of levy should be raised at the next Major Events Conference.

There will be income from SinS in 2015 and from the Midland Championships which had been identified as a selection race, which would increase entries. It was planned to take £1500 of the profit from BOC2016 for WMOA income.

There was some discussion about reducing mileage rates for attending WMOA meetings to reduce costs but it was agreed to leave this at 25p per mile.

8. Fixtures

West Midlands Urban League

The remaining events this year are Stafford (12/10) and Redditch (25/10). It was acknowledged that this year the classes were a little adrift and used just 4 technical courses. This relates to how competitors ran at Kenilworth. This format is part of a trial year.

R. Postlethwaite to adapt the West Midlands Competition certificates for the Urban League series.

R. Postlethwaite to include details of remaining events in West Midlander.

R. Postlethwaite to ask L. Ross if a link to the Nopesport page for the WM Urban League can be put on the WMOA website.

WM League

The Chillington Hall event has been slotted in for 30/11/14. Event selection for the 2015 League will take place at the end of November / early December, following a National Planning meeting, at which R. Brandon will represent the WMOA.

JIRC2015

Areas for competition have been identified as Brereton Spurs and Oldacre. Planners are Barry Elkington (OD) and Allan Williams (WCH).

BOC 2016 Brown Clec

Arrangements are progressing well.

The proposals put forward by E. Brown for profit sharing were discussed. Some clubs had found the wording confusing and were uncertain whether the lead club would be entitled to a second share, i.e. a % allotted to Organiser and Planner and the remainder split between other helpers. The following wording was suggested to offer more clarity:

N% to Planner's club, N% to Organiser's club; 100 - (2 x N)% split between other helpers regardless of club.

It was also proposed that this should look at assigning roles within the events to the clubs, rather than simply considering numbers of people who are mustered. It would be the clubs responsibility to find enough helpers to oversee the start, for example.

It was suggested that E. Brown liaise with co-ordinators in the clubs and discuss arrangements with them.

A system of identifying helpers in advance would also be needed.

JK2018

will be in WMOA - WCH have ideas for a Relay area.

West Midlands Relay review

General feedback was that the new format had been well received.

No negative feedback had been received regarding the age classes and it had been easier in relation to the 35-45 age groups.

Whilst there had been a mass start the planning had resulted in half the competitors going one way and half the other way. The mass start had also helped the day to move on quickly.

The issue of Juniors running up in relation to team entry fees was raised - it was clarified that the charge is per team and thus set.

9. West Midlander

It was confirmed that if clubs had any need for paper copies of the West Midlander, these should be printed by the clubs.

R. Postlethwaite would welcome reports, images and news items for inclusion in the magazine, particularly in relation to the recent Sprint and Middle Distance Championships.

10. Development

Mapping training - there was no progress to report.

11. Events and Competitions Committee

There had been no National Meeting. B. Elkington was keen to obtain feedback from those who were directly involved with the Sprint and Middle Distance Championships. H Morgan reported that a time plan for providing information would be helpful; for example he had learnt quite late on that final details should be posted 6 weeks prior to an event.

The number of courses available needed to be reviewed in light of increased demand as a result of the event becoming more popular - there had been no flexibility to accommodate last minute changes in start times. On the other hand, this had been advertised and nobody had turned up requesting an amended start time.

The lack of prizes at the recent Sprint and Middle Distance Championships for 18 and 20 age classes was raised. J. Woodall was asked to take this back to BOF. This appeared to be due to the elite wanting all 18-21 year olds to compete in the same race and is an issue steeped in the evolution of the event and combining of race classes.

The absence of some elite competitors at these events was also discussed. This is apparently due to clashes with other international events and links to club sponsorships. It was suggested that this could be rectified by there being a separate elite event or by making the British Championships selection races.

T. Craig reported that better signage to events was needed as competitors had struggled to find the Middle Distance event, this had led to complaints being directed to volunteers which was unacceptable. The signage had been in line with Major Event Guidelines which was compliant with Police requirements for signage to be reduced. However, this had proved to be insufficient.

J. Woodall suggested that post-event reports would be helpful.

12. West Midlands Junior Squad - June 2014 to September 2014 - Mel Elkington

June /July saw Harrison McCartney represent GB at EYOC and Julie Emmerson represent GB at JWOC.

A small group of us went to Sweden to the 50th 'O Ringen' at the end of July. We would like to thank the 'O' Foundation and the WMOA for supporting us in this and helping to keep the amount the Juniors have to pay to a minimum. We had a great time, the orienteering was very technical but we all improved over the week as did our fitness.

Nathan Lawson and Harrison McCartney attended a GB Talent Squad training for a few days just before the Lakes 5 Day. This involved lectures, different ways of training sessions and some orienteering.

The Junior Regional Squad Tours of Lagganlia, Trossachs, Stockholm and Gothenburg saw some of our athletes selected. Ellie Bales was selected for Lagganlia. Matt Hartland for the

Trossachs, Nathan Lawson and Harrison McCartney for Stockholm then Matt Elkington and Julie Emmerson for Gothenburg. Sadly Nathan was unable to take his place up as he damaged his knee and was unable to run. The rest of the athletes had a good time and also have improved their orienteering greatly.

The Junior Home International took place on the weekend of 30/31 August in Scotland. Julie Emmerson, Nathan Lawson and Harrison McCartney were all selected to represent England. In the end only Julie went .She did well and finished 2nd in the individual .

On the weekend of the 27 /28 September 2014 the Junior Inter Regional Championships is taking place in the North West. I offered it to all our members, aside from our very enthusiastic M 12's. All those that wanted to represent WMOA have a place. The final team at present is as follows:

M18 (Brown)	Stephen Elkington, Nathan Lawson
M16 (Blue)	Harrison McCartney, Matt Hartland, Will Heaton
M14 (Light Green)	Alfie Bullus, Ewan Lloyd, Callum Pearman, Alex Mitchell
W18 (Blue)	Aimee Morse , Rhiannon Cope
W16 (Green)	Heather Craig, Gemma Cairns Smith
W14 (Light Green)	Ellie Bales

Our next training session will be on Saturday 13 September 2014 with the East Midlands Junior Squad. All have been invited and a few have taken the offer up. Then the 16's will be training in the Lakes at the end of November for a weekend.

I am in the process of handing the Squad over to Sarah Dredge as she is taking charge. I will remain the main contact and overall co-ordinator for the moment.

13. AGM Planning

All current committee members indicated a willingness to continue in their roles. Nobody had any discussions items or motions that needed to be put to the AGM.

A Controller of Controllers would be useful. H. Morgan reported that we are seeing Controllers dropping out in line with the age profile and that this was a National problem. Planning and organising experience is needed to lead to controlling.

R. Postlethwaite to invite any other nominations from others who may be interested in a committee position and to mention that the Regional Coaching position was still available.

14. AOB

B. Morgan had 2 commemorative t-shirts left from the Sprint Championships that could be purchased for £5 each.

R. Collins notified the meeting of 2 Army events to be held on 15th October 2014 at Marquis Drive.

15. Next meetings

AGM:	Monday 13 October 2014
Next ordinary meeting:	Monday 8 December 2014

Agenda for the WMOA AGM

Monday 13 October 2014 commencing at 7.30 pm

Venue: The Great Barr Hotel, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 6HS

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declaration of interests**
- 3. Acceptance of Minutes of previous AGM**
- 4. Matters Arising**
- 5. Correspondence**
- 6. Chairman's Report**
- 7. Treasurer's Report**
- 8. Fixtures Report**
- 9. Other Reports**
- 10. Election of Officers:**

Nominations for the following committee positions are invited:

Chair	Vice-Chair
Secretary	Treasurer
Fixtures Secretary	Newsletter Editor

11. AOB

Next meeting: 8 December 2014

WMOA Controllers

Errata:

Following the list in the Summer edition a few errors have been notified:

Level A (omission)

Thompson Simon	M	(HOC)
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Level C (typographic errors)

Taylor Judith	F	(HOC) not OD as published.
Williams David	M	(HOC) not OD as published.

West Midlands Junior Squad 2014 tour to Sweden

Mel Elkington

This summer we (Mel, Barry, Matt1, Matt2, Nathan, Stephen, Heather1, Heather2, Gemma and Ellie) flew from Heathrow to Copenhagen and caught the train to Kristianstad in south east Sweden. A bus ride took us to the 'O-Ringen' town where we collected our final details, bibs, etc. and we were then all ready to compete in the 50th 'O-Ringen'. The people whose house we were staying in very kindly came and collected us from the town, and took us back to their smallholding. Here we had a house, a marquee and a converted shed, in which to live for the week.



Matt2 entering the converted shed where six of us slept.

They had also collected enough bikes from friends and family to be able to lend us one each. These were a challenge as most of them didn't have gears or brakes. In order to brake you had to back pedal, and to get up hills either pedal very hard or push. But at least they were very solidly built, and most car drivers we came across gave us a wide berth.

The marquee where we ate all our meals and relaxed every evening.

In the foreground one of the more elderly and brightly coloured of our bikes.



Setting off from the smallholding to cycle the 4km to the 'O-Ringen' town early in the morning.

On the day of our earliest starts we had to leave at 6.00 am.

Every morning we cycled 4km through the forest to 'O-Ringen' town, where we parked our bikes amongst thousands of others and caught a bus to the events. Over 20,000 people were competing so this was a great exercise in transport logistics. There was usually a short walk to the assembly field from the bus drop off followed by some long walk to the start.



Map extracts from days 1 and 2

The Orienteering areas were all different but technically challenging, and the map pack we had bought before the event was extremely useful as we were able to study old versions of the maps before we competed on them. Over the course of the week everyone improved both their fitness and their technical abilities and, even though we were still making mistakes at the end of the week, these weren't losing us as much time before relocating.

Day 3 was probably the best day of the five. The race took place on sand dunes alongside a lovely beach. After the event everyone went to the beach where the sea was warm enough to swim in and cool off.

On the rest day our hosts gave us all a lift to the nearest beach and then to the supermarket so that we could re-stock on food without having to carry it back to the house on the bikes.



The Swedish beaches were lovely, as was the weather for the whole week.



Day 4 saw us running in woodland with more paths and lots of walls with fewer contours but it was still very challenging



Day 5. The final control was on the hill top and had the most amazing run-in that any of us have ever seen.....the view as you left the forest was breathtaking!

We all had a fantastic time in Sweden. With 22571 competitors the orienteering was an amazing experience, the weather was lovely, and the accommodation was something else.

Getting home proved somewhat of a challenge as our afternoon flight from Copenhagen to Heathrow was cancelled. By midnight we had managed to fly back to Birmingham airport via Frankfurt, having set foot in four countries in just over twelve hours. However, all the parents were there and waiting so at least the children could get home for the night, although the luggage was still in Copenhagen (or possibly Frankfurt) and only eventually caught up with us all some days later.

The West Midlands Juniors would like to thank the O Foundation, The West Midlands Orienteering Association and everyone who supported our cake sales and quiz, for contributing towards the cost of the tour.

Lagganlia Training Camp

Ellie Bales (POTOC)



When I first found out that I had a place at Lagganlia I wasn't sure about going as I didn't know anyone else that was going so I arranged to meet up with another one of the girls so we could catch the train together. We all arrived at Aviemore train station to be taken to Lagganlia by some of the coaches. Once we were at Lagganlia we went to our rooms, emptied our suitcases then all met up at the boys lodge where we got to know each other and learnt everyone's name by playing some games. By then I became friends with and knew everyone. After that we ate dinner and had a briefing about the next day's training.

The next day we had a training session close to Lagganlia where we learnt about taking bearings, pacing and aiming off in our coaching groups. We had a few little courses to practise these skills. We also learnt about pacing and then found our own pace in 100m. After that we put our skills into practice and did a star relay in teams of three. It was great fun and I enjoyed it even though we didn't win. We then travelled back to Lagganlia to eat our lunch and then set out to a different

area. This area was very complex and had a grid of different types of green with paths running through them. Also some of the coaches were out trying to distract us so we had to keep concentrating. I found this area very challenging.

On Monday we made our way out to Roseisle which is one of my favourite areas for some simplifying attack points and catching features and long legs. I learnt a lot from these exercises and they improved my contouring skills. Next we did an odds and evens relay which I really enjoyed and our team came 2nd. Next we did a green area which I found a lot easier than I thought it was going to be. After that we came home and debriefed then did some race analysis.

The next day we all met at the boy's lodge to have a briefing and then we drew a sketch map drawing only the contours and features that were needed for each leg to use later on in the day and I thought that I wasn't going to get round the course as mine wasn't accurately drawn to scale. We then went to a small area and did a map walk to get used to the area and contour intervals as they were very small. We then set ourselves a little course and then ran it using the simplifying and bearing skills that we had learnt in the past days. We then went to North Granish and ran our sketch maps which I found a lot easier than the real maps and I was the third one back. After that we did a relay and I found that very challenging as I was the first leg and I didn't want to let my team down. However, in the end we came fifth. When we came home as usual we talked in our coaching groups about the day.

The next day was the rest day but we did two sprint events in the morning. We did a qualifiers and then a final. You could get into the A or B final. In the qualifiers there was a Swiss loop which was very confusing and caused me to mispunch. I mistook the 6 for a 9 😞. So that automatically put me into the B final. The next area was more like a camp and

it was a lot easier and I came first in the B final and I would have come third in the A final. When everyone had finished we stayed at this area and we had a go on the camp's rings which were metal rings hanging from metal rods across a pond that you had to swing across. It was a lot easier than it looked, however I only made it to the third ring and then fell in. There was one girl called Sophia who tried to jump to the second ring and then fell straight in and got submerged. After that fun we headed to a lake and we swam and took some photos of us all in the lake. We then got taken to Aviemore and we were set free to roam around the shops and cafés. I followed Jura as she had been to Aviemore before and knew where the best places were. When we got back to Lagganlia we had a barbecue and a game of rounders which was a lot of fun!

The next day we did a peg race where you had to be the first one at the control and then collect a peg and the person with the most pegs won. I found that quite hard but very exciting and in the end I won which was very pleasing. After the peg relay we did some terrain runs to test our running strengths on different terrain and then work on where we needed to improve. When we got back to Lagganlia there was a little maze course set out. I found this really fun as you needed to think fast and not confuse yourself. We did several of these courses and then we finally got our Lagganlia T-shirts and we had a group photo together.

On day 7 we had a classic race at Inshriach which was very technical and had a LOT of contour detail. I was doing okay until my number 6 where I was following the wrong depression but in the end I found the control. The marshland and river were very big, so we had to cross the river at a crossing point and follow tape through the marshland. Even

though there was lots of tape there I still ended up falling in up to my stomach.....twice. The finish was just walking distance from Lagganlia so we were back quickly. After the eventful race we had a 'fun' relay which was just a normal relay but you have to carry around a balloon and if the balloon popped you had to blow up another balloon which wasted time. They were only short courses- every one was 1.3 km but they were very enjoyable and had a lot of climb as you had to run up a ski slope. After the delicious tea we all went to the boy's lodge and we got ready for the talent show ('Lagganlia's Got Talent'). Our group went first and did a dance routine which went ok. Then it was the boys turn and they sung some Glee which wasn't the best to watch. The last group to perform were the junior coaches, they changed the lyrics to a McFly song to include orienteering terms and it was very funny.

This was the very last day at Lagganlia as the next morning we had to leave at 8 o'clock. We all said goodbye and boarded the train to go home. Overall my experience at Lagganlia was very good! I have learnt lots of new skills and find it easier to orienteer. I have made lots of new friends and I hope to see them all again. I would like to thank West Midlands for contributing to the cost of the training. I had a great time. 😊



Orienteering in Iceland

Allan Williams (WCH)

For our family holiday this year we decided to go to Iceland. We flew from Gatwick to Keflavik, which is the main International airport, about 50 km from Reykjavik. We had been a bit worried before departing as some of the volcanoes in Iceland had been threatening to erupt. It gave the salesman of the hire car company a great opportunity to sell us extra cover and we took up the offer of an extra premium for ash and also for gravel damage. We then had an easy drive into the city and found our apartment without too much trouble. I had read that Reykjavik has a population of about 100,000 people but as we drove through it seemed larger. It turns out that when you take its suburbs into account there are nearly 200,000 people which is similar in size to Telford.

My children are very keen swimmers so we started off the first night with a visit to one of the thermal baths. This had two 50 metre pools, one indoor and one outdoor. There was a fun pool and several hot tubs with temperatures ranging from 38° Centigrade to 44. One also had heated saltwater from a borehole at the shore. We rounded the night off with our first unsuccessful attempt to see the northern lights.

Whenever I travel abroad I always investigate if there are any orienteering opportunities. I found that there is only one orienteering club in Iceland it's called Hekla. Their website was very good and explained that they welcome visitors to their training on Thursday evenings. They also encourage you to use the maps on their website. On Thursday morning, while the rest of the family was still sleeping, I went for a training run in the city using a course from a 2011 Sprint race. It started in a park with two large lakes and was fast running. After a road crossing there were two loops of controls in small ornamental gardens and predominantly residential areas. I was surprised to see a security guard taking great interest in the refuse collectors. Then I noticed it was bin day at the US embassy. The final loop took me into the main city centre which is mainly pedestrianised. I later discovered that the penultimate control was in the garden behind the Alþingishús, the Icelandic parliament building. It was an enjoyable 3.4 km course and gave me a good introduction to the geography of Reykjavik.



Once everyone else was up we visited the church of Hallgrímur which is an iconic landmark. You can go to the top by lift, which I did later in the holiday. Afterwards we swam again at a different pool. We shopped at Netto and were pleased to get enough food for a couple of days for the equivalent of £50.

This week's orienteering training was conveniently located by the thermal beach. This is a man-made cove into which geo-thermally heated water is piped. It is surrounded by a beach made with sand imported from Morocco. The water temperature is somewhat dependent on the tide and whilst we were there it was quite cool unless you swam close to the hot water vent. There are, however, also a couple of hot tubs to enjoy. After half an hour in the water I changed into my O-kit and registered for the event. It cost 500 kronur (about £2.50). The area was called Öskjuhlíð and the map was 1:5000 which made the area look quite steep because of the 2m contour interval. I was followed towards the first control by some mountain bike riders who read my O-top and shouted "Chase the Chasers". For a country with few trees this area was quite green and I picked up a few scratches. The centre of the area has a lot of rock detail and paths, a bit like a mini Wharnccliffe Woods. I was generally quite accurate but on a couple of controls I wasted about 30 seconds. Midway through the course we passed the summit of the hill which has six large tanks that hold hot water ready for distribution into the city's heating system. The final legs offered a bit of route choice where I think local knowledge would have helped. At the finish I had a good chat, in English, with some of the locals and another visitor from Trondheim. Had I not had to stop to tie my laces I would have won.



We returned to our apartment for tea and then visited a modern concert hall on the waterfront where there was an impromptu gathering of classic American cars. Having counted them I can report that one in 10,000 Icelanders owns such a car. We then made our second unsuccessful attempt to see the northern lights.

On Friday we set off on an excursion to see some of the natural wonders of Iceland. There is a route called the Golden Circle which is very popular with tourists. The first stop was at Þingvellir, a place where the European and American Continental Plates are drifting apart. Although I didn't run here I had an orienteering map to look at. The geography is very strange - from the car park

you walk uphill to some crags and find that there is a river running along them. About 500m further along it has found its way through the crags and falls to the valley floor. Þingvellir is also a special place for Iceland as it is here that the new Republic was formed in a ceremony in 1944.



Our next stop was at Geysir the place that all volcanic waterspouts take their name from. The main attraction here is Strokkur which propels hot water, sometimes as much as 40m, into the air about once every 10 minutes. A few kilometres further on we stopped at Gullfoss, the Niagara of Europe. We can thank the early environmental campaigner Sigríður Tómasdóttir who fought to prevent its destruction by a hydroelectric dam scheme. It really is spectacular especially under clear blue skies with a rainbow in the spray. All of these sites were busy but not overwhelmed with visitors and were all free. We left the main tourist route to experience a bit of gravel road driving. We also took in what just looked like a small hill from the bottom but concealed a volcanic crater with a lake. Our final stop was at another area with thermal activity with many steam vents, ponds of boiling water and pits of bubbling mud.

We returned to Reykjavik, swam again, and then headed back out of town away from the streetlights. Despite spending a couple of hours in the darkness below clearing skies we failed to see any Aurora so we'll have to try again someday.

On Saturday morning I again got up early and drove to another orienteering area for a gentle run. This one was mainly forested and again was quite green but at one edge there was a sudden transition as you reach an ancient lava flow. Previous courses from this area show that some controls have been placed just on the edges. Although the lava is covered in pale green pillow moss it is very rough and sharp so it would be very hard to run on. On my way back into Reykjavik there was a lot of traffic and road closures due to a marathon, part of a day long festival.

After breakfast I visited the Phallological Museum which was generally a serious exhibition (apparently the museum owner is fed up with e-mail spam from local builders offering to construct an extension). We swam a couple more times to use our discount multi-pass ticket up. We then spent the evening enjoying the cultural festival which attracts about 100,000 people, a third of the population. The high points were waffles and ice cream and an outdoor photographic exhibition about a couple living with their small son in Greenland. The low point was the Icelandic folk metal band, Skálmöld, who produced music so loud that it was physically shaking the portable toilet that I used 50m behind the stage. We wandered back through the city and then watched the end of the show on TV.



On Sunday morning we checked out and had a takeaway breakfast. We headed out of Reykjavik and experienced a stark change in landscape. Quite suddenly we were in expansive lava fields surrounded by young rounded mountains which looks like a moonscape. Our destination was the Blue Lagoon. On the face of it this doesn't sound too appealing as it is the cooling pond from a geo-thermic power station. Apparently people started swimming in it informally in the 70s and it has now developed into a major attraction and appears as a top hit when you search for Iceland on Google images. It costs 40 euros to enter but as children are free so it's not bad value. It has a large irregular pool surrounded by the natural lava. The water which originates from the sea is naturally heated below ground and used to create electricity. The water has a high silicate content which gives it a milky blue appearance. It's lovely and warm and, despite quite a cool breeze blowing steam across the surface, I could have stayed in for hours. There is also a spa where you can get treatments and a very posh restaurant.

We then headed back to the airport and our flight departed on time even though the aviation risk from the Bárðarbunga volcano had reached red status overnight.

We had a fantastic holiday and I'd recommend Iceland. We flew with WOW air and our accommodation was provided by Stay Apartments. Hekla Orienteering Club appear to organise a 3 day event every June although they don't seem to have announced the dates for 2015 yet. (Maps © Hekla Orienteering Club).

Peter Palmer Relays 2014

Congratulations to the OD team of Harrison McCartney, Stephen Elkington, Julie Emmerson, Ellie Boot, Felix Lunn, Oliver Lunn, Nicholas Buckley and Nathan Lawson who won the Peter Palmer Relays by a mere 2 seconds from MDOC. The event was hosted by HALO at Walesby Forest Outdoor Adventure Centre in Nottinghamshire on 13/14 September

East and West Midlanders Running for Great Britain at World Radio-O Championships in Kazakhstan Robert Vickers (HOC)



Robert Vickers (HOC)

Photo by David Williams (HOC)

Not many orienteers would think of going to Kazakhstan to run through forests with map and compass, but this was the country hosting the 2014 World Radio Orienteering Championships. The British Team for this event amounted to 9 people, and the Midlands Regions were well represented with HOC members David Williams and Robert Vickers, plus Bob Titterington and John Marriott from LEI. Before the question is asked, the Team members were all entirely self funded.

These World Championships are held every two years, under the auspices of Amateur Radio organisations rather than IOF - since radio direction finding techniques are required to locate the control sites (small radio transmitters) as well as run round them as quickly as possible. Like conventional orienteering, participants run in 'Age Classes' and the number of transmitters (and their arrangement) allows courses of different

lengths to be devised. In the intervening years, European Regional Championships take place instead, though the level of competition is just as fierce since the European nations predominate.

The event centre was in Burabay, the best part of a 4 hour bus journey from the airport serving the capital city, Astana. The two places were connected by an excellent, and almost traffic free, 6-lane motorway which crossed seemingly endless tracts of featureless steppe, barely interrupted by an occasional cluster of modest houses and groups of cattle. Not much prospect of any decent orienteering here: until eventually arriving at Burabay which turned out to be a smallish town on the shores of an attractive lake surrounded by significant hills. They call it the 'Kazakh Switzerland' though this might be a slightly ambitious claim. However, after all those miles of steppe, what joy to be greeted by the most gorgeous pine forests, marked by rocky outcrops and the cleanest forest floor imaginable. The latter is no doubt helped by the harshest of winter temperatures. Fortunately, the September temperature is a lot kinder, albeit a bitter gusty wind with accompanying periods of rain through the middle of the week did make us glad that we had packed some 'Hellies' and other winter gear, in case of such emergencies.

It is around 20 years since the first British competitors began to attend these events and started learning how to develop the necessary techniques, and in those early days it seemed that the podium was always destined to remain far out of our reach. Gradually however, more runners were recruited (largely from the traditional 'O' clubs) and the Brits began moving up the results lists - with Bob

Titterington breaking the mould by winning M70 Gold for 80 metres (the radio wavelength, not the distance!) in 2012. The British presence was reinforced in 2013, with a 'Sprint race' Gold medal for Robert Vickers and a M70 team silver coming back home from the European Champs. But this year our podium presence was reinforced yet again ensuring that Great Britain is now recognised as a significant player in this sport. David Williams made a notable breakthrough winning Silver for 2 metres - and this in M50, which is a highly competitive class in these events. Furthermore, in the same race, Robert Vickers also collected M70 Silver. The other British M70, Bob, had a good run too which resulted in an aggregate result giving a team Silver. Four podium appearances for Midland Brits from one day's events! This was not the end of the Union Jack's visits to the podium, however, since the M70s collected a further team Silver on one of the other days for the 80 metre event.

So what are the abiding memories of our week in this distant land, of which we know so little? Vast open spaces with a sparse population; a brand new capital city (Astana) with spectacular modern architecture; a delightful lake surrounded by hills and superb forests. An organisation with obviously limited human resources struggling bravely to put on a prestigious event, but inevitably leaving a lot of gaps. Importantly though, the actual competitions running almost faultlessly - despite inexperience showing in some aspects of the planning. Good maps, but lacking details of the mappers. Decent hotel accommodation and catering - but scattered over some kilometres so that 'getting together' was a frequent problem, with constant uncertainty about transport arrangements exacerbated by inadequacy of information arrangements. The value of a single Russian speaker in our team, since so

few local Kazakh people spoke any Western languages. All in all a memorable experience which will be cherished for a long time by those taking part.



David Williams (HOC)

Photo by Robin Bishop



A Long Mynd Challenge - April 2014

Bob Brandon (OD)



Just got back from the annual Wrekin 'Long-O' on the Long Mynd. It is great to be out there - my second visit to that area this year.

When Tony Feltbower told me he was going to run the Gill Harris Challenge, a 20 mile route around the Long Mynd, I thought that it would make a good walk.

The circuit of the 22 named tops of the Mynd was established in 2010 to mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of Mercia Fell Runners, in tribute to one of their number who loved these hills. Details of circuits of the Gill Harris Challenge can be found on the Mercia Fell Runners' website.

Tony and his partner took just over 5 hours. In April I persuaded Mike Langrish to take on the Challenge, as part of his 75th birthday celebrations. We met up on a Friday evening at the camp site at Little Stretton and discussed the route over a meal and couple of pints at the Green Dragon in the village.

Next day at 10 am Mike and I were standing in The Square at Church Stretton in warm sunshine.

As we set off up Burway Hill, on a clockwise circuit, it started raining enough to make us stop and put on the cagoules. The first 3 tops were gentle enough, mostly along ridges with undulations marking out the tops. Our first steep descent was into Ashes Hollow where we lost any height that we had gained. Slowly we toiled up Nills and onto Grindle. Another descent off Callow was where each of us slipped in turn, so that we now had matching grass stains on our backsides. Resting a little way up the other side for a bar of nougat, we spotted a fox back on Callow. We watched the fox for quite a while as it traversed the hillside lower down, ducking and diving, ignoring sheep but making quite a comprehensive recce. Eventually now at a high level the fox disappeared from whence it came. This being a signal for us two to

continue up our own slope and on to Minton Hill.

The beauty of the Mynd is that it is mostly clear of trees and that no climb is forever. At the end of each ascent you are rewarded with a good view. Today, it being overcast and often raining, there were all-round views making it worth the effort. Ragleth, Caer Caradoc and Lawley to the East forming a dramatic dragon's back.

Mike and I lost sight of each other in the vicinity of Shooter's Knoll as we each chose a different route off. But down is down, and we were reunited at the foot-bridge over Minton Batch. Our route now took us up and through the forested area at the South West part of the Mynd. Here we came across our first encounter with others as we overtook two walkers. We emerged from the forest to visit the trig. point and then onto the edge to look over towards the jagged outline of Stiperstones - but by now it was misty. In fact it was raining quite hard as we approached the Gliding Club (no gliding today). We picked our way through stationary gliders and as we passed the Club house, Mike told me that there was a canteen inside the Club house (members only). Undaunted, Mike 'blagged' his way in and bought two mugs of hot tea and a couple of packets of crisps.

The next stage of the Round saw us travelling North East along the road, every so often popping off to the right or left to visit a top or three. The road had also attracted several school Duke of Edinburgh school groups, each in brightly coloured waterproofs. Every so often a white mini-bus would pass by with teachers warm and dry inside.

As we approached the northern part of the Mynd off Haddon Hill and skirting Long Batch, our route turned towards All Stretton via Plush Hill. Now in farmland, we found the access to Castle Hill particularly difficult to find. Eventually having decided to climb up 'off-piste' from the road, we broke through the undergrowth to see a school group go past on the footpath to Castle Hill summit. Clever, these kids!

From All Stretton, Novers Hill was quite a 'wake-up' climb, with Bodbury Hill the real sting in the tail. Soon we were descending from Stanyeld (our final top) through the Golf Club car-park and back to The Square at All Stretton. It was just before 6pm. Back at Little Stretton, a quick shower, and back to the pub to stoke-up and reflect upon a good day out.

Since then Dave and Richard Marr have completed the challenge in about 5 hours 40minutes. They too had 'trouble' with Castle Hill.

The Square	452937	13 Shooting Box	421953
1 Burway Hill	444940	14 Wildmoor	418958
2 Yearlet	436935	15 Long Synalds	425953
3 Ashlet	440931	16 Calf Ridge	429954
4 Nills	432925	17 Haddon Hill	436956
5 Grindle	430926	GH Finger Post	440967
6 Callow	431919	18 Plush Hill	452962
7 Minton Hill	415919	19 Castle Hill	460959
8 Packerstone Hill	421915	20 Novers Hill	452951
9 Shooters Knoll	424906	21 Bodbury Ring	445949
10 Knolls Trig Point	403901	22 Stanyeld	449944
11 Round Hill	416929	The Square	452937
12 Pole Bank	415944		

WMOA Planner's Course 20 September 2014

A Planner's Course was held by Henry Morgan (POTOC) at the John O'Leary Centre, Marquis Drive, Cannock Chase on 20 September.



Participants:

Ian Gamlen	(COBOC)
Adrian Griffiths	(WRE)
Claire Alcock	(POTOC)
Tom Lewis	(WRE)
Peter Riley	(POTOC)
Steve Parker	(WRE)
Matt Mardling	(WCH)

Photo by Henry Morgan

West Midlands Park Championships

The 3rd West Midlands Park Championships were held by Octavian Droobers at Brueton and Malvern Park on 13 July. The event was also part of the West Midlands League and attracted a larger number of competitors than the previous years' competitions.

Winners

M10	Chris Markham	OD	W10	Florence Lunn	OD
M11-16	Felix Lunn	OD	W11-16	Gemma Cairns-Smith	WCH
M17-39	William Gardner	OD	W17-39	Anne Straube	OD
M40-59	Chris McCartney	OD	W40-59	Delia Kingsbury	WRE
M60+	Michael Baggott	HOC	W60+	Margaret Willdig	OD

British Sprint and Middle Championships

POTOC and WCH hosted the British Sprint and Middle Championships, respectively, on the weekend of 6/7 September. This is the second time these short format championships have been held in the region, the previous ones were held by OD at Warwick University and Hopwas in 2008.

For POTOC, being a very small club, holding the Sprint Championships at Keele University was a major achievement. The Campus itself had never been mapped before though Springpool Woods at the South end had been mapped in the late 70s/ early 80s and used for a number of events. The Plaza outside the Students Union building and the shops provided a great focus point for the event (see front cover) and, as the mapper, it was great to see it full of orienteers rather than the students I encountered on my mapping visits. The event was something of a family affair with Brenda Morgan as Organiser and husband Henry as Planner.

The Middle Championships were held by WCH on Brereton Spurs on a glorious sunny day. The large car park/assembly field was ideally suited to a championship event and has been used a number of times in the past. The area, however, suffered a little from the amount of undergrowth present at this time of the year which was not ideal. The original area that was to have been used, Beaudesert suffered from a lot of forestry work so a change of venue was necessary.

All in all, a great weekend of orienteering for which the organising clubs and the region can feel very proud.

WMOA British Sprint Championship Winners

M16	Harrison McCartney	OD	W21	Tessa Hill	HOC
M40	Andy Simpson	OD	W65	Sheila Carey	OD
M70	Peter Carey	OD			

WMOA British Middle Championship Winners

M40	Andy Simpson	OD	W21	Tessa Hill	HOC
M65	Andy Hemsted	HOC	W75	Alison Sloman	HOC

Congratulations to Andy Simpson of Octavian Droobers who has completed a 'grand slam' of British Championship titles (excluding the British Night Championship) having previously won the Long Distance in the North East.

The West Midlands League 2014

1. OD 7231				2. WCH 6011				3. HOC 6010			
A	Sam Leadley	M14	500	A	Holly Craig	W10	458	A	Arthur Mitchell	M10	451
A	Stephen Elkington	M18	500	A	Esther Mardling	W10	395	A	Sebastian Mitchell	M10	442
B	Alistair Powell	M35	500	B	Allan Williams	M45	485	B	Ian Hopkins	M45	430
B	Chris McCartney	M45	482	B	Iain Stamp	M21	300	B	Adrian Bailey	M45	354
C	David Leadley	M50	444	C	Andrew Yeates	M50	500	C	John Embrey	M55	491
C	Barry Elkington	M55	441	C	Ray Collins	M55	452	C	Paul Hammond	M50	339
D	Suzanne Humphries	W50	500	D	Tracy Craig	W45	444	D	Barbara Ford	W55	272
D	Anne Straube	W35	494	D	Alison Yeates	W45	412	D	Kerstin Mitchell	W45	191
E	Peter Carey	M70	500	E	Hazel Waters	W60	400	E	Alison Sloman	W75	497
E	Sheila Carey	W65	500	E	Bob Dredge	M60	368	E	Colin Spears	M75	477
F	Florence Lunn	W10	500	F	Carol Dredge	W55	376	F	Geoff Trewin	M60	462
F	Ian Prowse	M60	490	F	Adam Mardling	M12	369	F	Michael Baggott	M60	435
F	Janet Richardson	W65	470	F	Chris Boycott	M70	357	F	Barry Houghton	M65	427
F	Felix Lunn	M12	456	F	Claire Bushnell	W50	349	F	Suzette Spears	W75	373
F	Robert Brandon	M65	454	F	Cath Williams	W40	346	F	John Pearson	M65	369
4. WRE 5840				5. POTO 2339				6. COBOC 1388			
A	Jamie Grimsdale	M18	400	A	Enys Lloyd	M10	148	B	Ian Gamlen	M45	255
A	Jessica Parker	W14	340	A	Ewan Lloyd	M14	148	B	Andrew Sadler	M21	78
B	Clive Richardson	M45	478	B	Martin Pigott	M35	191	C	David James	M55	84
B	Steve Parker	M40	385	B	Richard Pigott	M35	162	D	Yvonne Feasey	W50	158
C	Andrew Clough	M55	425	C	Peter Munn	M55	129	E	David Arnot	M65	223
C	Richard Pay	M50	197	C	Gerry Riley	M55	115	E	Joan Norris	W60	221
D	Delia Kingsbury	W45	499	D	Ianka Petrova Evans	W45	100	F	Ruth Lockley	W60	181
D	Diane Jacks	W45	419	D	Elizabeth Bales	W50	93	F	Toby Norris	M75	109
E	Derek Turner	M75	448	E	Henry Morgan	M60	249	F	Mick Sadler	M65	79
E	Jane Howsam	W60	389	E	Judy Douglas	W70	187				
F	Pamela Hardy	W65	385	F	Jean Rostron	W70	170				
F	Tony Callow	M45	376	F	Marian Denham	W65	168				
F	Patrick Pay	M75	376	F	Paul Graetz	M65	167				
F	Adrian Griffiths	M45	370	F	Graham Pigott	M21	161				
F	Sharron Richardson	W40	353	F	Andrew Mayland	M45	151				

Positions after 7 events

2014 Events

Jan 12	Brandon Woods	OD	May 11	Mansty Woods	WCH
Jan 19	Sandwell Valley	HOC	Jun 8	Titterstone Clee	HOC
Feb 2	Beauesert	WCH	Jul 13	Brueton & Malvern Park	OD
Mar 30	Chillington Hall	WCH	Oct 19	Dudmaston	HOC
	(Cancelled)		Nov 23	Nesscliffe Country Park	WRE
Apr 27	Breakneck Bank	HOC	Nov 30	Chillington Hall	WCH

Individual Class Leaders

M10	Arthur Mitchell	HOC	451	W10	Florence Lunn	OD	500
M12	Felix Lunn	OD	456	W12	Holly Craig	WCH	458
M14	Sam Leadley	OD	500	W14	Jessica Parker	WRE	340
M16	Harrison McCartney	OD	398	W16	Gemma Cairns-Smith	WCH	290
M18	Stephen Elkington	OD	500	W18	Beatrice Falga	OD	200
M20	Matthew Elkington	OD	199	W20	Harriet Lawson	OD	160
M21	Iain Stamp	WCH	300	W21	Katie Lewis	WRE	331
M35	Alistair Powell	OD	500	W35	Anne Straube	OD	494
M40	Tom Jeffries	OD	421	W40	Sharron Richardson	WRE	353
M45	Allan Williams	WCH	485	W45	Delia Kingsbury	WRE	499
M50	Andrew Yeates	WCH	500	W50	Suzanne Humphries	OD	500
M55	John Embrey	HOC	491	W55	Carol Dredge	WCH	376
M60	Ian Prowse	OD	490	W60	Hazel Waters	WCH	400
M65	Robert Brandon	OD	454	W65	Sheila Carey	OD	500
M70	Peter Carey	OD	500	W70	Sue Bicknell	OD	337
M75	Colin Spears	HOC	477	W75	Alison Sloman	HOC	497
M80	Norman Hall	WCH	200	W80	Beryl Pay	WRE	240

WMOA Fixtures

October to December 2014

Please note all Fixtures are correct at the time of publishing. Please check club websites for further details:

October

11	HOC Level B	British Schools Score Championships Arrow Valley Country Park	Redditch	SP06276
12	WCH Level C	WCH WM Urban League Stafford Town Centre	Stafford	
18	POTOC Level D	POTOC Leisure and Training Event Ladderedge Country Park	Leek	SJ 972551
18	OD Level D	OD Local Event Coombe Abbey Park	Coventry	SP404794
19	HOC Level C	HOC Regional Event & WMOA League 9 Dudmaston Estate	Bridgnorth	SO740899
25	HOC Level D	HOC WM Urban League Redditch	Redditch	SP032656
29	COBOC Level D	Last Wednesday in month event	Sutton Coldfield	SP144794

November

9	HOC Level D	HOC Local Event Castlemorton Common	Malvern	SO766382
13	HOC Level D	HOC Night Street League Walmley Village	Sutton Coldfield	SP127930
15	POTOC Level D	POTOC Leisure and Training Event Downs Bank	Stone	SJ900365
20	HOC Level D	HOC Winter Evening Event (WEE) Walton Hill	Hagley	SO938807
22	OD Level D	OD Local Event Cawston Park	Rugby	
23	WRE Level C	WRE Colour-Coded & WMOA League 10 Nesscliffe Country Park	Nesscliffe	SJ386199
26	COBOC Level D	Last Wednesday in month event	Sutton Coldfield	
30	WCH Level C	WCH Colour-Coded, West Midlands Championships & WMOA League 11 Chillington Hall		

December

4	HOC Level D	HOC Winter Evening Event (WEE) Arrow Valley Country Park	Redditch	SP06276
6	HOC Level D	HOC Western Night League Wyche	Malvern	SO776421
7	OD Level D	OD Club Championships Brandon Wood	Coventry	
14	WRE Level D	WRE Club Championships (Closed) Boreatton Park	Baschurch	SJ402239
17	COBOC Level D	Santa 'O'	Sutton Coldfield	
21	HOC Level D	HOC Club Championships (Closed) Clent Hills	Hagley	
27	OD Level D	OD Local Event Christmas Relays Rough Close	Coventry	

West Midlands Urban League



Two rounds of the new Urban League have now been completed with the remaining two events scheduled for October.

Results and tables can be found on the UK Urban League website at:

<http://urbanleague.nopesport.com/scoring/>

Date	Event Venue	Club
21 May	Kenilworth	OD
31 August	Bridgnorth	WRE
12 October	Stafford	WCH
25 October	Redditch	HOC