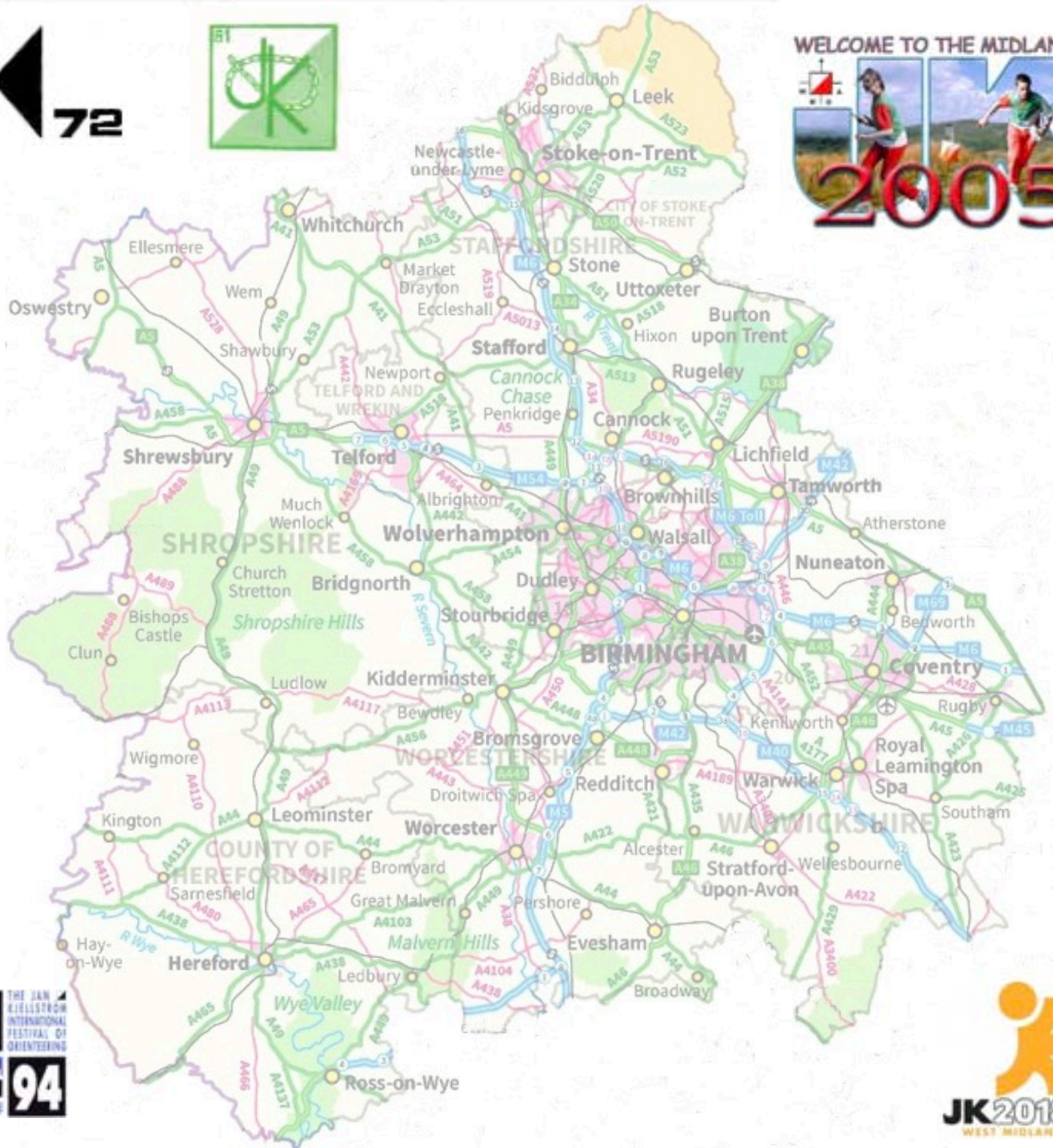
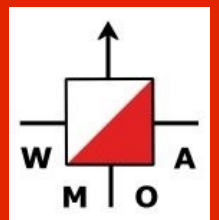


The West Midlander

Winter 2018



The Newsletter of the
West Midlands Orienteering Association



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Editorial

Happy New Year everyone and welcome to the Winter edition of the 'West Midlander'.

The Winter, so far, has seen quite a bit of snowfall and it caused the cancellation of both the HOC Castle Vale Urban event in December and the WMOA committee meeting the following day. Both these decisions were very sensible - Castle Vale would have been treacherous underfoot and the freezing conditions the following evening would have meant that the roads would have been potentially unsafe to get to the meeting.

The JK is getting closer and preparations are reaching the final stages and the region is hoping to put on a successful event. With this in mind, I thought the time had come for a retrospective look at the previous JKs that had been held in the region stretching right back to 1972. Having personal experience of only the last two, in 1994 and 2005 I did some research using old copies of 'The Orienteer', 'CompassSport' and the 'West Midlander' to write the article. Thanks to Dave Gittus (WRE) for the article on JK 72 and to Nick Barrable of CompassSport for the use of some of the pictures.

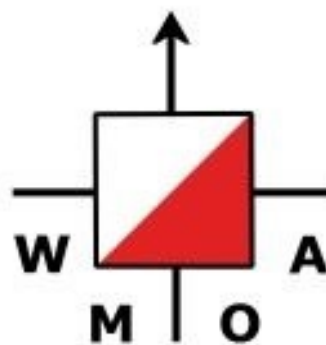
The West Midlands League has got off to a somewhat shaky start. The first event was held by HOC at Kinver Edge on a freezing wet day and consequently the numbers were down on what was expected. The second event held by WCH at Brindley was plagued by the gremlins with the wrong planning file being used to print the maps. This led to misplaced and missing controls and the eventual voiding of all the courses. Hopefully, the sun will shine and all the controls will be right for the third event held by WRE at Lizard Hill!

Happy Orienteering

Rod

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WMOA Chairman's Bit**Ray Collins**

Happy New Year, a belated welcome to 2018.

The Laurie Bradley Score Event on New Year's Day was a well-planned event that had fast and furious running. Congratulations to OD for winning once again and to Walton Chasers for hosting the event and arranging for good weather. Talking of weather, the HOC event at Kinver Edge started with snow that turned into a downpour and lasted all day. The road to and from the start was a river with torrents of water on both sides of the road, what a day! The area though was in excellent condition where the brambles had been squashed down by the snow which made the straight line a good route choice option. My personal thanks too all the HOC helpers who made the event possible.

The JK is now rapidly approaching, only seven weeks away as I write this, and the main officials are working very hard to make the event a great success. As well as the orienteering; on most days we will have a 'bi-orienteeringathon' (my word) which, as I understand it, is a bit of orienteering followed by shooting followed by more 'O' followed by more shooting etc. Like Ski Biathlon but orienteering instead of skiing. Worth a go methinks. Please volunteer your services to your club so that we have enough helpers to make the weekend a great WMOA success. All helpers are entitled to a small voucher that you can spend at any of the shops at the event, not just food, so discount on your next pair of shoes.

Unlike the rest of the UK Christine and I did not watch Downton Abbey when it was on TV several years back but about 15 months ago it was all repeated on one of the 1000 Sky channels and we recorded them all. We watched half last Winter over the long Winter nights and the rest this Winter and we are now down to the final episode. Lady Mary has just remarried but will her sister have a reconciliation with the new Lord Hexham and marry in the final episode? By the time you read this we will know.....and then we can move on with the rest of our lives. We now have a lot of spare recording space on our sky box as well. What next?

See you in the woods,

Ray Collins

Minutes of WMOA Committee Meeting 11 December 2017 Great Barr Hotel

Due to the snow of the previous day and the threat of freezing conditions on the night, it was decided to cancel the meeting. In the absence of any minutes, it was decided to publish notes and progress reports that would have been discussed at the meeting.

1. Chairman's Report:

No Report.

2. Treasurer's Report:

As everyone is aware we normally donate £1000 of WMOA money to the WMJS. I am planning on doing this as £300 now, £350 in the Spring and £350 in the Summer. Ian checked back with the committee that there were no reasons not to follow this approach.

3. Fixtures:**JK Update (A. Yeates):**

- The event is proceeding well at the moment. We are now getting into the fine detail of each day with site visits scheduled to look closely at the set-up of each day.
- I've produced the first version of the programme, which can be viewed on the JK web site. Some information is not yet available to us, e.g. course lengths. This will appear in later versions. The site visits will also be used to check what detail we have and the programme will be updated if necessary.
- We have some great looking JK 2018 'O' tops, designed and supplied by Bryzos. They can be ordered on entering the JK and will be available to collect at the event. I've notified the officials that they can order through me if they are not entering.
- The first closing date is fast approaching - 17 December. SiEntries will be sending a reminder out to JK 2017 competitors.
- If someone would like to take on 'bib production' please let me know a.s.a.p. I've just received a load of information about JK 2016 bibs, so we don't need to 'reinvent the wheel'.

Castle Vale

HOC is hoping to reschedule Castle Vale in 2018 (*the date has been set at 16 June 2018 since these notes were written - Ed*). Roger Thetford (UKUL Co-ordinator) says, via Facebook: "A rescheduled Castle Vale event would still be the Final for UKUL 2017, even if it took place in 2018. Eligibility for the various UKUL age categories would be determined using the 2017 age-classes. Despite being one BOF year older, the HyperVets would be deemed still to be safe to cross roads on their own so the courses would not need to be modified!"

4. Event Scheduling Group meeting update:

Meeting on 14 October at Birmingham.

H. Morgan chaired the October WMOA Fixtures meeting with feedback from DK - official minutes have since been circulated to that group.

2021 Midland Champs is in WMOA - ESG will be looking for a date by the time of the March 2018 meeting.

Offers are needed for the 2021 British Mixed Sprint Relay - could it go alongside an Area Championship?

Offers are needed for British Night Championships and CompassSport Cup Final 2021 (last in WMOA in 2011).

2019 BSSC and Yvette Baker Trophy Final need organising clubs.

There had been some correspondence to ESG about clashing events, however ESG only have control over level B and above, it is up to local Fixtures Secretaries to check listings, liaise with neighbouring areas etc. Setting dates for Level C is at the club's risk.

It is now quite open to apply for an event to be a WRE, but there are significant requirements that have to be met and there are costs of an IOF Advisor to be met. Chris Philips has been advising clubs if he thought he saw events in the listings that might be worth considering. Selectors are keen to have more Sprints, but areas are key and will probably need a weekend format that will attract Elite athletes from the continent.

CompassSport Cup/ Trophy Round 1 2019 - for EMOA this is a NOC event and in WMOA it is an OD event. There was comment about potential proximity, although no request to change. Note on the southern end of our area NGOC are hosting a round - maybe something for us to consider??

New event names are in use eg Major, National, Regional and Local. The old regional for Level B should be renamed National - could clubs check if amendments are needed and notify D. Kingsbury please.

Guidance is to be published about how to handle Prologue and Final races for Sprint events in Planning computer software packages.

When registering events officials **do** need to be entered, otherwise the insurance cover is not effective.

There has been some resolution of Level B events from the region since the meeting and I am grateful to Mike Cope for his assistance with this. WCH requested Level B events for July 2019 and SinS 2019 has been agreed as 2 x Level B and 1 x Level A.

The next ESG meeting will consider Level B events to the end of 2019 - the first half of the year is now set. Clubs wanting Level B events for that timeframe and early 2020 should register their events and notify ESG that they would like to be considered for Level B status.

5. Mapping update

The extract below is from a recent BOF circulation:

From: Chair, Map Advisory Group to all Club and Association chairs and secretaries

The IOF Rules Commission have just published a revised version of the IOF Control Descriptions, accessible via this link:

<http://orienteering.org/new-control-descriptions-published/>

The new descriptions are expected to be used for all events from 1 Jan 2018 onwards. Where the planning and controlling activities for events in early 2018 are sufficiently advanced to make this impracticable, it is acceptable to use the 2004 version of the IOF Control Descriptions. Event Officials are encouraged to inform competitors if their event will use the 2004 version of the Control Descriptions after 1 Jan 2018.

6. Timing of WMOA Relays:

For discussion at the next meeting.

7. Carrying of Whistles:

B. Elkington is happy to defer the discussion about carrying whistles for events until the next meeting.

Responses from HOC and COBOC are below:

HOC supports the proposal to remove the blanket edict on 'whistles are compulsory at all WMOA events'. With the introduction of Urban and Park events, this has become a tick box approach. It should be considered as part of the overall assessment of risk, and risk mitigation, by the Organiser/Planner and Controller. With specific reference to Castle Vale we could see no benefit from mandating the carrying of whistles on the Senior courses.

COBOC - By a narrow majority we were in favour of this proposal.

8. Proposed Realignment of West Midlands League classes:

Discussion is postponed until the next meeting. Feedback so far is below.

HOC opposes the AGM proposal to change WMOA League mappings of age classes to courses for some Junior age classes.

HOC is broadly neutral about the AGM proposal to change WMOA League mappings of age classes to courses for some Senior age classes. On balance, it is more inclusive to keep them as they are since those wanting a longer run can remain eligible for League points by running up a course.

COBOC: By a narrow majority we were in favour of this proposal.

OD were against the re-alignment of the League classes. We would like as many members as possible to be physically able to run the course allocated to them, Lengthening the older age groups courses won't help this - there will always be some who want to run the longest course available.

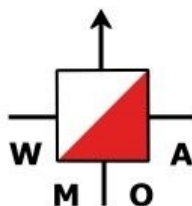
9. Development update:

Coaching course details from BOK - already circulated to clubs.

10. Dates for 2018 Meetings:

19 March, 4 or 18 June, 10 September, AGM: 15 October, 10 December.

The first 2 are later in the month than the normal pattern, however D.K. would not be able to do 12 March or 11 June, hence the proposed dates. These dates need to be agreed for hotel booking.





IOF Control Descriptions

Further to article in the Summer 2017 edition (2017_3) the IOF have issued the final version of the new International Specification for Control Descriptions which is aligned to the recently released ISOM 2017 map specification.

All events from 1 January 2018 should use the new descriptions. New versions of the Event Planning software (CONDES, OCAD and Purple Pen) have been released incorporating the new descriptions. OCAD have only updated version 12 but Bruce Bryant (OD) has produced updates for OCAD 9, 10 and 11 which are available on the British Orienteering website:

https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/mapping_resources

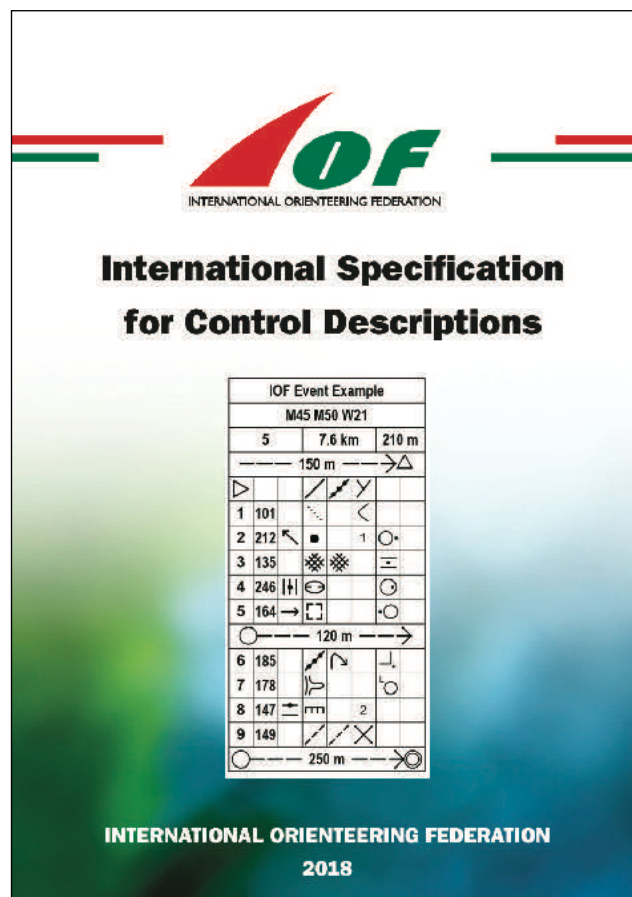
Since the Draft version was published for consultation, there were a few changes, most notably the changed symbols for Boulder, Boulder Cluster and Dot Knoll which have reverted to the original 2004 symbols.

Major Changes to the 2004 version:

1. Optional extra line showing the distance to the start triangle from the timed start.
2. New symbols introduced for Trench, Out of Bounds Area.
3. Bend moved from Column G to Column F.
4. Removal of symbol for Radio or TV control.
5. Names and descriptions brought into line with the ISOM 2017 terminology where appropriate.
6. Renumbering of symbols to cater for additions and deletions.
7. A number of minor changes throughout the text in order to provide further clarification as to the use of specific symbols.

Copies of the PDF file in either A4 or A5 format can be downloaded from the IOF website here:

<http://orienteering.org/new-control-descriptions-published/>



Mapping Matters

Great news for mapping as the Environment Agency has announced plans to map England's entire landscape by 2020, using the data to assess flood risk and inform conservation work.

Using aircraft equipped with laser scanners, the Environment Agency will map all 130,000km² of the country, including rivers, fields and national parks - equivalent to 32 million football pitches.

As well as being used to understand flood risk, the data will also be made available for free to the public and industry to be used by archaeologists, environmental and urban planners, and even gamers to make accurate 3D models of the landscape.

Currently about 75 per cent of the country is mapped but with only sporadic coverage of upland areas. The new project, beginning over Winter, will cover all of England's National Parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) and sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) such as the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales.

The Environment Agency has been using LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology for 20 years to better understand flood risk. Maps are created by aircraft equipped with laser scanners, which measure the distance between the aeroplane and the ground. The data collected can then be used to plan flood defences across whole river catchments. It also helps environment officers spot sudden changes in the landscape that could indicate illegal waste dumping, etc.

Other organisations across the DEFRA group also use the data to help improve the environment - Natural England uses it to assess wildlife habitat and Forestry Commission use it to understand more about the country's tree cover.

In 2015, the Environment Agency made 11 Terabytes of LiDAR data (equivalent to 3 million MP3 songs) available for free to the public as Open Data. Since then, the data has been downloaded more than 500,000 times. The data has even helped archaeologists uncover lost Roman Roads in the North of the country.

The new data will also be better quality than ever before, as the Environment Agency will map the whole country at 1m resolution by 2020. This means using the most up to date laser technology to reveal the features and details of the terrain more clearly.

Unfortunately, not much of the West Midlands region is being flown over the Winter of 2017/2018 except a very small section of Warwickshire to the East of Tamworth. The flight plan can be viewed here:

<https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Styler/index.html?appid=09b15081af4f48e8a2bb6415a830c1f2>

More detail about LiDAR from the Environment Agency can be viewed here:

<https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=c6cef6cc642a48838d38e722ea8ccfee>

This article appeared on the Environment Agency's web blog.

The JK in the West Midlands

The Jan Kjellström weekend or, as it is more commonly known, the JK is a multi-day festival of orienteering held every Easter to commemorate the life of a young Swedish orienteer who was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident in 1967. Jan was the son of Silva Compass co-founder Alvar Kjellström and played a large part in establishing Orienteering as a sport in The UK.



JK 1972

The first JK in the West Midlands was held at Easter on 1 & 2 April 1972 and consisted of an Individual day on the Saturday and a Relay on the Sunday and there was also a Training Day on Good Friday.

The Individual event was held at Beaudesert Park (as JK 2018 will be) on a 1:20000 scale map (see page 11) which was one of the earliest to be produced using photogrammetry. At that time there were no professional orienteering companies so the photogrammetric plot was made by the Geography Department of Glasgow University. Fieldwork was undertaken by a mapping team from the region.

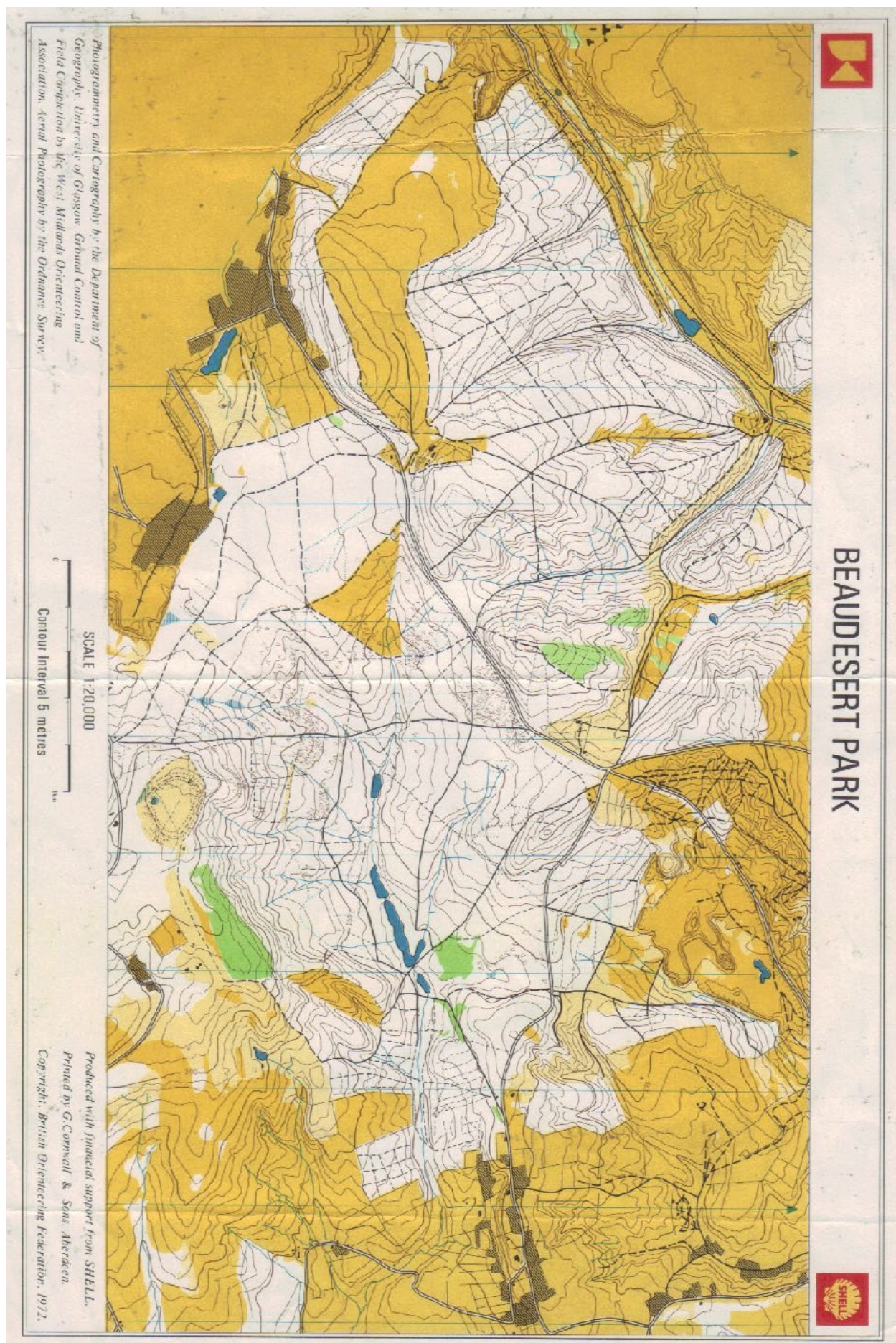


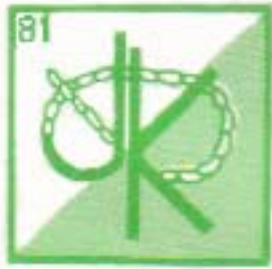
Richard Haw, one of the mapping team, with Mark Holliday and Robert Harris (OD).....

Photograph from 'The Orienteer' courtesy of CompassSport magazine

There were 900 entries for the event, of which 200 were from other countries. Unsurprisingly, given that BOF was only 5 years old at the time, the majority of the class winners came from Scandinavia. There were no Elite classes then - the 'open' classes being H21A and D19A (this was the Ladies Open class at that time as there was no D21 age class) and the oldest being H50. In the H21A class the winner was Rolf Petterson (SWE) with the fastest British competitor being Geoff Peck (EUOC) in 8th position closely followed by Chris James (SN) who is the father-in-law of this year's mapper, Dave Peel. The D19A course was won by the Swedish Junior champion Bibbi Siljenblad and the best placed British competitor was Sue Harvey (CH). Times for the H21A were very impressive with Rolf Petterson completing the 12.5km course in 72:06 on a very wet day.

The Relays were held on Cannock Chase (presumably the Sherbrook section) and consisted of four classes. The A class was won by Göteborg OK II with the best placed British team being NOC in 9th position.



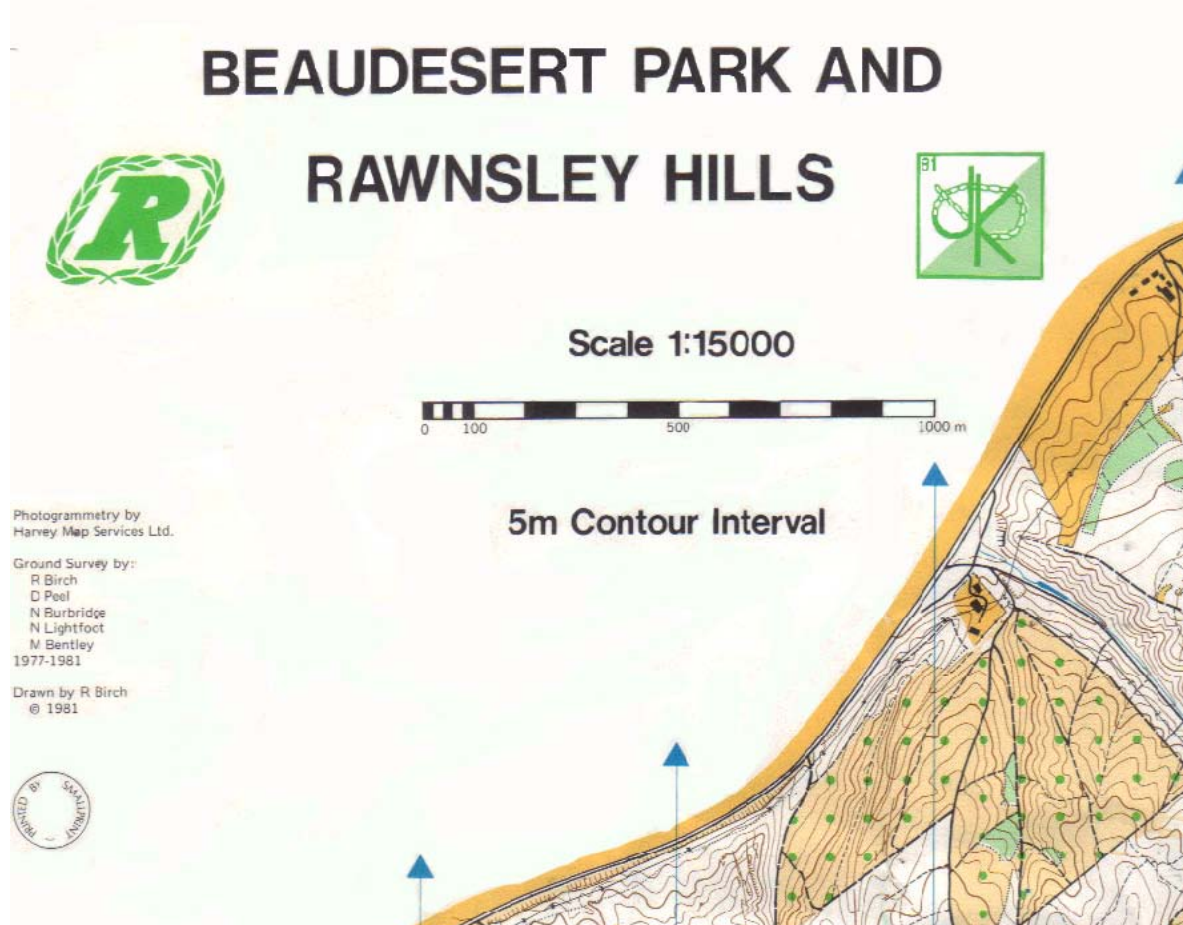
JK 1981

The JK returned to the West Midlands nine years later and was based, once again, in Staffordshire. The Individual event returned to Beaudesert Park and the Relays were held at Bishop's Wood between Eccleshall and Loggerheads.

On Good Friday (17 April), WRE held a Training Event at Lizard Hill which attracted a large number of orienteers and proved lucrative for the club. I believe that there was also a Training Event at the Lickey Hills.

The map of Beaudesert Park was resurveyed at the larger scale of 1:15000 (the norm for events at that time) by members of WCH and drawn in pen and ink (no OCAD then!) by Roger Birch. The Individual event now consisted of two Long Distance (or Classic) races and, unusually they were held on the Saturday (18 April) and Easter Monday (20 April) with the Relays taking place in between on Easter Sunday. There was also a Chasing Start for the Individual race which made for a very exciting finish, particularly in the H21E race where Geoff Peck (SN) beat Graham McIntyre (BOK) by a mere 15 seconds overall. The D19E race was won by Sue Parkin (EPOC). By now there were more 'senior' competitors taking part so the oldest age groups were H62 and D56. WMOA winners were: D10 Sophie Powell (WRE); D17A Liz Dunn (WCH); D35 Sheila Carey (OD); H10 J.Shields (OD); H13A Steven Palmer (WCH) and H43A Bob Carey (OD).

WRE hosted the Relays at Bishop's Wood and the Men's Open was won for the 4th year in a row by BOK who won by 3 minutes ahead of SN. The Ladies Open was won by INT in a much closer race from SYO by a mere 10 seconds.





JK 1994

The JK in 1994 was a very ambitious project by a small club, WYE. Terry Foxton, one of the country's best mappers moved back to his native Hereford towards the end of the 1980s and met with fellow orienteers Chris James, Dermot and Joanne Ruddock, who had also recently moved to the area, at Chris' house on 25 November 1989 and Wye Valley Orienteers (WYE) was born on 1 January 1990.

Terry was very prolific on the mapping front and produced a few small maps for the club before embarking on the task of mapping four brand new areas for JK 1994.

The Training event was held at Garway Hill near to the Welsh border on Friday 1 April and was, disappointingly for some, just limited to the deer park section of the map.

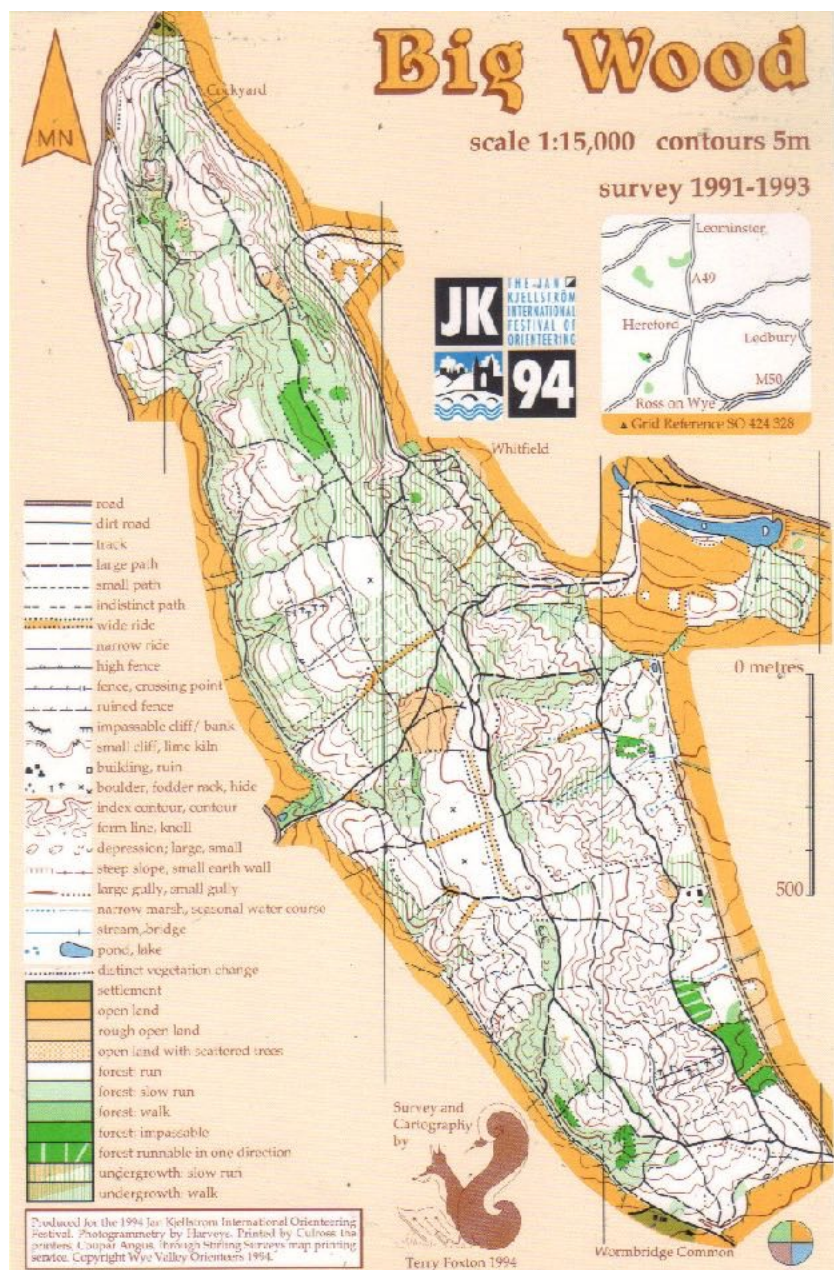


JK 1994 Training map

Day 1 was organised by HOC at Garnstone and Foxley to the North West of Hereford. The assembly and finish were on the site of a World War II US/ Canadian military camp and hospital which closed and was demolished in 1958. The area was very steep and fairly brambly and gave rise to fairly physical courses - the M21E course was 13.1km with 595m climb whilst the W21E was 7.9Km and 345m climb.

The weather wasn't very kind for Day 2 and heavy rain and car parking was a big problem which led to the organising club, WRE, putting the starts back an hour. Pyon and Dinmore again had some steep slopes and brambles but also a plateau full of depressions which made for more interesting orienteering. It also had lots of the infamous Herefordshire.....mud! The Elite courses were again quite physical - M21E 13.5km and 455m climb and W21E 8.4Km and 310m climb. The winners were Christian Hanselman (Switzerland) and Alice Bedwell (BOK) respectively. The WMOA had no individual class winners.

The Relays were held at the rather inappropriately named Big Wood, South West of Hereford, which was actually quite small for a major event. SYO won both the Men's and Women's Premier titles.



JK 1994 Relay area map

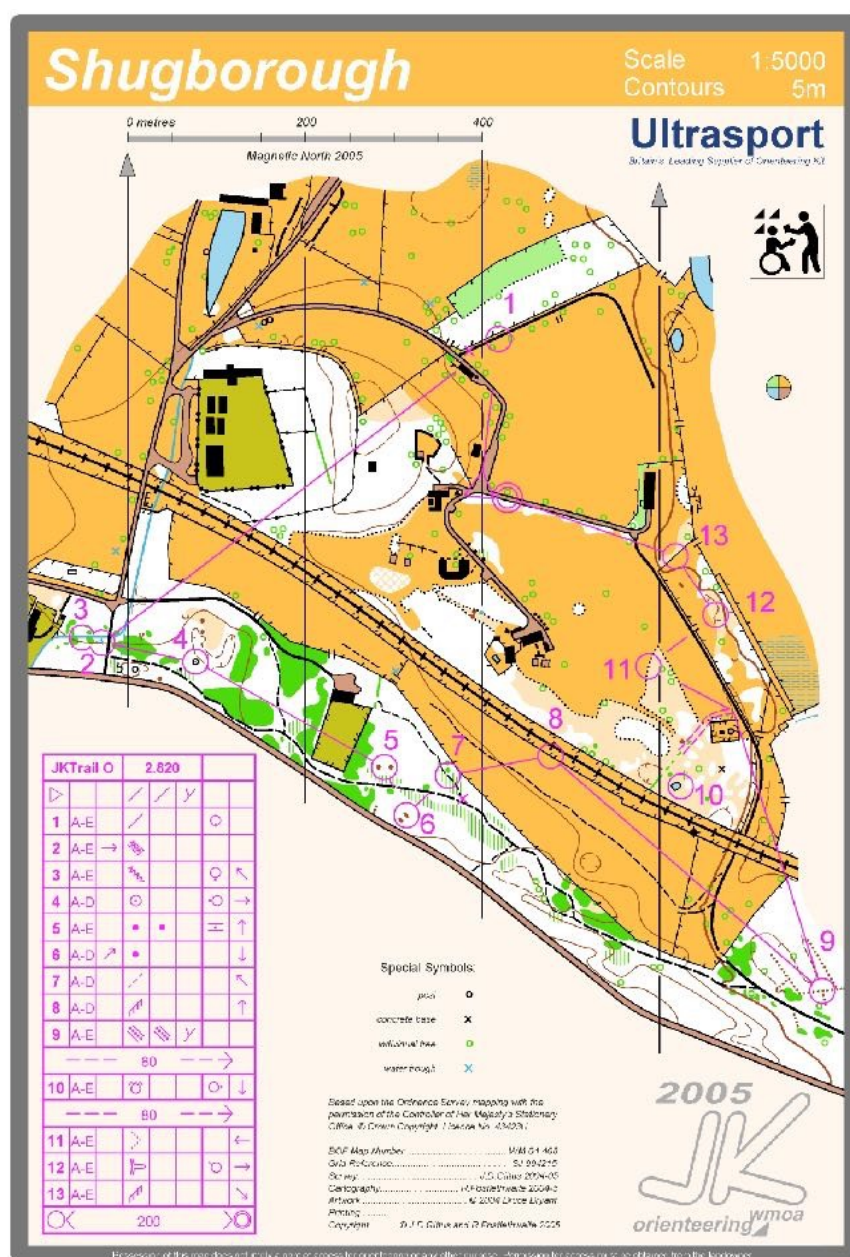


JK 2005

The JK returned to the West Midlands in 2005 and was shared amongst the larger clubs, HOC, WCH and OD with each club providing an area for the main competition.

The Training event was held at Birches Valley on Friday 25 April and this time there was also a 'PeelAdventure' mountain bike race which served as a World Championship selection race. Competitors completed a point to point orienteering race, followed by a score section to satisfy the 'no racing on a bridleway' laws. Best placed finisher on the Men's Open race was Andy Simpson (OD) whilst Janine Hensman (CLARO) won the Women's Open.

Individual Day 1 was hosted by HOC at Brown Clee, arguably the best terrain in the region, but was marred by a misplaced control on the Men's Elite course which led to the course being voided.



JK Trail 'O' map

Abraham's Valley and Wolseley Park was the venue for Day 2 on the hillier North end of Cannock Chase. Although not as technical as Brown Clee it offered quite a physical challenge. The M21 Elite was won by Jamie Stevenson (SYO) with a very impressive rate of 5.3 mins per Km. Heather Monro (SLOW) won the W21E overall finishing 1st on both days. Successful West Midlands competitors were: M55L Andy Hemsted (HOC); W16 A Joanna Halliday (OD) and W35L Lesley Ross (OD).

On the same day a Trail 'O' competition was held at the nearby Shugborough Outdoor Education Centre. Several foot orienteers took part including GB international Stephen Palmer. Brian Parker (DEVON) won the Paralympic and Open class.

The Relays were hosted by OD at Hopwas, again a relatively small area. The assembly area was right in the centre of the map and clever planning saw competitors faced with a 90° route choice right on the start kite. The Men's Open was won by EUOC and the Women's Open by SYO.

Laurie Bradley Trophy 2018 - Hednesford Camp (WCH)

2018 started off with the traditional Score event hosted this time by Walton Chasers on Cannock Chase. It rained quite heavily in the run up to the event but a few minutes after 12.00 the sun came out. Once again, Droobers proved their strength in depth and won the Laurie Bradley Trophy. Bradley

Team Scores

1	OD	5400
2	WCH	5020
3	WRE	4700
4	HOC	3520
5	POTOC	1280
6	COBOC	470

Leading Scorers:

Felix Lunn	M16	OD	300
Alistair Powell	M35	OD	300
Robert Holdway	M21	POTOC	300
Oliver Lunn	M16	OD	300
Alex Morgan	M50	HOC	300
Barry Elkington	M60	OD	300

Leading Scoring Junior Male:

Felix Lunn	M16	OD	300
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Leading Scoring Junior Female:

Holly Stodgell	W16	WCH	230
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2018 CompassSport Cup/ Trophy Draw

Organising Club & Region	Area	Cup	Trophy
(EAOA/ EMOA)	Shouldham Warren	LEI, NOC, NOR	CHIG, LOG, SMOC, SOS, SUFFOC, WAOC
Cup & Trophy: The winning teams qualify for the Final.			
SYO (NEOA/ YHOA)	Canklow	CLOK, DVO, SYO	CLARO, EBOR, EPOC, HALO, NATO, NN
Cup: The winning team qualifies for the Final. If SYO win then the second placed team qualifies for the Final. Trophy: The winning team qualifies for the Final.			
SELOC (NWOA)	Clowbridge	AIRE, LOC, MDOC, WCOC	PFO, SELOC, SROC
Cup & Trophy: The winning teams qualify for the Final.			
DFOK (SEOA)	Balcombe	BKO, HH, SLOW, SN, SO, SOC, TVOC	BADO, DFOK, GO, HAVOC, LOK, MV, SAX,
Cup: The first and second placed teams qualify for the Final. Trophy: The winning team qualifies for the Final.			
FVO (SOA)	Beecraigs	ESOC, FVO , MAROC, MOR ,	AYROC, BASOC, BL, CLYDE , ECKO, ELO, GRAMP, INT , KFO, RR, SOLWAY, STAG, TAY
Cup: The winning team qualifies for the Final. If FVO win, then the 2nd placed team qualifies for the Final. Trophy: The first and second placed teams qualify for the Final. If INT are either first or second then the third placed team will also qualify for the Final.			
QO (SWOA)	The Slades	BOK , DEVON	KERNO, NWO, QO, SARUM, SBOC , SWOC, WIM , WSX
Cup: The winning team qualifies for the Final. If BOK win then the second placed team qualifies for the Final. Trophy: The first and second placed teams qualify for the Final. If either SBOC or WIM are in the first two places then the third placed club also qualifies for the Final. If SBOC and WIM both occupy the first two places then the third and fourth placed clubs qualify for the Final.			
WRE (WMOA)	Nesscliffe	DEE, HOC, NGOC ,OD	COBOC, ERYRI, POTOC, WCH, WRE
Cup & Trophy: The winning teams qualify for the Final.			

XXXVI Meeting Internazionale di Venezia**Allan Williams(WCH)**

In 1995 I attended the World Orienteering Championships in Germany's Lippe region. Our group made up of ex-BUOC runners took part in the spectator races and watched the GB team that included David Peel, Jenny James, Andy Kitchen, Steve Palmer and Steven Hale. One afternoon there was an opportunity for anyone to attend an IOF workshop where several developments in the sport were on show, including an early demo of GPS tracking. Accompanying this was a small exhibition of maps from around the world and one intrigued me so much that I took this photo of it, reproduced here following a trip into my loft to retrieve the original 35mm slide and my projector.



It looked like an amazing place to have an orienteering race. Of course in 1995 there was really no Sprint or Urban racing. The closest thing I knew were the Night Street events that my club of the time, Harlequins, ran on cold Winter nights. Even within the club they were seen as fringe events with only a few dedicated people taking part on simple hand drawn maps. Despite this some events had attained a classic status including the complex streets of Redditch and Russ Fauset's Bewdley Mountain Marathon. In comparison Venice seemed like an all-together more exotic place to go.

Fast-forward 22 years and finally I got the chance to try this race. On a Friday morning 13 Chasers were aboard an EasyJet flight from Luton to Marco Polo Airport, Venice. It wasn't until we got into the baggage hall that the group got together and I could see that no one had missed the plane.

Not many airports have direct access to waterborne transport but Venice does - a long set of travelators take you to the water taxi rank. After a bit of touting around Mark Stodgell fixed us a ride and we were soon on a sleek motorboat heading across the lagoon. The fare of €200 seemed steep but when split across our group was good value. The route took us along a water highway defined by two lines of wooden piles; it was fast and a bit bumpy as we crossed the wake of other boats. Soon the main islands were on the horizon with some of the famous bell towers clearly visible.



The boat pulled into the quay at Ospedale just next to the water ambulance station. As Cath led us towards our accommodation I realised what an unusual city I was going to be spending my weekend in. Narrow alleyways, deliverymen with trolleys and an unusual quietness - there was no noise from traffic. After a few twists and turns we arrived at our accommodation, the splendid Palazzo Contarini Apartments. A big wooden door lead us into a beautiful courtyard and then into a spacious reception area with high ceilings and hanging tapestries. Had we stepped back centuries in time to the heyday of the City State of Venice? No we hadn't because a credit card was required to cover incidentals before we could have our rooms.

There were now 15 Chasers in residence as Ray and Christine Collins had arrived the day before. We spent the rest of Friday exploring the city in small groups. Sally and Holly Hughes had their plans scuppered by a one day water bus strike so they couldn't sail up the Grand Canal as planned. I tagged along with Cath, Stodge, Zoya and the other Holly and we just walked and walked around this fantastic city. We took in St Mark's Square and the Basilica (allowing me to tick off a further entry in a book I have at home; 'The Seventy Wonders of the Modern World'. I've seen thirty nine of them now).

I was very impressed by Venice - it just goes on and on, one expansive square after another with hardly a modern building to be seen and beauty everywhere. We snacked in street cafes, ate tasty, crispy pizza near the fish market and enjoyed the wide variety of shops many with wonderful displays in their windows. In the evening we all got together and had a nice and very reasonable meal in a restaurant close to our apartments.



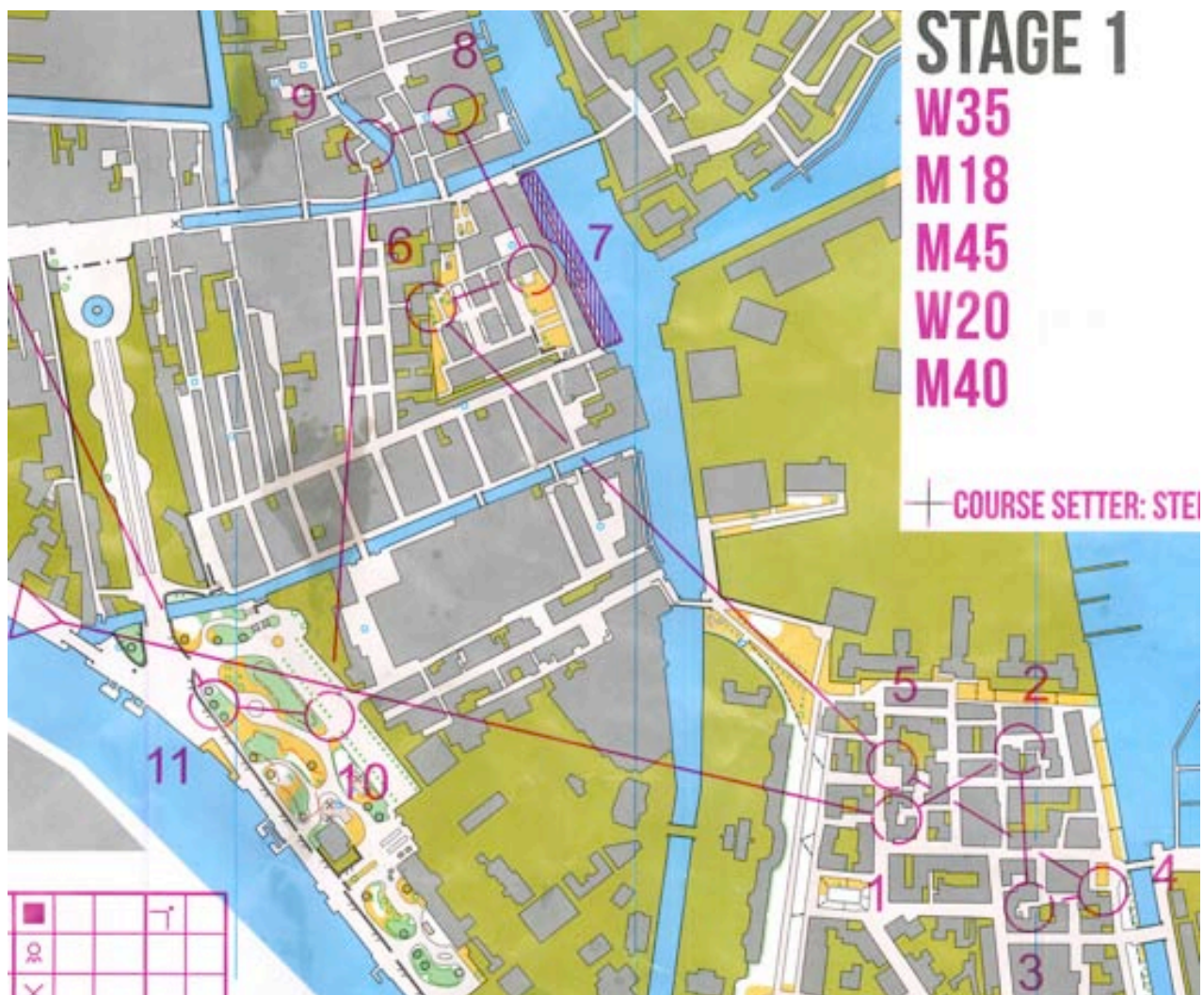
After the meal we returned to the Palazzo Contarini where a pre-concert meal was being served in the reception area. A classical concert was to take place in the large lounge upstairs for some guests on a package tour. We returned to our rooms to relax and I spotted there were tea bags in our kitchen so I decided to try and buy some milk. I headed off into the narrow streets but found them much quieter and darker than earlier, a few bars were open but most shops had their roller shutters down. It was past 9pm but I was sure I had seen some grocery stores earlier with opening times until 10.00. I'd catch a glimpse of light in the distance only to find it was another restaurant. It gradually dawned on me how easy it would be to get lost. One alley looks just like another, as do the bridges and canals. Eventually I found a small store with milk and bought a couple of litres. As I was tendering payment the shopkeeper tried to take a £1 coin off me, they look so similar to Euros now. I'd nearly made the reverse mistake in a petrol station in Luton the night before. At least now if I did fail to find my way back I had some sustenance to keep me alive until morning. Soon I found a square I'd passed through on the way and eventually I spotted the busy bar on the corner of our street and knew that I wouldn't have to spend my night in a Venetian gutter. We had tea and then I went to bed and drifted off to the sound of a String Quartet from the room next door.

There was an easy start to Saturday with no commitments until lunchtime. When I rose Stodge had just returned from breakfast in a local café but was happy to go out again with me for a second breakfast. It was a bit chilly and a mist was hanging above the city. The bell tower of the Campo San Francesco was poking into the cloud. We returned to our rooms and found the rest of the group were up and hungry so we went back out; breakfast number 2 for me and 3 for Stodge! As we sat in the café a young child and, I guess his older sister, came in, he was carrying a cooking pot lid and a wooden spoon which he bashed together while singing. The Barista looked flustered and pointed at her limited selection of pastries but eventually relented and handed over a chocolate croissant. We had seen a group of school children with pans and spoons yesterday and a bit of 'Googling' revealed that it was the festival of San Martino. It's basically a similar concept to 'trick or treat', if they don't get given food the kids keep banging the pan lids and keep singing "San Martin xe 'ndà in sofita, A trovar la so novissa."

We returned to the rooms and packed our stuff for the first orienteering event. I also pulled a pan lid and whisk out of the cupboard, I wasn't going to miss out on a free lunch in expensive Venice!

First up was the Model race in the Cannaregio area, in the West of the city. Earlier someone had referred to this as the 'Specimen Race' which got the medics amongst us thinking and resulted in the invention of a new form of orienteering where you have to give a sample at each control: blood, sputum, stool, etc.

I had decided just to wander around the Model race and save my energy for the night, which was a good job because the registration process and start were as one and as soon as you handed your form in you were off. I had a nice walk around paying close attention to the map and enjoying the views. The course started in a quiet residential area with parallel canals and then headed to busier streets close to the Grand Canal. For one couple in our group this event would be extra special. Alistair had colluded with the organisers in advance and got details of the Model course which allowed him to be in position by a control near the Grand Canal and propose to Amy as she approached. Apparently this was greeted by applause from occupants of several boats on the canal.



We returned to the rooms via the waterbus along the Grand Canal, at €7.50 for an hours trip this is an absolute bargain giving stunning views of the waterfront. We disembarked at Giardini and as we wandered back we saw the start and finish being readied for the night's race.

The event centre was in what is probably the most ugly building in Venice, a brutal lump of concrete that has been dumped into a gap between Rio de La Tana and Calle San Biasio. When I saw it earlier in the day I had assumed it was a refuse processing facility. It is, in fact, a Sports Centre and has been used for the 'O' meet several times before. There is a large gym with tiered seating and another gym underneath, which must be below the waterline. Cath did the registration, which was efficient, though, slightly annoyingly, we were not asked to show our medical forms which some of us had gone through great lengths to get. We all received a free thermal top. After a quick change and team photo we were ready for the race. Tonight we had open starts so there was a queuing system at the start on the waterfront. I expected to freeze while waiting but it wasn't so bad and, after about 15 minutes, I was on the start line.

The Night race was described as 'Classic with obliged sequence, Sprint type'. At 4.6 km it was really a Middle Distance race. My first leg offered two route choices: go right along the promenade or head through the park and use the northern bridge.



I chose the route via the park which took me 3m 53s. This first section was really tricky with such small buildings that it would be easy to miss a turn and get confused. I fared well except on 4 to 5 where I turned in too early halfway through the leg which added about 25m as I recovered. From 1 to 5 took only 3m 09s. Google maps gives a taste of how fiddly this area was.

The course then lead back to another intricate section, this time with small gardens and some covered walkways. I nearly collided with fellow Chaser Dan but just missed him at the last moment. After 4 more controls in courtyards and narrow streets, numbers 10 and 11 were in a park and I had some trouble with 11, losing a few seconds trying to locate what was quite a small statue in the bushes. The last 3rd of the course had two good 'route choice' legs before finishing on the waterfront. I'd run well, made only two minor mistakes and still had enough energy to do a 6 second sprint to the line for our informal 'Stivale d'oro' (Golden Boot) competition. Gradually the full Chasers team appeared at the finish with most people happy with their runs, especially Holly Stodgell who had beaten her mum on Elite. As time went on we started to get worried about Ray Collins who had been out for quite a while. We were all getting a bit cold but thought we ought to hold on for him. Christine checked with the finish but they didn't think he was back - was he really lost or had he tumbled into a canal? Eventually we send Mark off to the Event Centre and a few minutes later Holly Hughes returned with the shocking news that Ray was at the event centre eating biscuits and had been doing so for quite some time. We were relieved and annoyed in equal measures.

After changing, most of us went for a meal in a restaurant on Via Giuseppe Garibaldi, an unusually wide street. I jokingly said it looked like it had been pedestrianised and it turns out I was right, a canal that used to run down it's centre has been filled in some years ago. As we ate and drank the results were available online and I was surprised to see I was 10th.



Start times on Sunday morning were quite early (09:00 to 11:00) and I was awake by 07.00 thanks to the nearby bell tower. Using just two bells the mechanism managed to create nearly a minute of 'tune' which gave me no chance of a lie-in. The start was quite close to our apartments so it didn't make much sense to go to the Event Centre first. This plan was helped by us being able to extend our check-out times until lunchtime which would allow us to shower after our runs. I was hoping for a repeat of Saturday's breakfast but Mark reported that all the cafés were shut, so we just ate a few biscuits in the room. Just after 09.00 I acted as Sherpa for Holly, allowing her to take a coat and camera to the start. There was a bit more life near there and, by 09.15, a hat shop was open and also a nice café allowing me to have a coffee and cake. I then had enough time to return to the apartments, get my compass and return to the start with Zoya.

I was off at bang on 10:00 with a 4.7km course ahead of me. The start was in the centre of the map, to the East of the Grand Canal. Leg 1 went well and I think I made the right route choice - you had to take your decision in the first few seconds. Leg 2 took me over the Rialto Bridge to a string of 6 controls. I was going well until after control 5 when, part way down a narrow street, a Czech runner coming towards me shouted something. I could see ahead there was some orange mesh and realised that the bridge was closed. I turned back before I got to it but this wasn't shown on the map. I made a quick decision to use a different bridge but probably chose the wrong one and added maybe 200m to my route. The Czech runner, however, had probably saved me 100m so the loss wasn't that bad. From 7 to 8 I was delayed by two old gentlemen carrying antique furniture. The alley was so narrow there was nothing to do but wait until they reached a wider section. Around 10 minutes after my first crossing I was running back over the Rialto Bridge towards another loop to the North of the map. Again I was accurate although I was a little disappointed by the planning as there was only a single viable route to and from this group of controls making some of the run a bit repetitious.

I was running well and keeping contact with the map and continued without error right through to the last control. As I ran away from it and down another narrow alley, I was expecting to exit onto the front and see a clear view across the lagoon. I panicked slightly when in front of me was what looked like a giant block of flats, 20 stories high. A moment later I realised that they were moving, quite slowly. It was 96,000 tonnes of cruise liner being tugged into the port, quite a sight, and one that will stop in a few years time when the big ships are banned from the lagoon.

I'd had another good run that would again see me in 10th place. I had found the navigation easier than expected but I think that was because I hadn't made a mistake. In some ways I'd like to have experienced an error as I'm sure just one or two wrong turns can lead to total dis-orientation. After the race I reviewed my route and counted that I had crossed canals a total of 35 times. Most of the other Chasers had good runs too and all seemed to have enjoyed the experience.

We rounded the weekend off with another fine meal and then headed away from the hotel in James Bond style, directly from the back door by water taxi.

West Midlands Urban League 2017



Full results and tables can be found on the UK Urban League website at:
<http://urbanleague.nopesport.com/scoring/>

Date	Event Venue	Club
25 March	Rugby	OD
2 April	Shrewsbury	WRE
4 June	Heath Hayes	WCH
10 December	Castle Vale Cancelled	HOC

Class Winners

Junior Men (M12-)	Arthur Mitchell	HOC	Junior Women (W12-)	Ella May Rush	BOK
Junior Men (M16-)	Alexander Mitchell	HOC	Junior Women (W16-)	Saskia Jones Anna Harris Sophie Vincent	DEE DEE DVO
Mens Youth			Womens Youth	Holly Hughes	WCH
Open Men	Samuel Naylor	POTOC	Open Women	Sally Calland	DVO
Veteran Men (M40+)	Chris McCartney	OD	Veteran Women (W40+)	Helen Parkinson	NOC
Super Veteran Men (M55+)	David Vincent	DVO	Super Veteran Women (W55+)	Carol Dredge	WCH
Ultra Veteran Men (M65+)	Doug Dickinson	DVO	Ultra Veteran Women (W65+)	Liz Godfree Rae Lomas Sheila Strain	DVO MDOC ELO
Hyper Veteran Men (M75+)			Hyper Veteran Women (W75+)		

The 2017 West Midlands Urban League was a bit of an anticlimax as the final event at Castle Vale fell victim to heavy snow and ice. The event has been rescheduled for 16 June as part of a 'double header' with Birmingham University (TBC) on 17 June.

2018 looks as though it's going to be a good year for Urban events in the Region with all the clubs putting on at least one event. Venues are: Rugby South East (OD); Lichfield (WCH); Castle Vale, Birmingham University (TBC) (HOC); Sutton Coldfield (COBOC); Whitchurch (WRE) and Hanley City Centre (POTOC). At the time of writing it is not known whether all these events will be League events.

The West Midlands League 2017 Final Positions

1. OD 7403				2. WRE 6895				3. HOC 6574			
A	Finlay Flippance	M12	500	A	Harriet Allinson	W10	412	A	Arthur Mitchell	M12	413
A	Jacob Oxtoby	M14	500	A	Grace Allinson	W10	394	A	Sebastian Mitchell	M14	316
B	Tom Jeffries	M45	500	B	Adrian Griffiths	M45	434	B	David Aldridge	M35	491
B	Chris McCartney	M45	498	B	Jeremy Lewis	M45	406	B	Tim Kieniewicz	M21	189
C	David Leadley	M50	491	C	Clive Richardson	M50	500	C	David Williams	M55	494
C	Kevin Ross	M50	415	C	Tony Callow	M50	465	C	Alex Morgan	M50	481
D	Juliette Soulard	W45	500	D	Delia Kingsbury	W50	481	D	Marian White	W55	412
D	Lesley Ross	W50	500	D	Diane Jacks	W45	459	D	Heather Kieniewicz	W21	367
E	Barry Elkington	M60	500	E	Adrian Pickles	M60	500	E	Alison Sloman	W80	500
E	Peter Carey	M70	500	E	Brian Morris	M75	500	E	Barry Houghton	M70	498
F	Sam Leadley	M18	500	F	John Riley	M80	500	F	Geoff Trewin	M65	492
F	Josie Smart	W12	500	F	Lawrence Jones	M60	486	F	Russ Fauset	M70	487
F	Florence Lunn	W14	500	F	Lesley Norton	W75	470	F	Andrew White	M60	483
F	Sheila Carey	W70	500	F	Ian Hopkins	M50	450	F	Lesley Brown	W65	482
F	Felix Lunn	M16	499	F	Mike Callow	M75	438	F	John Pearson	M65	469
4. WCH 6349				5. POTO 6038				6. COBOC 2160			
A	Holly Hughes	W18	452	A	Ellie Bales	W18	480	B	Benjamin Rauffet	M21	472
A	Oscar Barnby	M10	300	A	Enys Lloyd	M12	242	B	Emils Vainovskis	M21	200
B	Iain Stamp	M35	398	B	Robert Holdway	M21	496	C	Ian Gamlen	M50	443
B	David Brown	M40	375	B	Martin Pigott	M40	484	D	David Arnott	M70	456
C	Neil Adams	M55	374	C	Jim Cooke	M55	378	E	Mick Sadler	M65	343
C	Andrew Yeates	M50	337	C	Gerry Riley	M55	335	E	Richard Burnett	M60	246
D	Sally Hughes	W45	477	D	Elizabeth Bales	W50	475				
D	Mary Adams	W55	467	D	Ianka Petrova-Evans	W50	100				
E	Hazel Waters	W65	500	E	Marian Denham	W70	500				
E	Jonathan Howell	M65	499	E	Jean Rostron	W75	500				
F	Ray Collins	M60	474	F	Graham Pigott	M35	478				
F	John Robinson	M65	444	F	Henry Morgan	M60	404				
F	Christine Collins	W55	436	F	Judy Douglas	W70	404				
F	Alison Yeates	W50	420	F	Dave Bales	M60	399				
F	Ian Jones	M65	396	F	Dora Deaville	W60	363				

2017 West Midlands League Events

Jan 15	Postensplain	HOC	Oct 8	Sutton Park	OD
Jan 22	Brandon Wood	OD	Oct 15	Shoal Hill	WCH
Feb 5	Badgerslade	WCH	Nov 12	Dudmaston	HOC
Feb 19	Nash Woods	WRE	Nov 19	Wombridge, Telford	WRE
Mar 5	Chillington Hall	WCH	Nov 26	Sherbrook South	WCH
Sep 24	Oldacre	WCH	Dec 3	Hay Wood	OD

Individual Class Winners

M10	Max StraubeRoth	OD	414	W10	Tilly Flippance	OD	432
M12	Finley Flippance	OD	500	W12	Josie Smart	OD	500
M14	Jacob Oxtoby	OD	500	W14	Florence Lunn	OD	500
M16	Felix Lunn	OD	499	W16	Molly Parker	WRE	80
M18	Sam Leadley	OD	500	W18	Ellie Bales	POTOC	480
M20				W20			
M21	Robert Holdway	POTOC	496	W21	Kirsten Strain	OD	389
M35	David Aldridge	HOC	491	W35	Claire Stamp	WCH	160
M40	Martin Pigott	POTOC	484	W40	Anne Straube	OD	388
M45	Tom Jeffries	OD	500	W45	Juliette Soulard	OD	500
M50	Clive Richardson	WRE	500	W50	Lesley Ross	OD	500
M55	David Williams	HOC	494	W55	Elizabeth Bales	POTOC	475
M60	Barry Elkington	OD	500	W60	Jane Stew	OD	446
	Adrian Pickles	WRE	500				
M65	Jonathan Howell	WCH	499	W65	Hazel Waters	WCH	500
M70	Peter Carey	OD	500	W70	Sheila Carey	OD	500
					Marian Denham	POTOC	500
M75	Brian Morris	WRE	500	W75	Jean Rostron	POTOC	500
M80	John Riley	WRE	500	W80	Alison Sloman	HOC	500
				W85	Beryl Pay	WRE	320

2018 West Midlands League Events

Jan 21	Kinver Edge	HOC	Sep 23	Malvern (TBC)	HOC
Feb 4	Brindley (Void)	WCH	Oct 13	Berry Hill (TBC)	POTOC
Feb 18	Lizard Hill	WRE	Nov 11	The Ercall	WRE
May 6	Mansty Woods	WCH	Dec 2	Great Horsenail Slade	WCH
May 13	Bentley Woods	OD	Dec 9	Titterstone Clee	HOC
Jul 8	Burton Dassett CP	OD	Dec 16	Itchington Holt	OD

The West Midlands League 2018 Positions after 1 Event

1. OD 1386				2. HOC 1170				3. WRE 689			
A	Rupert Powell	M10	100	B	Benjamin Rauffet	M21	100	C	Tony Callow	M50	80
A	Oliver Flippance	M14	100	B	David Aldridge	M40	100	C	Clive Richardson	M50	80
B	Tom Jeffries	M45	100	C	Alex Morgan	M50	100	D	Sharron Richardson	W45	100
B	Alistair Powell	M40	99	C	David Williams	M55	100	D	Delia Kingsbury	W50	100
C	David Leadley	M50	88	D	Heather Kieniewicz	W21	100	E	Mike Callow	M75	91
C	Kevin Ross	M55	69	E	Mike Baggott	M65	100	E	Adrian Pickles	M60	90
D	Anne Straube	W40	100	E	Russ Fauset	M70	100	F	Richard Pay	M55	75
D	Lesley Ross	W50	98	F	Robert Vickers	M75	100	F	Derek Turner	M75	73
E	Sheila Carey	W70	100	F	Carol Farrington	W60	100				
E	Peter Carey	M70	91	F	Alison Sloman	W80	100				
F	Nathan Chapple	M16	100	F	Andy Hemsted	M65	90				
F	Kirsten Strain	W21	89	F	Robert Rose	M35	80				
F	Barry Elkington	M60	88								
F	Chris McCartney	M45	84								
F	Ben Flippance	M40	80								
4. WCH 523				5. COBOC 339				6. POTOC 100			
A	Oscar Barnby	M12	100	B	Emils Vainovskis	M21	99	B	Robert Holdway	M35	100
B	Tom O'Boyle	M21	80	C	Ian Gamlen	M50	72				
D	Christine Collins	W55	70	D	David Arnott	M70	88				
E	Ray Collins	M60	100	E	Richard Burnett	M60	80				
E	Chris Boycott	M75	95								
E	Jonathan Howell	M65	78								

WMOA Fixtures

February to May 2018

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

2018

February

15	HOC Local	HOC Winter Evening Event Malvern Common	Great Malvern	
17	OD Local	OD Local After Dark Event Hartshill Hayes Country Park	Nuneaton	SP317942
17	COBOC Local	North Birmingham & Sutton Coldfield Schools League & Newcomer Event Banners Gate, Sutton Park	Sutton Coldfield	SP090955
17	POTOC Local	POTOC Local Event Bathpool Park	Kidsgrove	SJ838537
18	WRE Regional	WRE West Midlands League 3 Lizard Hill	Telford	SJ779094
24	OD Local	OD Local Event Compton Verney Park	Wellesbourne	SP313525

March

1	HOC Local	HOC Winter Evening Event Highgate Common	Wombourne	SO836895
8	POTOC Local	Staffordshire Schools Championships Central Forest Park (CLOSED EVENT)	Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent	SJ886487
10	OD Local	OD Local Event & Schools Championships War Memorial Park	Coventry	SP322772
11	WRE National	CompassSport Cup/Trophy Heat Nesscliffe	Shrewsbury	SJ389198
24	COBOC Local	North Birmingham & Sutton Coldfield Schools League & Newcomer Event Handsworth Park	Birmingham	SP049899
30	WMOA Major	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Sprint (UKOL) MOD Stafford	Stafford	
30	WMOA National	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Temp 'O' MOD Stafford	Stafford	
31	WMOA Major	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Individual 1 (UKOL) Brereton Spurs	Rugeley	

April

1	WMOA Major	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Individual 2 (UKOL) Beaudesert/Brereton Hayes	Rugeley	
1	WMOA National	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Pre-'O' Beaudesert/Brereton Hayes	Rugeley	
2	WMOA Major	Jan Kjellström Orienteering Festival - Relays' Beaudesert	Rugeley	
14	OD Regional	OD Urban Event (WMUL) Rugby (South East)	Rugby	SP527746
25	OD Local	OD Local Event National Herb Centre	Banbury	
28	COBOC Local	North Birmingham & Sutton Coldfield Schools League & Newcomer Event Pype Hayes Park	Birmingham	SP130922

May

2	OD Local	OD Summer Evening Event Borough Hill Country Park	Daventry	
6	WCH Regional	WRE West Midlands League 4 Mansty Woods	Penkridge	
7	POTOC Local	POTOC Park Event 1 Biddulph Grange	Biddulph	
9	OD Local	OD Summer Evening Event Hay Wood	Baddesley Clinton	
12	OD Local	West Midlands Schools' Championships Coombe Abbey Country Park	Coventry	
13	OD Regional	WRE West Midlands League 5 Bentley Wood	Atherstone	
16	OD Local	OD Summer Evening Event Kingsbury Water Park	Tamworth	
19	COBOC Local	North Birmingham & Sutton Coldfield Schools League & Newcomer Event Perry Hall Park	Birmingham	SP060921
23	OD Local	OD Summer Evening Event Abbey Fields & Kenilworth Urban	Kenilworth	
26	POTOC Local	POTOC Park Event 2 Whitfield Valley	Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent	SJ887508
30	OD Local	OD Summer Evening Event Elmdon Park	Solihull	

SCHOOLS AND FAMILY ORIENTEERING NORTH BIRMINGHAM & SUTTON COLDFIELD 2017-2018

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS
BETWEEN 1 PM AND 2.30 PM

- \$at 30 \$ep WITTON LAKES B23 7XA
- \$at 28 Oct PERRY PARK B42 2LR
- \$at 25 Nov WYNDLEY B73 6EB
- \$at 27 Jan ASTON HALL B6 6JD
- \$at 17 Feb BANNERS GATE B73 6JX
- \$at 24 Mar HANDSWORTH PARK B20 2BY
- \$at 28 Apr PYPE HAYES B24 OHG
- \$at 19 May PERRY HALL B42 1RS
- \$at 23 Jun NEWHALL VALLEY B76 1QT



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Schools League: Children's best 5 scores to count from 9 events, with prizegiving at the final event. Children may be accompanied around the route – but let them do the navigating!

Yr	Course	Distance
3-5	White	1-4 km
6/7	Yellow	2-1 km
8/9	Orange	2-8 km
10+	Red	3-5 km

Children £2 Adults £4 per map
Member discount £1



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Day 2 - 4

Cannock Chase

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