



# Chair's Report to the 2020 AGM



Here are a few highlights from the club's activities over the last twelve months. My second year in the role of Chair has been rather different from the first!

The last few months of 2019 were quite uneventful. We carried on with our usual monthly programme of great events – including Chris Wight's fun Autumn Series of short races – while also planning and preparing for 2020's events.

A huge thank you to the very many volunteers on whom we depend. We have implemented our volunteer entry discount system – which gives free entry vouchers for the three main officials and half price entry vouchers for all the other volunteers – with the vouchers being valid for use at subsequent events.

A dozen of us went to the Lake District for a great coaching session, staying the weekend in a very nice modern 'cycle barn'. The coaching on the Saturday was ably led by Duncan and Pippa, and on the Sunday we enjoyed a technical LOC event on the moors.

At the start of 2020 we held a great sociable New Year Team Relay event and then went round to the Rigbys' for lots more gathering, mixing and chatting in the warmth afterwards. The fancy dress standards really do continue to improve year by year. We'll certainly aim to continue to put on these events every New Year, though next January's event will have the significant challenge of not mixing or gathering ..... and there will need to be staggered starts to avoid falling foul of the 'rule of six' (or whatever has replaced it).

Marion Archer led an excellent SI Managers' course for at least a dozen of us, with the expectation that we would all soon get lots of practice with the SI software at events during 2020 .....

Several of us also went off on multi-day orienteering holidays, such as the Portugal O Meeting and the Lipica Open. Remember those?

We thought that our main focus for 2020 was going to be helping to host a fabulous JK at Easter near Whitby. Everything was pretty much ready, and then .....

## **Coronavirus!!**

We had to make the difficult decision (at the time, but not with hindsight) to cancel the JK before making significant financial commitments; e.g. printing all the maps, etc., etc. We also – very sensibly as it turned out – decided not to try and rearrange it for Easter 2021. Having to cancel the event was a huge disappointment considering all the voluntary effort that had been put into co-ordination, mapping, planning and organising. Obviously we'll do our best to make use of the updated maps and the course planning as and when we can ..... if not this year then maybe 2021.

Then into lockdown.

We thought we were going to have all our lovely new CLOK jackets and O-tops ready to distribute just before the JK. A combination of Covid-19 and a printing error delayed those plans, and although the jackets and O-tops are now here – and look really good! – we're still in the process of getting the jackets distributed to the people who had ordered them.

Anyway, thanks to Livi Wright for the excellent design and to the Sirius Minerals Foundation for the funding that allowed us to subsidise the costs. The unanimous view is that Livi's design looks great and the Noname training jackets, the Oland softshell jackets and the Oland O-tops are all very good quality, smart and functional!

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Orienteering was put on hold during the lockdown, so CLOK members did lots of walking, running and cycling for our 'once a day' exercise. Though there were those weekly Thursday Lockdown Zoom quizzes to exercise our memories, and they proved sufficiently popular that they're still being held monthly. Duncan also kept producing our weekly Tchimes emails, keeping us all in touch, and there were some great armchair planning exercises for you – organised by Alan Cranke – and some other puzzles to keep us all entertained.

Our Klub Committee meetings restarted on Zoom, using that tech we've all become so familiar with. We did our best to plan and prepare for the end of lockdown and to be ready to have some events in July if the UK government, British Orienteering and the landowners all gave us permission. The idea was to have a number of event options available and to be flexible enough to go ahead with whatever we were allowed to proceed with. We are obviously still having to exercise that flexibility.

We thought about how to improve our best 30 or so permanent orienteering courses (POCs), with a dozen of you volunteering to adopt your local POCs and check the maps and markers several times a year. Several landowners / councils have now rectified their markers and the maps are much more up to date, though there are still a few more to be sorted out. We do need to ensure that we sustain these as ~1,000 of our POC maps were downloaded from the British Orienteering portal during the last twelve months.

Phill Batts volunteered to take on learning how to set up virtual orienteering courses (VOCs) for us using the new free MapRunF software. So now we have our own VOC Lead Administrator, who can help those of you who want to try out creating courses. Several of us were involved in helping set up several VOCs; e.g. by test running around Darlington. I think Phill used his plush e-MTB for the ones around Catterick! We now have VOCs in six different areas, each with a range of course options. Most are in urban areas (great for winter training), and some are in country parks. So we're ready for the 'second wave' lockdown!

Paul, Wendy and Dennis were also all very busy in lockdown. I'm sure they'll describe their activities and achievements in the Mapping Report.

In preparation for orienteering in the post-lockdown era, we produced a new Covid-19 template risk assessment, and Alastair wrote a new online entry system that implements key mitigation measures; e.g. no entries or payments on the day, a limit to the number of starters in any 15-minute start block, etc. That has enabled us to be very flexible in terms of organising Covid-secure events with little commercial risk if we need to cancel.

This meant we were ready to go as soon as British Orienteering gave the go-ahead to restart orienteering on 1<sup>st</sup> August ..... and we held our first post-lockdown event in South Park, Darlington on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Then we put on our amazing Moors Double Header weekend on 8/9<sup>th</sup> August using both Standing Stone Rigg and the new Graystone Moor area. It was fantastic that Eileen Bedwell drove out to join the other ~130 competitors to enjoy these tough areas.

So our lockdown legacy includes some great new mapped areas and a whole new type of virtual orienteering.

We continue to have a strong CLOK Junior section, with training led by Neil Hunter, ably supported by Charles Mayes when Neil is off on holiday (although I understand that that isn't happening as much this year).

I'm not sure what I can usefully say about individual sporting highlights this year. It might be worth mentioning that Dave Riches is pleased to know that he will be the reigning M50S JK champion until (at least) 2022. And Duncan will presumably retain a selection of mountain marathon titles for a similar period?

Looking forward, I think the biggest challenge for the club is attracting new members, especially young adults in their 20s and 30s. We really do need to excite a whole new generation to become involved in our adventure sport so that we can sustain our Klub over the next decade and beyond. To that end, we have been working on an application for a grant from the Orienteering Foundation to partially fund a part time Club Development Officer – someone who can relate to that generation and, over the next couple of years, will lead the effort to recruit and involve new members. We will come back to that in more detail later on in the AGM.

I do think it's healthy to have some turnover of people on the Committee and the people filling the club's other volunteer posts. As well as avoiding overloading our willing volunteers, it brings fresh ideas about how to evolve and improve the club. In that context, I'm very grateful to those members who are willing to take on new roles this year. It's really good to have those key posts filled again ..... though we always do still have space for a few more volunteers in assorted roles!

We will miss those who are retiring from some posts, though. For example, Mike Hardy is retiring from obtaining access permissions for us from those 'hard to please' landowners such as Forestry England and various Local Councils. I'd like to thank him for those decades of back room work, and especially this year, when all his skills have been tested to the full!

And congratulations to Joe Trigg for being chosen to receive the 2019 Joe Wright award – the second time he's done so.

Finally, please stay safe and enjoy the events that we are able to put on as we continue to make the best of the situation. I look forward to seeing you at the next event ..... from a suitable distance of course!

**Caroline Mackenzie**  
**CLOK Chair**