



Chair's Report to the 2024 AGM



Introduction / Overview

Since the 2023 AGM we have put on 21 orienteering events (c.f. 23 in 2022-23), although CLOK members were also heavily involved in running the British Orienteering Championships (Classic distance) and the British Relay Championships as part of NEOA.

Organising and planning our extensive and comprehensive range of orienteering events has required a lot of flexibility and hard work from all our key officials and other volunteers. The results have been worth all the effort, though, and have given us all a chance to enjoy navigating our way around some fun and technical courses!

CLOK members have now almost completed the work that resulted from our success in winning about £7,000 worth of grant funding. This helped us to update and extend the local park mapping throughout our region and to set up new permanent orienteering courses (POCs) and virtual orienteering courses (VOCs) in 16 areas. See Paul Taylor's Mapping Report for more details. As promised at the last AGM, I haven't applied for any new funding this year. That will be deferred until we've fully completed our backlog of work to deliver the earlier funding objectives. Having said that a couple of landowners have approached us to update their maps and/or courses and we are dealing with those requests on a reactive basis.

This is all part of setting up the infrastructure that will enable us to facilitate more local community involvement in orienteering and to encourage families into our sport. Once that's complete, we'll need to ensure that the new maps, POCs and VOCs are used and, importantly, maintained.

It's worth noting that 90% of the grant funding goes to club members as expenses for doing the mapping and course design work, with the remaining 10% going to club funds to help pay for OCAD licenses, insurance, etc.

Club Development Project

By Christmas last year, we had found our excellent Club Development Officer, Rachel Baker (ably supported by her aunt, Sarah Hague). Rachel has focused on delivering a brilliant C2G Spring course, and has then been busy encouraging more families to try out orienteering in a series of activity days focused on families and children. She has also put on some more coaching for us. See Rachel's report for more details.

Many thanks to the Orienteering Foundation for their continuing funding support and their agreement to support a third year of the CDO contract – which is the 2024 calendar year. We agreed at last year's AGM to continue to support a further year of a CDO beyond when the Orienteering Foundation grant stops. That will be the 2025 calendar year. I would like us to be able to offer a two-year contract when we need to advertise the role again, which will be when Rachel completes her gap year in January 2024. We'll be having a vote on that matter tonight.

Schools Development Project

Many thanks to Mark Davis, who has taken the lead on the role of Schools Development Officer. See his report for further details.

Event programme

In summary, our very full event programme over the last twelve months included:-

- The NEOA British Championships (an IOF ranking event) and British Relay Championships, held in the beautiful Mulgrave Estate including Hutton Mulgrave and Skelder Woods. (The individual day counted as our Acorn Event for 2024.) The British Championships took place in April, after a very, very wet winter, and the sodden, muddy parking fields posed a few challenges that I'm sure are seared into our memories (or least mine and Mark's!). We had over 100 volunteers on the Saturday and 70 on the Sunday – which is pretty impressive when you consider that NEOA only has 160 ranked members – and we were ably supported by the Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team (CMRT). This enabled NEOA to put on an excellent, tough

Championships with over 1,100 competitors on the Saturday and about 800 on the Sunday. The CLOK share of the profits amounted to £1,833.

- Our normal monthly programme of Regional events continued through all weathersincluding a Dale Town Moor night event that was included in the YHOA Night League.
- Chris Wright's Autumn Series of short races took place in some lovely locations.
- Our annual New Year Team Score event was held in Hardwick Park (with easy access for NN and NATO teams).
- We inaugurated a winter mini-series of dusk / night events, including very sociable events at Bedale, Cleveland Links and Romanby golf courses.
- Joe Trigg continued to organise a Summer Series of Saturday events.
- We organised a UK Urban League event on our newly extended map of Barnard Castle (with over 170 entries).
- It was our turn to organise the October Odyssey weekend, comprising two National events including the NE Orienteering Championships. The weekend went well, with just over 100 competitors each day.

Unfortunately, EBOR had to defer this year's iconic White Rose Weekend, as the access permissions came through much too late for appropriate mapping and planning of the new area proposed by Forestry England, which is in the southern part of Dalby Forest. EBOR are, however, aim to use that area for the 2025 White Rose Weekend. We're going to help them by organising the Sunday event, and I look forward to your support in filling those key roles, preferably tonight please?

So, it's been a very busy year. It's been really great to sustain our normal event programme while encouraging many folk to take on apprentice Organiser or Planner roles. Many of you have now graduated from your apprenticeships, which is helping us to spread the workload. Thank you.

Looking forward to next year, we have volunteered to organise the 2025 Compass Sport Cup (& Trophy) Final in the South Gare sand dunes near Redcar. I have volunteered to take the Organiser role (with Alastair's help), Rob Bailey is leading the planning, and Duncan Archer has volunteered to act as our Controller. The date has now been settled as Sunday 14th September 2025, and Joan Selby is focusing on formalising all the key access permissions. We have hardstanding for all the parking (of up to 1200 competitors) and I have asked Richard Rigby if he can persuade CMRT to support us again. Some other key team leader roles will need to be filled soon – my requests are going out shortly. Volunteers are welcomed.

Achievements

CLOK members have produced some excellent individual sporting performances this year. I'm not going to try to give a comprehensive list, but I'd like to mention just a few outstanding results.

- CLOK qualified for the CSC Final (in the Trophy competition for smaller clubs).
- Our Juniors competed in Junior IRCS and to the YBT finals.
- Recently Julian Simpson came first in the M45 class while representing England at the Veteran Home Internationals in Northern Ireland, helping England to secure first place overall.
- Nell Downing came first young junior in the Northern Sprint Champs.
- At the October Odyssey weekend, Alastair Mackenzie, Martyn Dean, Rebecca Simpson, Isla Simson, Lauren Simpson, Rae Simpson and Will Dehany all became NE Champions.
- Lauren Simpson came 9th (out of 153) in the W10 class on day 2 at the O-Ringen in Sweden.
- In the Northern Championships, Chris Mackenzie came first in M21S and Lauren Simpson came first in W10.
- 2024 JK podiums included Rachel Baker, with a clean sweep of wins in in the Sprint and the overall champion in W18. And she rounded of the weekend by winning the Women's Whort relay with Alice Rigby and Becca Mayes.
- We have several British Champions – Eileen Bedwell in W90, Carolyn Rigby W55S, Julian Simpson in M45, Rachel Baker in W18 and Lauren Simpson in W10.

- The Green family won the 2024 New Year Team Score event (successfully defending their 2022 and 2023 titles 😊) although NN's Northern Ninjas are closing the gap!

Awards

The Paul Thornton Awards – which go to Juniors (female and male) who have made the most contribution to the sport and the club over the previous year – were presented to Becca Mayes and William Rowan.

Joan Selby was awarded the 2024 Joe Wright Trophy.

Training

Phill Batts led another mapping course recently and three CLOK members (David Murphy, Martyn Dean, Rob Bailey) attended. We look forward to orienteering on your future work!

We continue to provide support to our CLOK Juniors, with training led by Neil Hunter, ably supported by Charles Mayes and other orienteering parents. See the Juniors Report for more details (once Neil has time to write it after his Canadian adventures).

The club also sponsored juniors to attend some enjoyable training camps. Becca Mayes went to the Junior Regional Orienteering Squad (JROS) training camp in Czechia and Isla Simpson went to the Lagganlia training camp in Scotland.

Permanent Orienteering Courses and Virtual Orienteering (MapRun) Challenges

We continue to improve our best 30 or so Permanent Orienteering Courses (POCs). Thank you to the club members who have volunteered to adopt their local POCs and check the maps and markers several times a year.

It's worth keeping the POCs in good shape, as about a thousand of our POC maps are downloaded from British Orienteering's 'Go Orienteering' portal each year.

Several landowners have now repaired or replaced their markers, and the maps are much more up-to-date, although there are still a few more to be sorted out. If you would like to help with this maintenance process, please let me know. Vacancies are available, particularly as one of our key POC adopters has had to stand down recently. The POC checks also help to inform and prioritise where the next mapping and course upgrades are needed (though we do need to finish off all the grant-funded work first!)

We've continued developing further MapRun courses, which are used for the weekly Klub challenges and for the Couch2Green courses. They're also being published on British Orienteer's 'Go Orienteering' web site so that they're available for community groups, members of the public, etc.

First Aid course

Towards the end of 2023, Richard Rigby ran a First Aid course for members whose certificates were expiring.

Safeguarding policies

Thanks to Carolyn Rigby for continuing to oversee our Safeguarding policy and practices. Note also our policy on photography and filming at our events and activities. We all need to understand these policies and practices, so please consider doing British Orienteering's online course on safeguarding – recommended participation for all Committee members and key Officials.

Club Image

It's been really great to continue seeing our club jackets and O-tops out and about at various events, and we're still getting lovely comments about the design. Livi Wright has recently designed some new club banners for us, so that we can have a second set. Look out for the new banners next year.

We're using elements of the design – particularly the colours and the "landscape of silhouettes" – to provide a consistent identity across our web site, social media, maps and other publicity materials.

Showing off our smart club image is really great when helping out at Family Fun Days and at School events

Committee business

We've continued to hold regular monthly Committee meetings via Zoom, as it's so much more time-efficient and avoids us wasting fuel and generating CO₂ emissions. On that point, we're still interested in finding ways of further reducing our sport's environmental and climate impacts. Remember that you can use the WhatsApp group or Facebook members-only chat functions for making arrangements to share transport to events.

The Committee is still considering further developing our club's environmental policy. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

Social activities and communications

We held our annual summer pizza night at East Harlsey village hall, where we presented the Joe Wright and Paul Thornton awards and enjoyed competing in the maze.

The monthly Zoom quizzes that started during the Covid lockdowns have continued to be popular, while our regular Tchimes electronic newsletter continues to let us know everything that has been – and is – going on and to bind us together.

Volunteers wanted!

I'd like to say again a huge 'thank you' to the many event officials / volunteers on whom we depend. We have continued to operate our "volunteer entry discount" system, which gives free entry credits for the four main event officials and half price entry credits for all the other helpers. These are given as credits in the Racesignup entry system, and we recognise that they're just a token of our appreciation to our volunteers rather than any form of recompense. We also appreciated several people stepping forward to be trained up and mentored in the Organiser and Planner roles.

Speaking of which, we now have next season's events programme mapped out ready for you to step forward and volunteer to take on those key roles!

Alternatively, if you're interested in planning a Lamp-O or a VOC or two, we have loads of scope for more to be created. We have a number of portable computers – with all the software needed for mapping and planning installed – available for loan to club members, plus a couple of very accurate handheld Garmin GPS devices that can be used for mapping and/or checking VOC control sites.

I think it's healthy to have some turnover of people on the Committee and in the club's other volunteer roles. 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 have stepped forward to take on new roles this year. It's really good to have some key posts filled again though we always have space for a few more volunteers in various roles. In particular, we currently have vacancies on the Committee and we're looking for someone to manage our social media presence.

Looking forward

Looking forward, I think the biggest challenge for the club continues to be attracting new members, especially families and young adults in their 20s and 30s. We really do need to excite a whole new generation to become involved in our sport so that we can sustain our club over the next decade and beyond. We'll continue to experiment with a variety of approaches to achieve that objective. On that subject, an important task for the coming year will be to find another Club Development Officer to continue to work on finding ways to attract families into our sport.

In conclusion

Please stay safe, keep active and enjoy the orienteering events that we and other clubs put on. I look forward to seeing you at some of them.

Caroline Mackenzie
CLOK Chair