



Chair's Report to the 2022 AGM



Introduction / Overview

Over the last twelve months, we have put on about 22 orienteering events – compared to about a dozen in each of the previous two, pandemic-restricted years – tackled some new challenges and taken forward some great new club development work.

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

CLOK members have taken on an increased workload resulting from our success in winning about £7,000 worth of grant funding, including some via the Sport England / British Orienteering's 'Find Your Way' project. This is helping us to update and extend our local park mapping throughout our region and to set up new POCs and VOCs in 14 areas. See Paul Taylor's Mapping Report for more details.

This is all part of setting up the 'infrastructure' to enable us to facilitate more local community involvement in orienteering and to encourage families into our sport. Overall, a significant amount of improvement work is being done across the heart of our Teesside communities. Once that is complete, we'll need to ensure that the new maps, POCs and VOCs are used and maintained.

Note: 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

Our Club Development Officer, Mary Fleming has been very busy encouraging us to get out and do more orienteering, arranging more training activities and 'orienteering games'.

Many thanks to the Orienteering Foundation for their continued funding support and to the club members who helped with the successful completion of the three Couch2Green (C2G) courses and the Track2Green (T2G) course. Special mention to Dave Riches for leading the Saturday morning sessions for last summer's C2G course. See Mary Fleming's Club Development Project Report for more details.

Schools Development Project

Unfortunately, our Schools Development Officer (SDO), Connor Smith, chose to leave us early in 2022. This left us needing to find a way of delivering the significant new workload that was requested – and paid for – by the schools over this summer. After re-advertising the contract, we have now found a way forward. Many thanks to Phill Batts, who has taken the lead through this transition period and has also completed a significant amount of mapping.

Mary Fleming has agreed to take on the bulk of the SDO work over the next twelve months, including leading the 'in-school' training activities. And Aly Raw will take on some of the SDO work once her Darlington Schools Sports partnership workload eases off next year, although this will not be until after March 2023.

Anyway, there is an extremely healthy cashflow coming through from the Schools Development work, especially now that Phill ensures we do get paid up front avoiding us having to chase up some unpaid bills!

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Event programme

Our very full event programme over the last twelve months included:-

- Our Acorn National Event at Boltby.
- Our normal monthly programme of Regional Events, which continued through all weathers with some events experiencing all four seasons on the same morning!
- Chris Wright's Autumn Series of short races.
- Our annual New Year team score event at Flatts Lane.
- Winter mini-series of Lamp-O events.
- Joe Trigg's Summer Series of evening events.
- The UK Urban League event at Richmond.

We also got together with neighbouring clubs to offer some well-received multi-day events, including:

- EBOR's urban event Thirsk pairing up with our Acorn National Acorn Event at Boltby.
- The NEOA Jubil-O urban weekend in partnership with NN & NATO.
- CLARO's urban event in Ripon pairing up with our urban event in Richmond under the banner of the North Yorkshire Orienteering Festival.

So, it's been a very busy year. It's great to get back to a normal event programme after the disruption of the two Covid pandemic years.

Looking forward to next year, EBOR have invited us to join them in running the White Rose Weekend next year. This would probably involve us organising – and getting the income from – one of the main events. Your views are welcomed.

And looking even further ahead NEOA have volunteered to run the 2024 British Orienteering Championships (in the Mulgrave Estates). Duncan Archer has volunteered to act as Coordinator, the key officials have been appointed and initial preparations are under way.

And we (CLOK) have also volunteered to organise the CompassSport Cup final in 2025 at South Gare.

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.

- Eileen Bedwell won a gold medal in the 2022 World Masters Orienteering Championships. 🌟
- In October 2021, Ann Cranke was crowned as the W65L British Champion. Hanne and Mark Bown came 4th and 5th respectively in their age classes.
- In November 2021, Julian Simpson, Chris Mackenzie, Hanne Bown, Alastair Mackenzie, Paul Taylor, Carolyn Rigby and Joan Selby all won their age classes in the NE Score Champs (in somewhat challenging conditions).
- The Green family won the 2022 New Year Team Score event. 😊
- In February, Duncan Archer became the M45 British Night Champion in deep snowy conditions on Ilkley Moor.
- In April, Pippa Archer, Joan Selby and Eileen Bedwell were crowned Northern Orienteering Champions at Dukeshouse Woods.
- 2022 JK class winners included Eileen Bedwell (again 😊), ALice Rigby and Caroline Mackenzie (on their short courses) with a CLOK team of Chris Mackenzie, Dominic Green and Duncan Archer coming 3rd in the Men's Short relay.
- In the British Sprint Championship, Liam Green came 3rd in his B final, adding to his record of good results throughout the year.

- At the 2022 Lakes 5-Days, Thomas Aspin, Alice Rigby and Eadie O'Callaghan all won their classes.
- Rebecca Mayes was the top scorer from NEOA at the JIRCs in Northern Ireland.

Congratulations to the inaugural 'Tour de MapRun' jersey winners:-

- Yellow (Overall League Winner) Viv Murphy
- Polka Dot (King of the Hills) Graeme Addison
- Green (Sprint Specialist) Graeme Addison
- White (Junior Winner) Joe Harrison
- Pink (Stage Winner) Viv Murphy

And congratulations to the whole Klub for reaching the CompassSport Trophy Final. Thanks to our 51 runners in the heat at Helmsley in March and to the smaller band who made it up to Scotland in October.

Awards

The inaugural Paul Thornton Awards – which go to the male and female Juniors (male and female) who have made the most contribution to the sport and the club over the previous year – were presented to Dominic Green and Livia Wright by Linda Thornton.

It was great to have the opportunity to present the 2021 Joe Wright Trophy to Marion Archer. A well-deserved win for her decades of strong contribution to the club!

I'd like to thank the CLOK committee for nominating me for the British Orienteering Volunteer of the Year award for the second year in a row. I even reached the shortlist, which is quite remarkable given that I won the award last year. Many thanks to everyone.

Training

We continue to provide strong 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.

The club also sponsored juniors to attend some training camps. Rebecca Mayes enjoyed her Junior Regional Orienteering Squad (JROS) training camp at Lagganlia, whilst Dominic travelled to Gothenburg for a JROS camp.

The Orienteering Foundation's Coaching Day at Graythwaite gave us seniors an opportunity to practice our techniques in some very tricky Lake District terrain. Thanks to Duncan and Pippa Archer from providing the coaching, which prepared us nicely for the event on the very challenging new area of Harter Fell the following day.

Entry systems

In March 2022, we wound up the use of our temporary CLOK Entry System. Thanks to Alastair Mackenzie for setting up and managing the in-house system, which helped us deal with the rapidly-changing Covid restrictions, and to Duncan Archer for managing a smooth transition to the Racesignup online entry system. This should give us all the flexibility that we require into the future, as they're continuing to develop the system to improve and expand it.

Permanent Orienteering Courses and Virtual Orienteering (MapRun) Challenges

As mentioned earlier, we have made large strides in improving some of 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 were 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, yes, 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

In April 2022, Richard Rigby ran an 'in person' First Aid course whose certificates were expiring, and he's planning to run another course later this year.

Safeguarding policies

Thanks to Carolyn Rigby for updating to our Safeguarding policy and practices and producing a policy on photography and filming at our events and activities.

Jackets, O-tops, etc.

It's been really great to see lots of our club jackets and O-tops out and about at various events, and we're still getting lovely comments about the design.

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 and other publicity materials.

The new CLOK gear has been so popular we've had to order even more O-tops and jackets to replenish our stocks!

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. (Please bear in mind that you can use the WhatsApp lift sharing group to arrange to share transport to events.) The Committee is still working on developing our club's environmental policy. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

We are also considering options for recognising the volunteers' efforts on behalf of the club. In particular, what should we do after all the current volunteers T-shirts have been handed out? More CLOK-badged T-shirts or would it be better to adopt the 'trees not tees' approach of planting trees on behalf of volunteers rather than handing out T-shirts? Let's have a discussion about this in the Any Other Business section of the AGM.

Social activities and communications

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

Also, many thanks to Duncan Archer for setting up a new section of our web site aimed at newcomers to orienteering. It's worth noting that different people can take responsibility for updating specific parts of the new section of the site. For example, Mary Fleming can update the information about club development activities.

Survey

We've recently asked all club members to complete a survey about what type of orienteering events and activities you're most interested in. The survey results will help us to adjust our future programmes to suit existing members and, hopefully, attract new members to our sport.

There are some constraints on what we can do when – for example, some areas are out of bounds during the bird nesting season, and we need to be aware of the skyrocketing costs of access, parking, portable toilets, etc., but we'll do what we can to accommodate members' wishes.

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 three main event officials and half price entry credits for 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 appreciate several people stepping forward to be trained up and mentored in the Organiser and Planner roles.

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

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 – installed with all the software needed for mapping and planning – 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!

We also know that a couple of very experienced club members will be moving on next year, so we'll need to fill the various key roles that Graeme Addison, Duncan Archer, and Phill Batts and Dennis Hooton have taken on for us.

Looking forward

Looking forward, we 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. So, in addition to continuing to organise our Couch2 Green twice-yearly courses and lead our other Club Development activities, Mary Fleming will also be working on how 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 enjoying some of them.

Caroline Mackenzie
CLOK Chair