

Interlopers

September 2021 Newsletter

Welcome to the September 2021 club newsletter!

Another jam-packed edition, this time with much more actual orienteering news now that events have been able to start up again. Read on for coverage of the Six Days, Coast & Islands, and Sprintelopes as well as other adventures by club members. And all your usual favourites – Chair's update, Events Coordinator, Nippers' News and even a GECOOT! There'll be another newsletter in December, so please bear that in mind this autumn and send me things for it!



Happy reading. *Katherine Ivory*

Good to have the opportunity for a long hard look at the finish before trying to find it again the long way round. Awaiting hordes of juniors at Tentsmuir last Sunday.



Ramblings from the Chair – Colin Eades

Over the last few months we have finally been able to get out beyond our immediate area and get back to travelling the country to go to orienteering events, a welcome sign of the progress made in the battle against Covid 19. These events have allowed Interlopers to dust off their rusty techniques and try to get back to competition. We have had British Middle distance champs, Scottish Champs, Scottish 6 days (or should it be 2 x 3 days).

The British Middle distance was first up and alas no champions but a silver medal for Mairi and bronze for Fiona. The next weekend saw the Scottish Championships on Craig A Barns with numerous top three finishes from Interlopers, but four Scottish Champions in Lucy, Mary, Scott and Angus. The Scottish 6 days proved another good hunting ground with class victories for Lorna, Matthew, Joseph and Peter and many others giving good showings in their classes. More recently we have British Champions in Sprint Orienteering, Rachel and Mairi in the individual and then Paul, Jane and Phil in the Mixed sprint relay. Well done to all.

The six days and realistically all events don't happen without hard work by many. Interlopers were given the task (honour?) of getting the event started on Day 1, with Max taking on the Organiser role and Mike and Graham doing the honours with the planning, our thanks to Brian Bullen and Ross Lilley for trying to control us!

I must also mention those who have achieved International selection. Congratulations to Mairi and Pippa who made the British to JWOC; alas Britain has had to withdraw the team

as Turkey is considered by the Government as a no-go area due to Covid. Peter Hodgkinson has been on duty at the World Championships in Czech.

More locally we have continued with events in the Sprintelope series both organising and getting out and about. Three events (sorry if I missed any) Polkemmet, Moredun and Blackford with thanks to Colin Ledlie, Angus Ivory and Scott Fraser for doing planning at these.

Looking forward after much will it happen/ won't it happen, the CompassSport Cup/Trophy Final has now been declared on and it would be great to get a strong team out and get the Trophy back. We also have British Long distance (away) Championships at Braunton Burrows, Devon, hopefully see some of you there.

Colin Eades



HURRAY, EVENTS ARE ON AGAIN!

British Sprint Champs – Paul Caban

A small but perfectly formed squad of Interløpers made the trip south to Skelmersdale, West Lancashire, over 21-22 August.

Saturday was the mixed relay, and we had three teams entered. Due to a bad accident on the M6, starts were delayed, and then a car dug its way into the mud of the event car park field, but eventually the day's excitement could commence. First off was our elite team, featuring a legal guest appearance by Helen Bridle who came back in third position. She handed over to James, who to great excitement was clearly in the lead at the spectator control, and kept up his personal tradition of leading at the end of his leg. Colin was next out, and had a solid run, handing over to Fiona who also ran well. Sadly, the Team had mispunched, missing out a control, something in common with around half the teams.



*Title suggested by
Word: 'a person in
costume'!?!*

The other races all overlapped, with our ad-hoc team of Graeme, Tricia and Lorna, and our super-vet team of Phil, Jane and Paul starting at around the same time. We had high hopes for our super super-vets: recent multi-million pound signing Phil was first off in the winning team two years ago, and was happy to lead out again for us, coming back around twenty seconds down on the leader. Phil handed over to Jane, who despite recent injuries had a fantastic run, coming through the spectator control in the lead, and handing over around two minutes clear. A visibly nervous Paul headed off, not knowing how much the lead was, and not only held his nerve, but even extended the lead slightly. Sadly, new to this winning lark, he didn't know how to celebrate properly on the run-in.

Sunday was the two-part Individual race, on a different part of Skem. The qualifying races were significantly trickier than the previous day's relay had been. Most qualified for the 'A' final, though sadly there were a couple of very unlucky 'first non-qualifiers'. There was a long gap between the qualifiers and final, but fortunately the weather was kind, and lots of "catching up after not seeing anyone for a long time" ensued. Each final sees competitors start in reverse order of qualification, so the fastest start last, maintaining excitement. Again, there was success for Interløpers, with top ten finishes for Fiona, James, Phil and Paul, and championship winning runs for both Mairi in W20 and, fantastically, Rachel in W50. Mairi started last in both her qualifier and final, and overtook the entire field to finish first both times. Rachel meanwhile took some notable scalps, including past British squad members.



Credit: Lorna



Rachel, Mairi and our SV Relay Team with their Championship medals. Credits: Peter Cull.

Sprintelope 2021 – Graeme Ackland

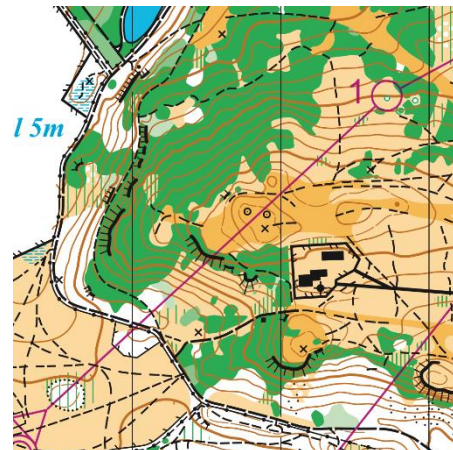
“Possibly the finest Wednesday evening informal orienteering league in the Lothians”



Sprintelope was back to almost normal this year, with contributions from INT (thank you MOWsquad, granny Ann, Angus & Scotia) and our friends at ELO, KFO and ESOC making up the total to 16 events from Dunfermline to Dunbar.

The online entry and payment system was the main nod to covid-safety, with people also heading home sooner and standing further apart than normal at the events. As far as we know, no COVID transmissions occurred at Sprintelope, so the precautions were obviously either effective or unnecessary.

Along with the old favourites, some new areas came on stream this year – Prestonpans, Moredun, Pencaitland. There were some route choices that nobody got right, for example this first leg effort from Scotia at Blackford.



And moving on from GECO, our local neighbours produced 22-23: a GERCOOT [that's 'Route Choice'] candidate at Viewforth...



You can see the results at <https://munroleagues.com/leagues/Sprintelope%202021>

And view the winners certificates here: <https://www2.ph.ed.ac.uk/~gja/Sprintelope2021.pdf>

Sprintelope will return in 2022. It's not too soon to think about where you'd like to stage an event. Sprintelope's crayons have been spotted in South Gyle...

Scottish Champs

On Sunday 13th June following months of uncertainty everyone was delighted to be able to take part in the National Championships hosted by ESOC at Craig a Barns in Perthshire. The sun shone over the fabulous terrain and it was great to be out in the forest again for some really enjoyable courses.

Congratulations to a number of INTs on their performances, with the following as this year's Scottish Champs (full list here - <https://www.scottish-orienteering.org/scottish-championships/>)

W12 Lucy Ward

M18 Angus Ivory

M21E native Scott Fraser

W45 Mary Ross



LOCHABER - SCOTTISH SIX DAYS – William Ivory

It might have taken a while to dry out from Day 5 (Craig Dhubh), but hopefully everyone's memories are mostly of the rather better weather that we had for most of the week up until Thursday night! We had great views of Ben Nevis, Aonach Mor and the Grey Corries from our accommodation for most of the week, and managed to swim in Loch Lochy most days (highly recommended) as well as the Witches Pool (bumping into assorted Interlopers and others at both), and climb a Munro or two. Oh yes, and we also did some orienteering ...

Day 1 saw a long drive south to the north shores of Loch Etive at Ardchattan for the event Interlopers were organising and planning. It was a gloriously sunny day, and all appeared to run very smoothly thanks to Max's organising and Mike and Graham's excellent courses ensuring everyone was well exercised by the end. Thanks again to everyone in the club (and to those in TAY and CLYDE) who helped both on the day, and beforehand as well.

Day 2 was much closer to hand, being based at the Inverlochry golf course in Fort William, extending up to the northern slopes of Ben Nevis for the longer courses. Another great day, with participants enjoying socially distanced picnics alongside the run-in. Courses again were excellent, with a good mixture of fast running on the golf course, and more complex navigation on the hillside above.



Day 3 (Arisaig) was a rest day for most club members, though went well by all accounts despite the occasional passing shower. Some courses apparently started with a 2km long leg straight out of the start which came as a shock to some! There was even the chance to see the Jacobite steam train, either from the course, or at Glenfinnan on the way back to Fort William

Day 4 was also a rest day for most of us, but we got to experience the same area (Creag Dhubh) on Day 5, albeit in a rather damper state than the previous day's competitors. Courses ran along the 'uniform slopes' mentioned in the final details, and it certainly paid to know how far you'd gone, and to keep a very careful eye on whether you were dropping or gaining height. Longer courses went 'over the top' into Glen Banchor and then back round Creag Dhubh for some more contouring towards the finish. Heavy showers meant that everyone experienced the bracken at its wettest, but it was another good day out on the hills.

Day 6 was another rest day - a middle distance course for the 'other half' on the lower slopes of Creag Meagaidh.

[Individual day results](#) are available on the Scottish 6 Days website. Results below are for the overall competition, with everyone counting their 2 best results, no matter which day(s) they ran on. Those shown were in the top half of their class - well done!

- W12A - Lucy Ward (6=/15)
- W18L - Pippa Carcas (3=/13), Fiona Eades (6=/13)
- W18S - Leah Bartlett (3=/7)
- W40L - Claire Ward (2=/22)
- W45L - Mary Ross (3=/30)
- W50L - Heather Hartman (2=/41)
- W50S - Lorna Eades (1/31)
- W55L - Ann Haley (5/54)
- W55S - Jane Carcas (8/24)
- W60L - Morag McIntyre (16=/50)
- M12B - Matthew Hartman (1/6)
- M14A - Laurence Ward (2=/24)
- M16B - James Hartman (2=/19)
- M18L - Angus Ivory (14=/30)
- M20S - Joseph Bartlett (1/5)
- M21E - Ali Masson (13/58), Iain Embrey (14=/58), William Rigg (23/58)
- M35L - Peter Gardner (1/15)
- M45L - Ray Ward (6/43), William Ivory (12/43)
- M50L - Ben Hartman (15/59), Colin Eades (19/59)
- M55L - Rob Lee (19/95), Robin Galloway (33/95)
- M55S - Ian McIntyre (8=/40), Ken Daly (19/40)
- M60L - Graham McIntyre (35/75)



Credits: Lorna



SIX DAYS 2021 – Planning Day 1, Ardchattan – Graham McIntyre

Planning at a Six Day event is one of the best jobs in orienteering.

The event can afford to do things properly, starting from getting maps year in advance so you can know what the area will be like on race day. The event also has years of experience built into the technical manuals, meaning there is more help and advice available than at many other events.



Credit: Lorna

In many ways you get to know an area better as a planner than a race day competitor. The detailed work of testing legs and finalising control sites takes place through Autumn and Spring. The planner sees all legs and control sites.

I enjoyed working at Ardchattan - the heather turning purple with bees and the small black Scotch Argus butterflies in abundance on race day. Must say a word for the organising team who managed to work together in a very positive way through all the unique difficulties – thanks Brian, Max, Ross and Mike who all added quality to the event.

While it was disappointing not to catch up with old pals over a bowl of chili at Lochaber 2021, it was pleasing to see many good performances among the elite and junior classes. Reward and justification for the months of training that have been going on through these quiet times.

Another nice thing about this year's event was a more relaxed atmosphere with everyone seeming just thankful to be there – would like to see if that can be remembered and carried forward.

As an experience I would like to recommend planning for 6 day, it should be one of the most sought after roles, I believe it is one of the most rewarding.



SELECTIONS - INTs going marching on!

British Orienteering selections

The British Teams announcements for the 2021 Junior World Orienteering Championships & the 2021 European Youth Championships included W18 Pippa Carcas, and W20 Mairi Eades. Due to be held in, but sadly no travel for British Orienteers this time. Pippa was also selected to represent Great Britain in the 2021 European Youth Orienteering Championships, to be held in Vilnius, Lithuania, 20 – 22 August, 2021.

Congratulations to Mairi on being selected for **Euromeeeting**. This is being held in Switzerland over 25-26 September, with Switzerland also due to host the World University Championships in 2022 and the World Championships in forest disciplines in 2023. There is a Middle Distance Race on 25 September with a Long Distance on 26 September, both in Alpine terrain predominantly at over 2000m altitude. It's great that British Orienteering is offering international experience to some of our older junior athletes, particularly as they have missed out on the opportunity to gain such experience at the Junior World Championships in either 2020 or 2021, and as a result a number of M/W20 athletes originally named to the 2021 JWOC team are included in this team.

SHIs SELECTIONS

LOADS of INTs have been selected to represent Scotland for the Senior Home Internationals being held on the 4th and 5th September in Aberdeenshire:

W20: Mairi Eades

M21: James Ackland, Sasha Chepelin, Iain Embrey, Scott Fraser.

The relays are to be held on the Saturday at Balmedie – a complex area of sand dunes north of Aberdeen, and the individuals at Glen Tanar, near Aboyne on Deeside. Both events are to be Scottish Orienteering League events so will have quite a buzz about them. **GOOD LUCK ALL!**



EVENTS UPDATE – William Ivory (Events Coordinator)

Events are starting to feel a bit closer to normal, with small groups allowed (albeit keeping 1m distance or so), though it seems that we will be using hand gel for some time to come. Entries on the day are not yet allowed, which makes it easier to plan map numbers, but harder to encourage newer members. We're planning 2 autumn events:

- **Braidburn Valley Park, Saturday 2nd October:** Come-and-try-it-event with yellow and orange courses in the park, and a longer course that will extend into the surrounding area for a more 'urban' feel. There will also be an ESOA juniors' training beforehand for Yellows and Oranges. Courses will be planned by Paul Caban, and the organiser is Graham McIntyre
- **Livingston SOUL, Saturday 6th November:** urban event with a full range of courses in Livingston, planned by Iain Embrey, organised by Robin Galloway, and controlled by Bill Stevenson (ESOC)

Over the winter months, look out for EUOC's Fight with the Night (FWTN) fortnightly events, and possibly some **Winterlopes** as well. Then in February or March we intend to host an event at Gullane, either as a SOL or as the Scottish CSC Heats for next year. We should

then be back into a series of Come-and-try-It (CATI) events from March through to June, hopefully alternating between Edinburgh and West Lothian. As ever, if you would like to help plan or organise an event, please get in touch with William Ivory (events@interlopers.org.uk)



Interlopers Thursday Training – Graham McIntyre

We have had good turnouts at Thursday evening off road training since lock downs ended. They are an excellent opportunity to catch up and discuss events past or coming up, there are always knowledgeable and enthusiastic people arounds who enjoy nothing more than talk – O.

This is a good time for the Thursday evening off road training runs, we have been treated with several special sunsets over the last year or two.

We will be publishing a schedule for autumn into spring shortly and are looking for any new routes to add, probably something starting around Eskbank, any other suggestions?

Above all I would like to recommend these sessions as good sociable training.



Nippers' News – Katherine Ivory

Following on from the first race at Auchengarrich back in May, over 100 junior orienteers from across Scotland took part in the second round of the Scottish Junior Cup league at Tentsmuir on Sunday 30 August. This event was the East area contribution to the series, and huge thanks to all the volunteers who made it happen, especially planner Colin Eades (INT), organiser David Robertson (ESOC), controller Bill Stevenson (ESOC), and Keith Brown (ESOC) for the computing.

Results are available here - <https://scottish-orienteering.org/documents/results/sjc21/Tentsmuir/Results/> .

Combined results from the first 2 rounds of the Scottish Junior Cup league are also now available: there is some nail-bitingly close competition in some categories and everything to play for at the third event at Anagach on Sunday 18

September! <https://munroleagues.com/leagues/Scottish%20Junior%20Cup%202021>



Tentsmuir. Credit: Katherine

JUNIOR SELECTIONS

This autumn will see the UK-level juniors' competitions once again and the Scottish Squad for the Junior Home International (JHIs) and the Junior Inter-Regional Competition (JIRC) has just been announced (<https://www.scottish-orienteering.org/news/junior-selections-announced/#more-27965>) . Congratulations to the following:

JIRCs, 25th/26th September at South Gare, Redcar:

M14s Laurence Ward

W18: Pippa Carcas, Fiona Eades

JHIs, on 9th/10th October in the Guildford area.

M14: Laurence Ward (INT)

W18: Pippa Carcas (INT), Fiona Eades (INT)

M18: Angus Ivory (INT)



COASTS & ISLANDS – Robin Galloway

A West Coast Adventure - 25-30 July

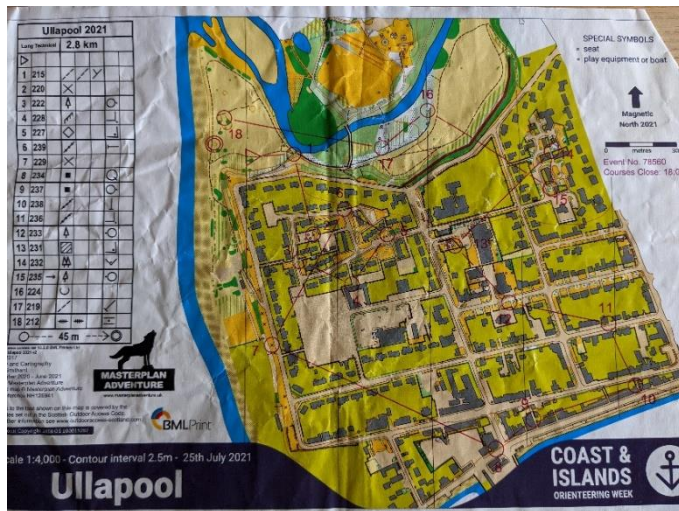
After 18 months of very limited orienteering opportunities, Coasts and Islands promised much. Great looking new areas, lovely part of the world, back-to-back with the Scottish Six Day, relaxed approach, sounded like fun. And it was. Blessed with great weather, fantastic scenery and more orienteering challenge than we had expected

Day 1 - Ullapool

The warm-up event was in Ullapool. A town built largely by Thomas Telford in an early grid layout with the sole intent of creating an urban orienteering area for future use. Meandering tourists, enjoying the sunshine, watched with some amusement while competitors paced around the course with starts from late afternoon.

Some strong early performances by the Interloper contingent, though I did chat at the end to a slightly disappointed Graeme McIntyre who unfortunately had left his dibber at the campsite, and the Wards were late arrivals due to an unscheduled visit to the Sick Kids in Edinburgh before they could set off. Fortunately Bertie was ok and the other Ward juniors got their runs.

Straight after the event Lucy and I went for a short run up the hill behind the town to make the most of the sunshine. Gorgeous views with Ullapool in the background.



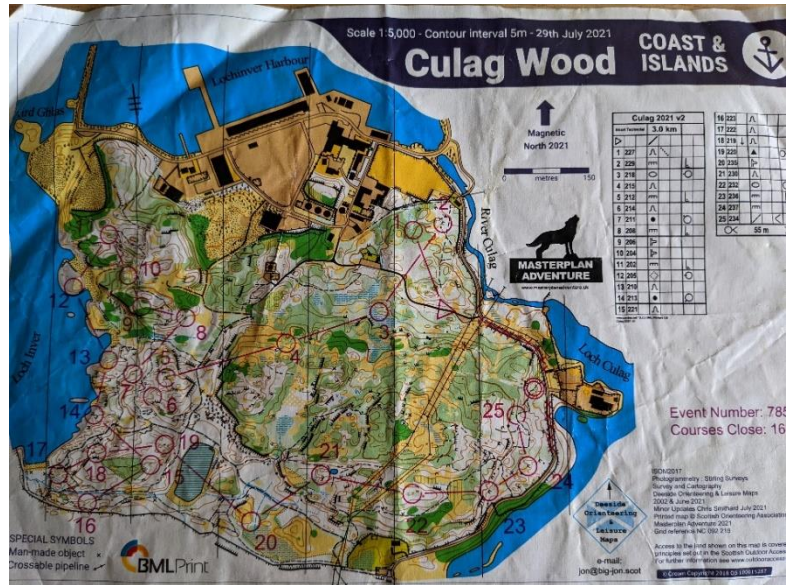
Day 2 - Lochinver

Day 2 was an area north of Ullapool at Culag Forest – Lochinver. The scenic drive there took us past Stac Pollaidh, though low cloud that day made it less appealing as a potential post-race activity.

Culag forest looked fairly harmless. Yes, a bit green, but not a very large area, and always good to see a few telegraph lines here and there as navigational aides! The map at the start looked promising, with a fair amount of white, and even some yellow, so certainly nothing to set off any alarm bells. On the ground however, things looked rather different. It probably says something about my orienteering skills, but I didn't find much white or even light green on the ground. I did find dark green, and possibly some black. Most of my run is a bit of a blur. I can

remember doing the breast stroke through some impenetrable thickets, eyes shut, no choice but to press forward, head down. It was some of the toughest orienteering I can recall. Reassuringly others had similar tales, the overall winning time was about 10 mins slower than was estimated. I was relieved to just finish. Good fun though. Sort of.

After that experience, refreshment was badly needed and came in the form of a lovely swim in a river pool spotted by Max on route to our next overnight destination – Poolewe. But I found out later that ticks don't come off at all while swimming.



Day 3 - Inverewe

Our start times on Day 3 were late afternoon, so we had a day to fill. In the morning Lucy and I cycled up the west side of Loch Ewe to the headland guarded by old WW2 gun emplacements. In 1942, the Arctic Convoy fleet was based in Loch Ewe and made several treacherous voyages north, decks covered with thick ice, braving storms and Luftwaffe attacks past Norway and Svalbard to ports at Archangel and Murmansk with food and equipment to support the Russian war effort. There was a memorial on the headland and an interesting museum on the east side of the Loch.



The orienteering was fun – an area adjacent to Inverewe gardens. Some good fast open terrain, combined with the denser vegetation we were coming to expect. The mantra was to stick to the paths as much as possible! I managed to pick up even more tick passengers on the way. The daily search, tweezers in hand, by then had become a post-race ritual through the week (buyers' tip: never buy tick specific tweezers, they are rubbish for the small ones. Get those card things instead).



After a second comfortable night in Poolewe hotel, we continued our journey south snaking towards Day 4 and Shildaig where, for the first time, the clouds were low, there was a heavy rain which later became steady drizzle and the midges were bountiful and hungry...

Day 4 Shildaig

I liked Shildaig from control 3 onwards. The area is open, tussocky, with pointy hills and rocks, lots of them – some very big. I was a bit random on the first two controls and had to give myself a talking to ‘Caban style’ but improved after that. I did get some assistance on the 5th control – Crag North side - when a helpful Claire Ward, who happened to be cycling to the start on the nearby road shouted, pointing, ‘Hey Robin, it’s over there!’. I looked across, and so it was! From then on, all was fine.

Our runs had been very early that morning, so after a quick refreshment in a café, I decided to take the opportunity to do the Beallach climb to Applecross. Lucy and Jane drove ahead and I laboured over the hill on my bike, regretting a little my impulsiveness and the squidgy salmon sandwich I had hastily stuffed in my back pocket as my only fuel. The ascent is long and steep but amazing views of the col. The descent to Applecross was in squally rain, then after some excellent Rocky Road, we were off to our next stop at Kyle of Lochalsh. We had dinner in Plockton at a great little restaurant and a lovely stroll afterwards, taking advantage of the low tide, out to the little island in the bay. Very picturesque. Little did we realise how that mellow, holiday feeling was about to be shattered the next day by the orienteering in The Plock, a name that will live in infamy. And boy, did that area have it in for me....





Day 5 - Kyle of Lochalsh – aka The Plock

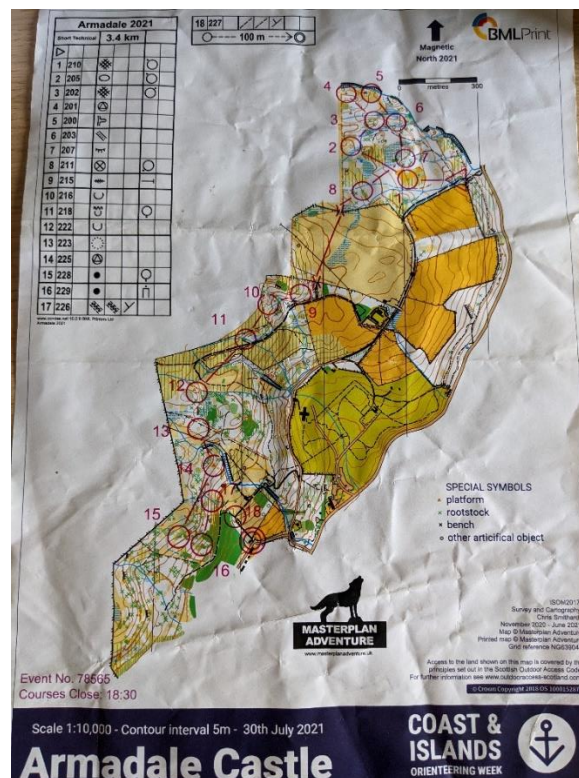
Kyle of Lochalsh is situated at the north end of the Skye Bridge, the major part of the map is the Plock, a community woodland. Sounded innocent enough. However, it is a wolf in sheep's clothing – dense vegetation, slippery crags, high bracken, sneaky paths ... or are they trods ... no, must be a path ... hang on ... which way is north again ... ?! Enough said, you get the picture. I finished well behind my arch rivals. Curses! Suitably humbled, it was time to slink back to our comfortable B&B and gather our strength for Armadale. Surely, that area would be an easy fast run, there must be at least one in the week to let me end on a high. I was looking forward to it.



Day 6 Armadale – the final insult.

Armadale Castle had some nice toilets. They used to be the Stable Block, but in fact the building was more like a small stately home. The blue skies were back and the sun softened slightly the memory of the Plock. The area at Armadale, at least the first half of it, was nice runnable forest, widely spaced trees – after that everything went dark, with steep hillside, thick rhododendrons and a plethora of tree stumps that were well mapped apparently (though I didn't realise that until after I had finished) – all quite tricky for the less alert orienteer. I did enjoy the course, though I also mis-read the map and ended up at the finish 5 controls too

early. Zut alors. Either I go back around the last lot, or I take advantage of an early finish, and short cake queue. Hobson's choice really, I felt I had already had my money's worth.



Lucy's course at Armadale

And so ended our inaugural Coasts and Islands experience. Fantastic holiday, great travel companions, interesting areas, amazing scenery, views to die for. I would highly recommend it – the simple, low maintenance approach worked really well and made for a low stress, engaging holiday. I can't finish without recognising the work of the remarkable Chris Smithard who, single-handedly, seemed to do everything, everywhere, every day. Huge kudos to him! More next year please.

Coast & Islands - PAUL CABAN

There were a handful of Interlopers at C&I: Galloways, Carcases, McIntyres, Wards and myself amongst ~200 people, the week before the SixDays. It was billed as a 'bare-bones' week of orienteering, and featured top-notch planning, but none of the frills (which even included car parking on one of the days). I was sold by the fact that all six of the areas were new to me – in fact, five seemed to have been mapped especially for the week – and that the courses were 'middle-distance' in length. When I entered, what I hadn't really thought about was that accommodation would be tricky, and that it was going to be a couple of hundred miles drive between the most distant of the two areas. Have tent, will travel ("it'll be fine").

Day 1 – Ullapool – (mostly) urban - So my orienteering exposure over the last twelve months had been golf courses, sprintelopes in forgiving areas, and an event in Speyside, of which the less said the better about my performance. An urban area in Ullapool was going to be a nice reintroduction, I thought ... It didn't start well when I couldn't even find the start - ho hum - and I was a little rusty on the roads, before messing up big time on the two controls

in terrain. Ho hum indeed. Went swimming in the sea afterwards, followed by a run on the moors above the village.

Day 2 – Lochinver – billed as the roughest of the days ... - Pick up the map, head straight into the green, wander around aimlessly before coming out the other side, turn round and head back in. I'd been ~5m away but didn't see it. Sigh. Controls 2 and 3 OK, but then have to crawl out of the control 4, which got me very disorientated, and like a lot of people, instead of hitting some enormous crags with a path in front of them, I hit a different row of crags (without a path) around sixty degrees off line. Deeper sigh. There were a couple more hard legs, which I fluked, before we ended up in some gorgeous coastal pine forest. >90 minutes. Good job it was a middle.



“Oops....” Paul’s blunder at Day2

Day 3 – Inverewe – An early evening event, so time for some bagging and tourism at the NTS Gardens. Mostly open and would have been a whole lot harder in the mist. Even so, I was out for almost 90 minutes again. Maybe the ‘Marilyn’ hadn’t been a good idea. Very, very midge-y at the finish too, but fortunately a front was coming in to drown the little blighters.

Day 4 – Sheildaig –Billed as the nicest terrain. And also the day with no parking (find somewhere along the road and walk/cycle/bitch) – Completely open area, and absolutely tremendous. Leg1 was a go straight across terrain/go around the outside, and having chosen the latter, I of course had no idea where I was. But things improved, and I was only (only!) out for ~70 minutes.

Day 5 – Kyle of Lochalsh – We were expecting to be entirely in the terrain, but fortunately that wasn’t the case. The bracken was up, big time, and with one of the first starts, getting to a path junction to be met by a head-high wall of the stuff where the path should have been, wasn’t encouraging. Fortunately, it was only like that for the first handful of controls (and nothing that a B52 with full tanks of Agent Orange couldn’t have fixed) - tactic: stay on the paths as much as possible - and then after half-way, the race turned into a full-fledged ‘urban’. My lesson learned was that there’s much more to Kyle than is seen from the A87. I’d also parked on Skye, and had a very pleasant warm-up crossing the bridge.

Day 6 – Armadale, Skye – What a little gem saved for the end. An area of two halves. First of all some fantastic open woods that wouldn't have been out of place in Scandinavia. And then a slope that we crossed at various heights, desperately trying – and, in my case, failing – to maintain altitude. For me, this was the best day because of the early terrain, and then the challenge. Plus there was a castle and café for afterwards.

As an orienteering holiday, it was fantastic, even with the necessity to move accommodation every couple of days. There's talk of something similar on Arran next year, when I must investigate campervans more seriously. All credit to Chris Smithard, though, as he not only planned and put out controls each day, and then was in charge of assembly/download, but he'd mapped and done most of the organisation too. Respect.



OTHER INTERESTING THINGS INTERLOPERS HAVE GOT UP TO THIS SUMMER ...

Campervanning 101: A Beginners Guide – Graham Haley

Having just bought one and used it a few times up to and including the 6-day, we thought we'd share some information about them (actually we were asked!). We are definitely in the beginners category though so apologies to more experienced campervan users. Perhaps they could share some tips?

First of all campervans are not motorhomes. Motorhomes tend to be bigger (5-7 metres or more!). They are well kitted out and are much more designed with comfort in mind (separate sleeping areas, kitchen, shower, toilet, lots of storage ... etc). Their drawback is they are more challenging to drive and park.

Chris and Pippa have a really nice (new to them) motorhome at the smaller end of the scale (a good compromise). The person next to us on the event campsite (the one who provided the kettle at the social) had an enormous motorhome. She drove up from Devon (on her own) and hired a car to tour round for the week!

Campervans are much more basic, and are essentially regular vans, then converted (sometimes by the manufacturer, like the VW California). Probably the most popular base van is the VW Transporter, but Ford Transits and other van types are also common. We opted for a Transporter.

They come in two sizes, short or long wheel base (40cm difference). Since there are just two of us, we thought SWB was big enough. It is about 30cm longer than our car so is easy enough to drive and park.

At the back you can either get a tailgate or double (barn) doors. Vans with barn doors are much easier to source (apparently) but we held out for a tailgate (better for bikes and it's a shelter in the rain).

Because there is very high demand for campervans, second hand vehicles can cost almost as much as new ones, and even old vans command high prices. The conversion company we chose (Thistle Campers at Dregghorn) happened to have a new van on order, so we just went for that. Production delays at VW, 3 weeks to get to the UK then a 4 week conversion meant we got it just 2 weeks before the 6 day!

In terms of spec, it has a pop top roof with a thin memory foam mattress sleeping 2, rear seats that go flat sleeping another 2, rotating front seats, dual burner gas hob, sink and tap with a 21L water tank, top loading fridge, diesel heater/fan, 2 tables, LED lighting, shower attachment in the rear (cold water but good for bikes), blackout blinds/curtains, plenty of 12V and USB charging points, plus lots of storage ... etc.

Other conversion companies like Jerba offer some different layouts, like dual single beds and a rear galley kitchen. The bigger the van the more options there are. We were happy with the standard mid-kitchen / bed at the back layout.

There seem to be two types of rear seat. Both fold flat into a bed, but on one type ("rock and roll") you sleep on the side you sit on, whereas our "RIB" bed you sleep on the flatter reverse side. It is quite firm though, so upstairs is more comfortable with its mattress!



While we have gas for cooking, it is possible to get a diesel powered hob. This runs off the diesel in your van and does away with the need for a gas bottle. They are quite expensive and slower to work, but they save space. Our gas bottle was ordered online (£45 for the bottle and gas, refills are cheaper).

At a campsite or at home, you can plug the van in to charge the 2nd (leisure) battery. This also happens as you drive. It holds enough charge to power the fridge, lights, fan ... etc for a good few days usage, plus any driving tops it up. The water tank was more than enough for a 3 day weekend, so going off grid is easy enough.

The van came with a 10m electric hookup cable, home charging adapter, shower attachment and windscreen thermal/blackout cover. We have added a hose pipe and fittings to fill the water tank, a step to make it easier to get back into the van after doing a hill(!), collapsible bucket to collect the sink waste, bungee cords for hanging things a portable (chemical) toilet and a Thule bike rack.

In terms of day-to-day usage, we are really enjoying it. As space is limited, we find that we are constantly moving things around depending on what we need. This is where the bigger vehicles and motorhomes are perhaps more practical.

We are looking forward to plenty more trips in the months and years ahead!



Bristol to Beijing / Butterfly World to Belhaven – Jane Ackland

In the early summer, I received an email from my good friend Jenny, challenging me to plan something B2Bish. Jenny's younger son Luke is currently just over half way through his own hugely ambitious B2B challenge. He has, since 1st Jan 2020, been making his way from his hometown of Bristol on a pink and blue tandem called Chris, towing a trailer full of camping gear, oatcakes and spare parts, and (I think) his saxophone but not his bagpipes. The destination is Beijing, and he has done pretty well so far, given that Covid has conspired against him and his potential stokers. His hope had been that the rear saddle of Chris would be occupied by a series of other young people, who, like him, were living in the aftermath of cancer diagnoses. He has had plenty of takers, but the closure of borders, lack of flights and general uncertainty regarding travel hasn't made it easy. Undaunted, he has made the best of it, and his website and blogs are recommended reading.

My perspective is as a doctor/ mother, as is the case for Jenny, who back in the spring of 2018 had an early experience of telemedicine that she could have done without. Luke, on a post-university gap year in Siberia, whatsapped her a picture of his shoulder, which didn't look at all right. In medical school, we are taught that common things are common, and we should think 'horse' rather than 'zebra'. However, Luke's shoulder was a zebra. The outlook was bleak. Luke has weathered the full works of chemo, radiotherapy and surgery, and has regained a lot of his pre-treatment fitness – he is a triathlete from the very successful Durham Uni stables.

So... the Interlopers B2B challenge. On 17th July, the sun shone, and 13 of us headed out on 12 bikes (yes, the Carcasses brought their tandem) from Butterfly World, aiming for Belhaven Bay, with the lure of a swim and ice cream on the beach. Thank you so much to everyone who came along: Graeme, Claire, Katherine and William, Jamie and Joanne (Thin), Robin and Lucy, Graham and Mo, Jane and Max, especially those who were under time pressure and had to squeeze the expedition between other fixtures.



Of course there were maps to be had, with some checkpoints for regrouping and refreshment. This allowed a bit of route choice, and a chance to show off gears and/or offroad tyres. Everyone spurned the option of public transport back to Edinburgh, and braved the headwind on the return journey such that we each clocked up a 67 mile (100km) round trip. Not bad!

If anyone fancies a similar expedition, I'm hankering after a cycling/swimming trip to Gladhouse reservoir.



At the start at Butterfly World / Survivors at the end at Belhaven

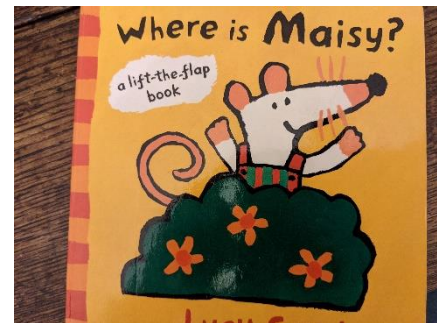


TALES FROM SQUIRREL TOWERS – JANE ACKLAND

Once upon a time in days of yore, there was a small boy whose parents indulged him with cheerful lift the flappy books about a mouse called Maisy. The plot lines were not overly challenging, and it was not long before the parents tired of Maisy's tedious little antics, and did that thing that parents do, of embellishing the stories.

It so happened that this period of the small boy's life coincided with a lovely trip orienteering in Wyoming and Alberta; truly lovely for him as Laramie (in Wyoming) is a major train junction where freight trains with well over a hundred carriages trundle by. His numeracy skills rocketed, as did those of the obliging Caban, who had joined us on the trip and seemed to enjoy counting wagons alongside the boy.

The Maisy books featured a squirrel called Cyril, and a chicken called Talullah, and in the embellished stories Cyril owned a Ryanairesque airline called Squirrelair, while Tallullah and her mates had a rival company; Dippy Chicken Airlines. At the Chicken checkin, avian eyelashes fluttered and terrible mistakes with luggage were made, while at Squirrelair, Cyril was busy being tight-fisted, dastardly, and calculating, putting his passengers at risk in his malfunctioning fleet. Unbeknownst to Caban, possibly even to this day, in the telling of the stories, Cyril the squirrel had a Caban-like voice (but obviously not the same personality), to the extent that in our house, Caban is still fondly referred to as Cyril.



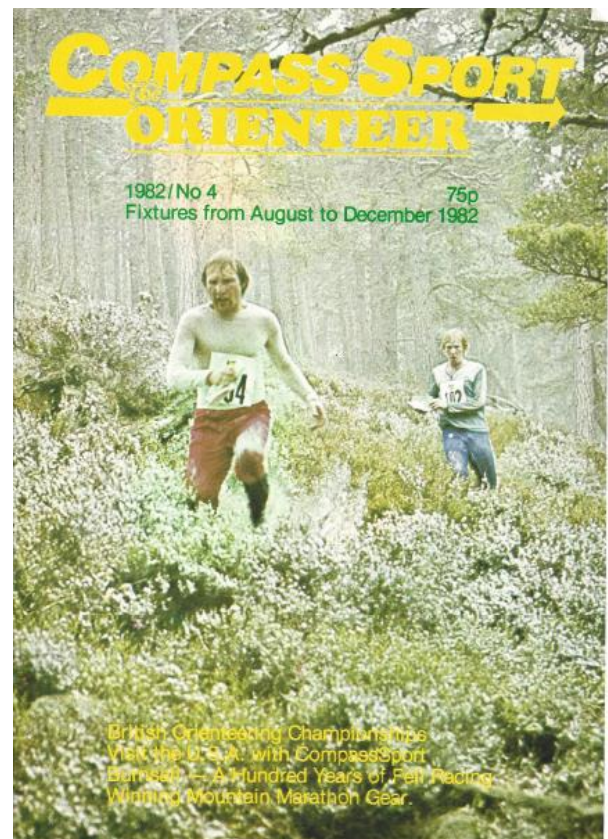
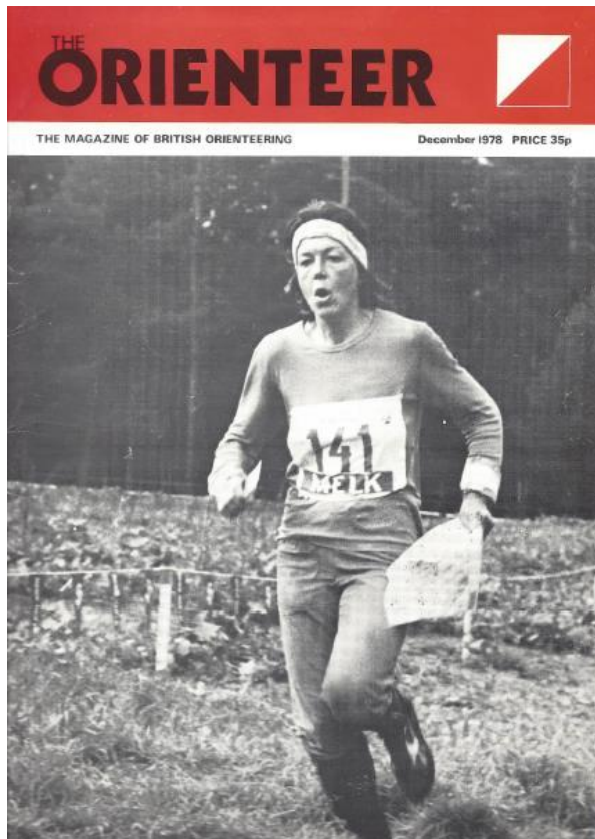
Anyway, just today, Graeme and I were cycling up Comiston Rd when I suggested that we call on Cyril at "Squirrel Towers" to see if he would like to join us, given that he is a recent convert to road cycling. Unfortunately, he had other plans, but it did have me thinking about the Impending Doom that may soon trouble our orienteering club. As you will be aware, much of the Squirrel Towers estate is kindly set aside for the storage of the club kit -trestles, kites, tents, picnic tables, information boards; bulky items for a squirrel needing to hoard his nuts and Rice Krispies. And here's my concern. Cyril has in recent years become a hoarder. You may be aware that during lockdown, he has taken the plunge into open water swimming, and is now equipped with copious rubber and inflatable fluorescence. Just this last week, he has put in an order for a bike, which will of course be sleek and space-efficient. But what about the shoes, shorts, maillots, helmets, drinks bottles, turbo trainer, Zwift set-up and more?

For the mathematicians amongst you, there must be an equation that describes the finite space chez Cyril, and the rate of accumulation of swimming and cycling related stuff, taking into account fluorescence and rubber volume (wet and dry) and lycra elasticity. There will be an R number beyond which something will have to give, and the club kit will be out on the street.



FROM THE ARCHIVE

John Barrow has been clearing out a load of old stuff and came across a photo of our Hon. President on the front of The Orienteer, in December 1978. This is Carol McNeill, coming 12th at the World Champs in Norway that September (the best placing by a British woman to date). Credited to Tony Thornley.



At the Scottish Relays. Graham is listed as being a member of EUOC, while Rob B. represented AIRE. Credited to Bruce Bryant.



GECOOT: BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!



Had they or hadn't they dibbed it?

Club Committee, as of the AGM on 24 September 2020

Chairman – Colin Eades
Secretary – John Barrow
Treasurer – Robin Galloway
Social Secretary – Jane Carcas, assisted by Lorna Eades
Communications – Katherine Ivory
Club Captain – Rob Lee
Junior member – Angus Ivory
Ordinary member: Ali Masson
Events coordinator – William Ivory
Child Protection Officer – Lucy Galloway (co-opted)
Equipment officer – Paul Caban (co-opted)
Webmaster – Graham McIntyre (co-opted)



For full details on club management, training, forthcoming events etc, see www.interlopers.org.uk. Enquiries to info@interlopers.org.uk.

Newsletter archive (from 1972!) available here - <https://interlopers.org.uk/membership/newsletters>.

