



BKO Newsletter

Winter 2024



Berkshire Orienteers
The Orienteering Club for Berkshire and Surrounding Areas

BKO NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024

Apologies, it's been a few more months than I would have like between issues – boring things like work getting in the way!

But it does mean we've got plenty to report back about in this issue, including the British TrailO champs hosted by BKO, articles from BKO members from further afield, event news from the last few months and a look ahead to 2025.

If you do go to any of the big events do drop me a picture / selfie and a line or two (or more) as it's always interesting to read about these events and other BKOers escapades, and see yourself in the newsletter!

See you out there

Rob Mullens



At the Windsor event August 2024

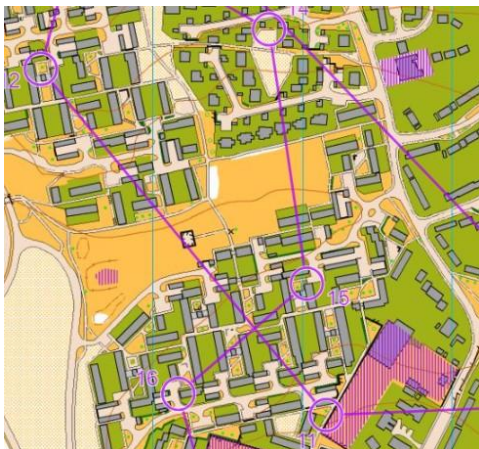
BKO EVENTS

BKO Summer Parks

SATURDAY 8th June 2024 – Wildridings, Bracknell

SATURDAY 17th August 2024 - Windsor

Our summer series of urban running started off in Wildridings and Easthampstead in Bracknell.



Lots of intricate alleys and paths interspersed with open areas always presents a really good urban challenge here, and with some long legs to really test you over a distance this was a great urban run planned by Stefan and Organised by Peter!

Check out the full courses and results - [2024-06-08 Wildridings Saturday Parks](#)

Unfortunately, our Club Picnic at Jennings park in Bracknell had to be cancelled, so our next outing was a slightly different urban challenge around Windsor in high summer with lots of tourists about!



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Windsor presented several intriguing areas, and some interesting discussion, with its various road, rail and river bridges and multi-

level crossing points, all with the castle as a fantastic back drop!



What do you make of the rail bridge arches here?

From Organiser Mark Foxwell – “Thank you to Stefan Stasiuk for his planning on a tricky area working around the tourists and the changing of the guard!

The challenges for organising were different from most of our Saturday morning events, for example we couldn't provide parking on site; but there were benefits such as having an event easily accessible by public transport and the start finish and assembly in close proximity.

Finally, thank you to all those from BKO who pulled together to help make things run smoothly on the day and to Stefan and Katy Stubbs for updating the map.”

Visit the BKO Routegadget to see what route choices other runners made, especially around the arches and the under level of the shopping district!

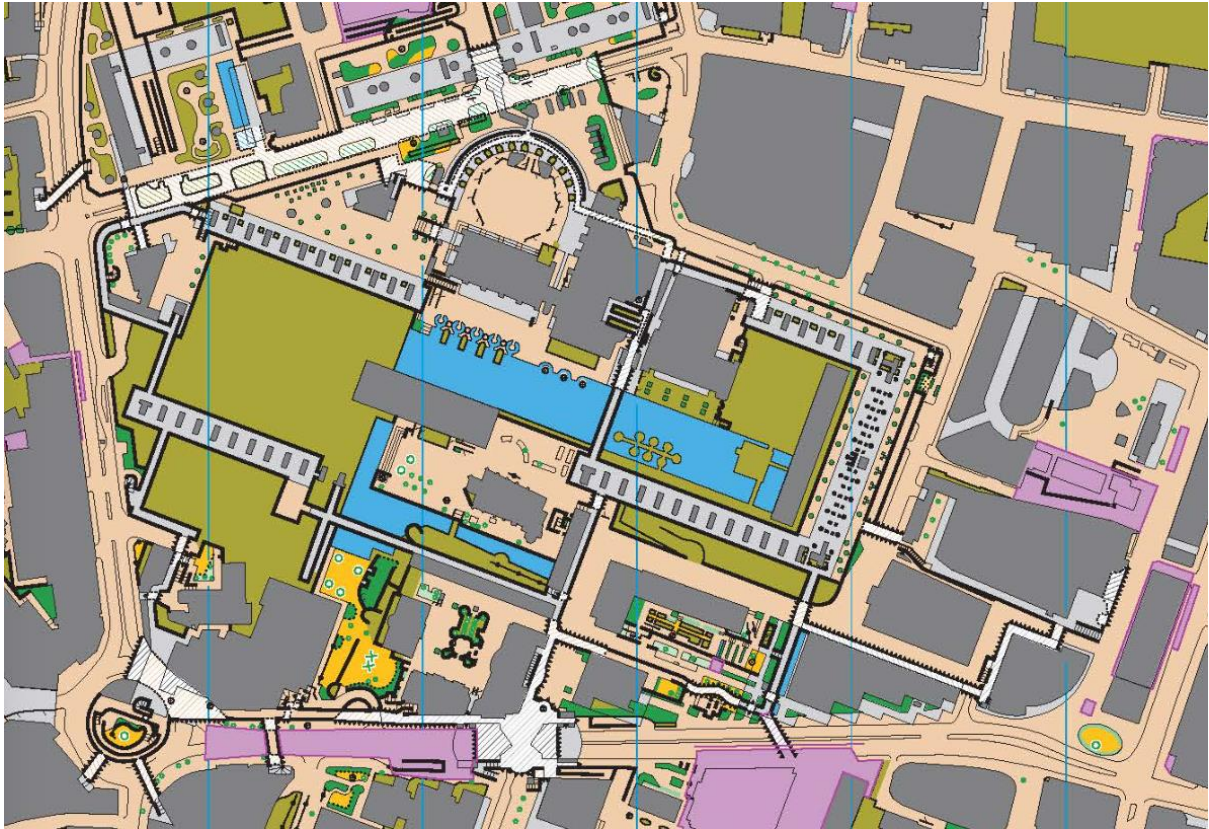
[2024-08-17 Windsor summer series](#)

THE London City Race 2024 – Barbican

Saturday 14th September 2024

A clear, sunny, yet slightly cool morning made for a good day for the main London City Race at the Barbican. I had never been inside the Barbican at all myself – despite working next to it for a time a few years ago – and seeing inside and around it for the first time found it a very interesting, if somewhat frustrating, arena for orienteering, and with hindsight I'm actually looking forward to testing myself here again, hopefully sometime soon!





THE BARBICAN!

Team BKO were well represented with 19 of us tackling the multi-level, pedestrian filled mix of leisure facilities, accommodation blocks and old narrow passages, and if you took a wrong turn like I did, a multi storey car park and what looked like a cinema lobby too!

Despite no Berkshire podiums, some issues with access and crowded streets (and unfortunately a few complaints from members of the public) this was a really good event in the heart of London, with multi-level madness and a pub 200m from the finish to “discuss” the length and complexity of the courses!



This was followed on the Sunday by an “Ultrasprint” Event – report from Nigel Hoults.

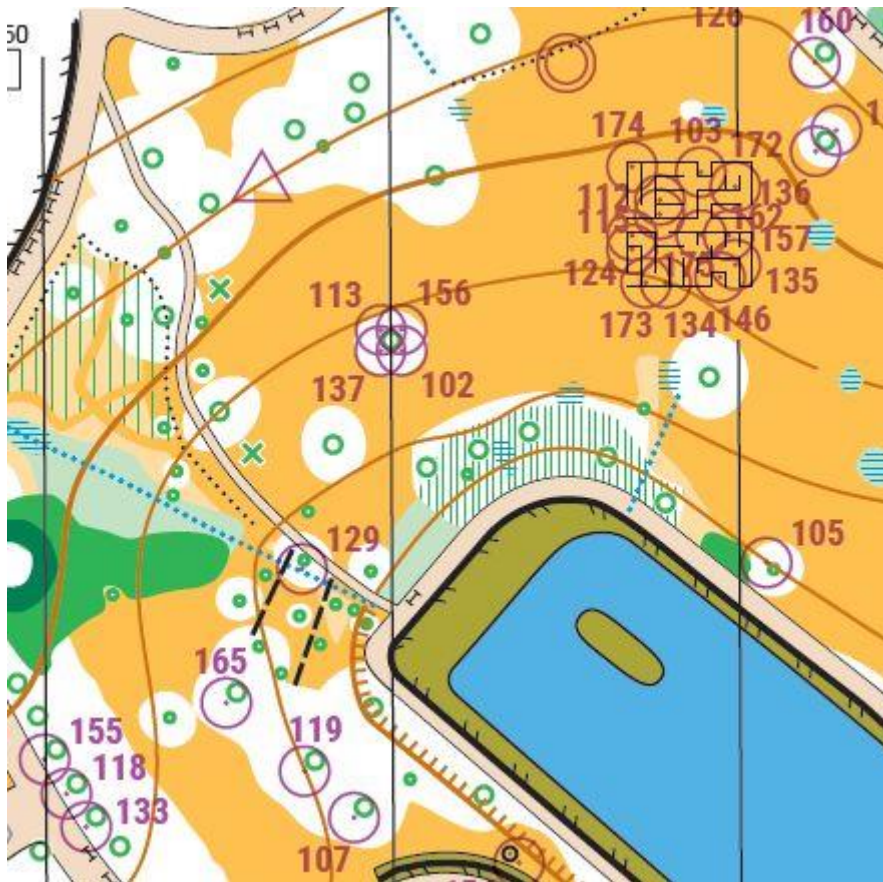


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London Ultrasprint

The day after the London City Race, which attracted 19 BKO members, LOK put on a Ultrasprint event in which only two of us – Terry Hosking and myself – took part. This is a shame, as it was a really fun event – maybe the title put people off? “Ultrasprint” doesn’t mean you have to run like Usain Bolt as most people were running at the same sort of pace as in a typical urban event; it’s more a reference to the distances involved. The courses were just over 1km in length for everyone.

The event had some other differences from normal orienteering as well. First of all, you had to use just a map and compass. Isn’t that always the case, I hear you say; well, no, normally you get control descriptions (or at least control codes) as well! The concept is that the map is at a large scale (1:1250) and there is a dot in the centre of the control circle identifying the precise location so you can clearly identify the right control (in theory!) without them. Here’s a sample of the “all controls” map for the prologues; the vertical lines are 50m apart.



The courses included a maze (top right above) for which a 1:625 enlargement was provided, and this was very helpful as even at 1:1250 it was hard to make out. There were also controls very close together – in one case (113, 156, 137 and 102 above) on four sides of the same tree – so you had to be careful how you oriented the map. There were controls on adjacent trees too, so you had to count as well!





The format was that everyone ran three “prologue” courses in any order. Apart from there being separate courses for men and women to spread out the load, the courses were the same from M10 to W90, except that the youngest juniors did get control descriptions. Each course had 25 or so controls, and missing one just gave you a 30s penalty rather than disqualification. The times for the three courses were added, and the fastest four in each age category took part in a final with butterfly loops, each on a different gaffle. After that, everyone else got the chance to run exactly the same finals courses.

With three starts every 30s in the prologues and four every 15s in the mass final, there were people running in all directions, which made it great for spectating as well. How many controls (including the finish) can you see in this photo?





I managed the three prologue courses with only one incorrect control (the adjacent tree to the one I wanted and the wrong side as well – I was careless), finishing just below halfway amongst the supervets (M55+) as there was no separate ultravet category.

The final was my best run, even though I did get a bit confused around the butterfly controls, and I ended up 17th out of 42 on the gaffle I ran (numbers were lower for the finals as several people didn't stay around).

I recommend giving this a try the next time you get the opportunity, which isn't very often unfortunately; the last one was in 2017.

Nigel Hault

2024 British TrailO Championships Come to Berkshire

The British TrailO Championships 2024 were staged by Berkshire Orienteers with both a PreO Championship and a TempO Championship on Saturday 12th October (PreO at Burnham Beeches), and Sunday 13th October (TempO at the University of Reading). In addition to the two main Championship events, there was also a PreO Sprint competition on Sunday.

The event was co-ordinated by David Jukes (BKO) and the planners were Tom Dobra (TVOC) (PreO), Charles Bromley Gardner (BAOC) (TempO) and David Jukes (PreO Sprint).

Congratulations to the winners:

- PreO Open Champion: **Ben Kyd** (MDOC)
- PreO P Class Champion: **Richard Keighley** (WIM)
- PreO Junior Champion: **James Curtis** (SO)
- TempO Open Champion: **Ben Kyd** (MDOC)
- TempO Junior Champion: **James Curtis** (SO)
- Overall British Champion: **Ben Kyd** (MDOC)
- Overall P Class Champion: **Colin Duckworth** (TVOC)
- Overall Junior Champion: **James Curtis** (SO)



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BTOC PreO Event - Burnham Beches

PreO Planner's Musings - Tom Dobra

One of the most unusual things about planning this year's BTOC PreO is that I never saw my courses in low light until competition day. Usually it's the sun coming out that suddenly makes a few controls much harder than anticipated. Kudos to David for arranging a deluge to coincide with the start window. The net result was that the visibility was not as good as I would have liked for some of the longer-range controls. Nonetheless, the top of the field was dominated by familiar names, so there can't have been too much luck involved.

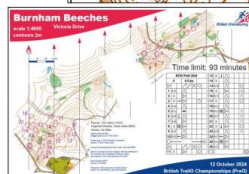
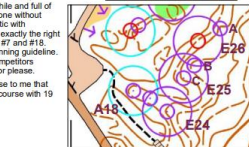
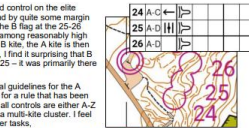
Control 26 was the most poorly answered control on the elite course, despite being the largest zero and by quite some margin at 12m. I had very generously provided the B flag at the 25-26 cluster to show the top of the large spur among reasonably high underground. Once you've looked in the B kite, the A kite is then too high and too far to the left. Moreover, I find it surprising that B was more popular than the correct C for 25 - it was primarily there to help, not to be a decoy!

As far as I can tell, there are few technical guidelines for the A course. Having run it past David, I looked for a rule that has been used in a few other recent competitions: all controls are either A-Z or one kite is guaranteed to be correct if a multi-kite cluster. I feel this creates a mixture of easier and harder tasks, thereby ensuring the A course is worthwhile and full of map reading (as TrailO should be). All done without overwhelming those who are less pedantic with questions like whether the best kite is at exactly the right position along a re-entrant or spur - see #7 and #18. Easier areas may warrant a different planning guideline. I'd be interested to hear what A class competitors thought of my course. Letters to the editor please.

Returning to the elite, it's a great surprise to me that control 5 was the best answered on the course with 19



A Course, Controls 6 and 7
Control 6 was an A/Z problem. Control 7 was a cluster with 3 controls up a re-entrant; in this case, zero was not an option. For Control 18, also mentioned by Tom, see the other map (above, right).



BKO hosted the weekend and many members helped out on one or both of the days – a massive thank you to you as none of this is possible without volunteers!

This was the first time I had experienced TrailO, having read a fair bit about it in David's newsletters, and having seen it up close now - I was helping man one of the stations during the PreO on the Sunday - I can really appreciate the talents and skills of the participants, as well as the dedication of the organisers and planners in putting on a very well run event!

A really good look at the weekend, and the wider TrailO world, can be found in the TrailO newsletter from our own David Jukes on the British Orienteering website - [TrailO - Newsletters](#)

From Two Legs to Four...

From FootO, to TrailO, to... something a little different that I hadn't known of until recently. Our own Eleanor Prescott took part in the TREC World Championships in Holland in September...

“At the start of September I took part in the TREC Young Rider World Championship in the Netherlands. TREC is a two-day equestrian sport that includes an orienteering section on the first day and a cross country course and control of paces section on the second. In this article I will go through the orienteering section and how similar and different it is from foot orienteering.

First, the distances and terrain. As a Young Rider (age range of 16-21), my route could be up to 35 km long. Whilst I have been sent off of tracks or on overgrown tracks in the UK, in the Netherlands we were told that we would always be on tracks due to much of our route going through a conservation area with bison, tauris and wild ponies. Meanwhile the Senior riders could be riding up to 45 km. The area we were riding in (Maashorst) was very flat forest with predominantly sand tracks. When we first visited the venue earlier this year we expected the flatness of the area to make navigation easier, but what we found was that contour features on the ground and on the map didn't match up and that the flatness made every path look the same.

Instead of riding between points for the whole of the course, like you would in foot orienteering, we are sent along a set route, which we copy onto our own map 20 minutes before our start time. In addition, the fastest rider is not always the highest scorer: we are given speeds to ride each section at, and the most accurate has the least penalties.

Starting with 240 points, every minute fast or slow loses you a point, and if you enter a check-point wrong or miss a ticket (equivalent of a control), you lose 30 points. When we start the route, we don't know where any of the check-points or tickets are, so we can't go back if we miss one. It also means that we must be riding at our set speed the whole time, otherwise the penalties can stack up quickly.



The most popular way of calculating your speed is by marking down kilometre distances on your map, then comparing the time on your stopwatch with cards that have times for each speed and distance on them (eg. if you've done 2 kilometres at 7.5 kmph, your card will tell you that you should have been riding for 16 minutes). The route in the Netherlands was particularly difficult to draw, so we had less time to draw our kilometres on as well.



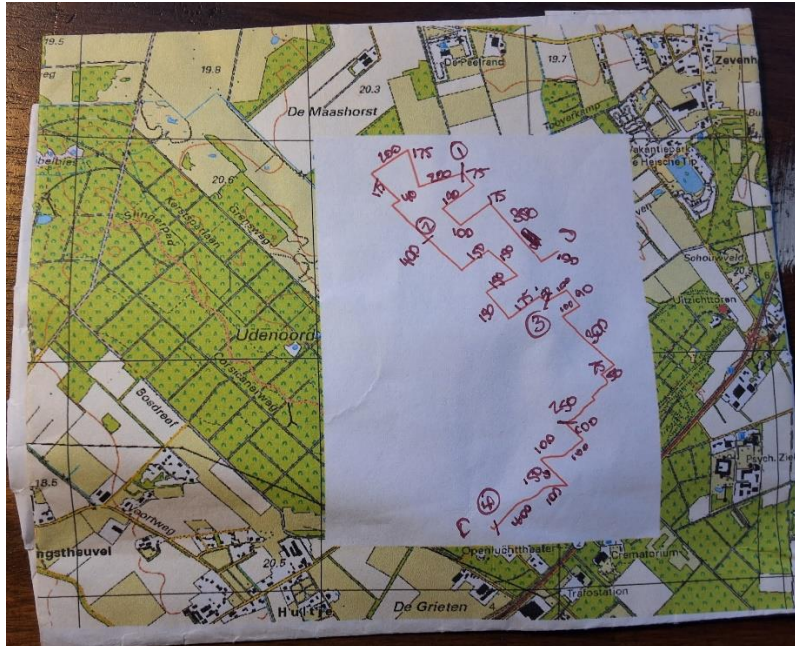
I was able to finish drawing them on at the first check-point, since there was a build-up in competitors and I was held for 20 minutes, but many of the Senior riders didn't have as much time and were running out kilometre markers part way round. There is of course the additional difficulty of needing your horse to stand still as you finish drawing your kilometres if you want to be accurate!

Since the organisers couldn't take us off of tracks, they had to find another way to increase the difficulty of the route. This took the form of technicalities: short sections mid-route where you have the map you've drawn taken away and are given a different type of map that is harder to read. My first technicality was a line map: a blank piece of paper with just a line for your route and north (attached below). I was given this map as soon as I entered the check-point and had until my turn to leave the check-point to study the map and measure the distances of each path.

Normally, you only have 5 minutes at a check-point, but as the last Young Rider to start, I had much longer since again there was a build-up of competitors and there must be a 5 minute gap between each rider as they leave the check-point. This section was probably the hardest part of the route since we had nothing to navigate by other than our compass and our horse's footsteps, which we use to measure the distance instead of our own footsteps.

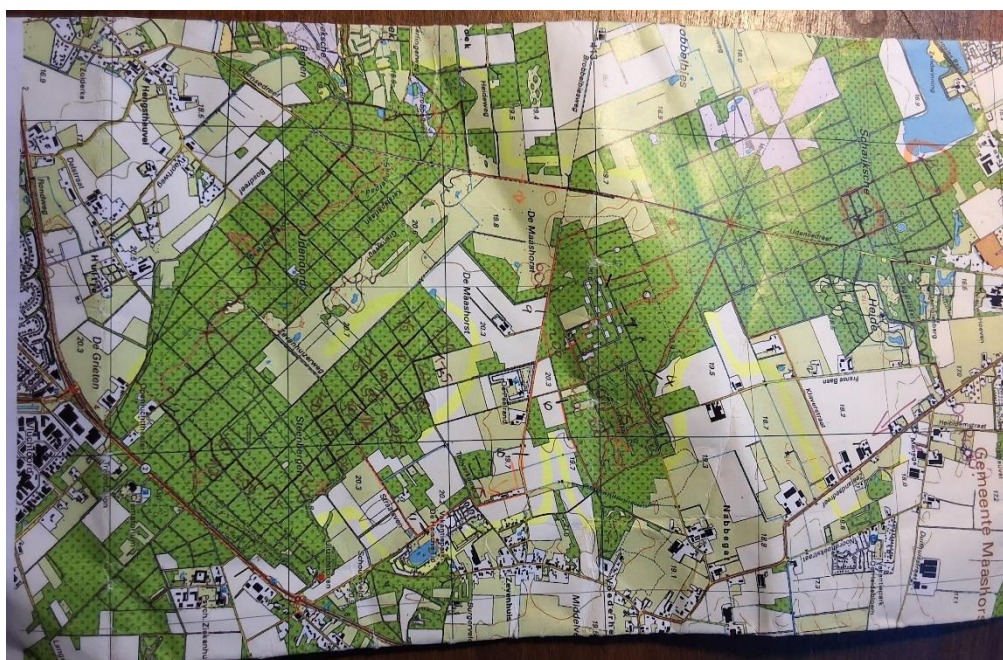


Every 50 metres there was another turning and many parallel tracks throughout the forest, so you couldn't rely on your compass bearing to know if you had paced a section wrong. I was able to navigate this section accurately and get the ticket right, but not without gaining some time penalties.



Our other technicality was two points which we had to create our own route between, similar to foot orienteering. At each point was a volunteer and a ticket punch. We had 25 minutes to ride between the points, which was enough time if you were comfortable choosing your own route.

Our finish was right after the end of the point-to-point, along an unused bike path and over a ditch, then we were finally done. From the finish we had 30 minutes to get our horses back to the venue (only a kilometre away) and get them ready for a vet check, where their heart rates were checked and the vet made sure that they hadn't gone lame, so that we could continue to day two and do the cross-country course."



What Eleanor didn't add is that she finished the orienteering day in a very commendable 13th place, having been extremely accurate with only one mistake, but after day 2 she dropped to 21st place overall as her pony Bruno was much smaller than all the other horses (her regular ride Raiden was recovering from a sprained tendon sheath last summer.)



Fantastic effort and very well done Eleanor!



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MEMBERS NEWS

NEW MEMBERS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

As it's been a few months since the last newsletter we've had an influx of new members join us, so a very warm and somewhat belated welcome to...

Josh Southwell from East Ilsley, Niamh O'Callaghan in Aylesbury, Brian Lo in Reading, David and Liz Palmer from Bradfield, James Palmer and Emily Tracey from Old Basing, and Alan and Judy Nesbit from Reading!

Do come and say hi to any of us if you see the famous orange, white and blue of BKO at any events you might go to, especially as in our last bit of club news –

New Kit Delivery!

You may spot some members sporting new, CLEAN kit now as the brilliant Trish Monks has corralled, cajoled and arranged a new order and delivery of club tops and jackets! And with new members joining all the time I wouldn't be surprised to see a call for another round of orders to go out soon so don't worry if you've missed out this time around and get kit envy! Myself and Gen have had this envy for a while, but no longer – Thanks Trish! *Email clothing@bko.org.uk*



Achievements

Well done on achieving the required finishes in British Orienteering challenges –

Navigation Challenge ***** Nicola Mort

Racing Challenge: Bronze **** Kelvin Williams

Racing Challenge: Silver **** Antje Inness

Racing Challenge: Gold ***** Alan Nesbit, Aidan Williams

Racing Challenge: Silver ***** Alan Nesbit

Racing Challenge: Bronze ***** Nicola Mort

You can earn these awards by completing courses of the appropriate level in the specified time 3 times, and are able to view them and your progress on your profile at britishorienteering.org.uk.



UPCOMING EVENTS

BKO Events 2025

Sat, 25/01/2025	Level C	Regional Event	Great Hollands	Bracknell	RG12 8YS
Sun, 26/01/2025	Level B	Concorde Chase	Cold Ash	Thatcham	RG18 9UF
Sat, 08/03/2025	Level D	Saturday Event	Langley Park	Slough	SL0 0LT
Sun, 13/04/2025	Level C	Regional Event	Bloom Wood	Marlow	SL7 3RN
Sat, 10/05/2025	Level D	Saturday Event	Yateley Common	Yateley	GU17 0NU
Sun, 22/06/2025	Level C	Level C Urban Event	South Hill Park	Bracknell	RG12 7AL
Sat, 19/07/2025	Level D	Club Picnic	Jennetts Park	Bracknell	RG12 8EB
Sat, 20/09/2025	Level D	Saturday Event	Wokefield Common	Mortimer	RG7 3JB
Sun, 26/10/2025	Level C	Regional Event	Black Park	Slough	SL3 6DT

The planned BKO fixture list for 2025 – subject to permissions, volunteers and weather – please do let events@bko.org.uk know if you would like to help out at any of them.

SCOA / Local Events 2025

Sunday 5th January – TVOC – Thame Urban Regional Event and SEOUL (*postponed from 2024*)

Saturday 11th January – TVOC – Coombe Hill North, Wendover – Local Event

Saturday 18th January – SN – Newlands Corner, Guildford – Local Event

Sunday 19th January – SOC – Bentley and Fritham SCOL

Saturday 15th February – SN – Frensham Heights School – Local Event

Sunday 16th February – SOC – Boulderwood, Lyndhurst – Local Event

Sunday 23rd February – SN – CompassSport Cup Heat (TBC) Long Valley North

Saturday 1st March – TVOC – Kingswood, High Wycombe – Local Event

Saturday 8th March – SN – Alice Holt – Local Event

All fixtures correct at time of publication. Check BOF Website for any changes.



Gallery





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