**HAVOC NEWSLETTER October 2025**

2017, 2018, 2019, 2021

2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

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**Chairman’s Chat**

Hi everyone,

For many of us the new season seemed to take a while to really get started. The first weekend in September saw the Midland Championships at Chapel-on-le-Frith near Manchester, but that seemed too far for me, and Mike Muggeridge was the only HAVOC to make the long journey. The second weekend was the Compass Sport Cup Final in the North-East, so few other Orienteering events to tempt us.

Things only really seemed to get going on the 3rd weekend with the London City Race series of 3 events. The event attracted a huge entry, and a number of HAVOCs made it to the Friday & Saturday Urban races. On the Sunday, there was a full forest event at Hampstead Heath, which again had a great turn-out, and was controlled by Graham Batty. 13 HAVOCs made it to this event, although some of us seemed to have forgotten how to navigate!

Earlier in September, we had kicked off our own Mid-week Street O series with an event in South Ockendon, organised by Seb Parris. This was a fun score event in a complicated area, and although there was a good HAVOC turn-out, overall numbers were down. We followed this 2 weeks later with another score event organised by David Float at South Woodham Ferrers, with the twist that this event used a snooker style format, with controls representing the coloured snooker balls and having to be visited in scoring order. It sounded complicated, but turned out to be great fun! Again, initial entries were very low, and we were close to postponing it, before a sudden rush at the last minute, made a good event.

That brings us to the 3rd HAVOC event of the month – our major EAL event at Epping SW, last Sunday. Graham Batty had planned some good challenging courses, on what is our best forest area, and despite the planned external controller falling ill, the event went ahead smoothly with Paul Beckett standing in as Controller. As usual, this event could not have gone ahead without the hard work of a whole group of HAVOC helpers, who ensured we delivered another high-quality event. Thank you to everyone who gave their time to support this event, both before and on the day. We ended up with over 200 competitors, which is one of our biggest events in recent years – not quite matching our 50th Anniversary event at Epping in 2023, but still a great turn-out.

Congratulations also go to Charlie & Hugo Maule-Lidbury who had been selected to compete for East Anglia at the junior inter-regional (JIRC) competition in the Lake District that same weekend.

Looking forward there seem to be good forest events in East Anglia or the South East most weekends now through till the end of the year, plus a number of major events further from home, such as the November Classic in the New Forest, or the Caddihoe Chase in Dartmoor.

HAVOC also have a full series of events planned for the rest of the season with our next Wednesday evening Street O event on October 8, based at the Gardener’s Arms in Brentwood, before kicking off our full winter series with SOS later in the month. Our next Forest event is on November 2, at Dagnam Park, near Brentwood, a great new area we have only used once before.

Don’t forget that the HAVOC annual AGM will be held on Monday October 6. The meeting will be held on-line, and every member is welcome to attend. Just contact Paul Beckett (Club Secretary) to get the log-in details. This is your chance to hear what’s going on in the club, raise comments and questions, and elect the new Committee to run the club over the next 12 months. We are also always keen to get new Committee Members -- all meetings are held on-line, so the time commitment isn’t onerous.

Finally, as I’ve now completed my 3 years in the Chairman’s role, I will be standing down at this year’s AGM, and you’ll be glad to hear that there will be a new person writing the Chairman’s Chat next month!

That’s all for now, stay healthy, and enjoy your Orienteering.

Colin Jackson

**Our Next Events**

Our next forest event will be in our newest area – Dagnam Park, on November 2nd. This will be in the SWELL league. The terrain description from our last event here was:

*Formed of ancient deciduous woodland, parkland, meadows and streams of the former Dagnam estate deer park.  It offers fast courses through runnable terrain where maintaining map contact at speed will be a challenge.  The ancient woods have many earth and water features and are heavily grazed by wild fallow deer so undergrowth is minimal.*

Colin Jackson will be planning the courses, with Paul Beckett as Controller, and Zbig Gebka and Jenny Gebka as organisers. We will obviously be looking for volunteers to help on the day. As usual, you can have a free run if you can help. The helper code to remove entry fees in Racesignup, will be circulated in due course.

Away from the forests, we have our final Twilight series event. This series has seen a variety of different formats, and this event is no different, as we try out a Spiral O. The idea here is that you follow a line course, but that line gets progressively further from the finish, so you have to make a decision as to where to quit the line and head back to the finish to avoid penalties for going over the time limit. The controls are worth progressively more points, so giving up the line too early means losing out on point scoring opportunities, but staying on too long means a risk of losing points for being late back! We will have the usual Short and Long time limits of 40 and 60 minutes, and this type of course is designed to test your ability to judge time v distance and how well you can time your run to meet the time limit.

Next month sees our first Midweek Winter series event for 2025/26. This is being staged by Simon Fowler, probably in Rayleigh or Stanford Le Hope. We are running score events for this series this year, as they tend to work better for urban areas, where a line course is difficult to introduce route choice into. It also avoids the risk that people miss out a control and take a penalty instead. And, has the added benefit of knowing when competitors should be returning, so we can get an early warning if something has happened to them. We may introduce a short line as well, using some of the score controls, but this will be on a per event basis, maybe only for Anytime Catch Up, and won’t score for the overall league.

The Midweek Winter series will be a joint venture with SOS again, and they have their first event planned for Bocking, Braintree, on 22nd October.

Volunteer planners and organisers, or people to assist with course planning or organising, are always welcome for the street orienteering and forest orienteering events. Please contact the club secretary, Paul Beckett (secretary@orienteering-havoc.co.uk ) for more information or to volunteer.

**HAVOC AGM**

Each year we hold an Annual General Meeting, where all members of the club can get together (virtually, anyway) and hear how the year has gone, and plans for the following year. We have votes for the club officials and the committee, and for membership fees. The 2025 HAVOC AGM will take place via a virtual meeting this year.  The meeting be at 8pm on Monday 6th Oct 2024. All HAVOC members are welcome to attend.  If you would like to, please inform the club secretary, Paul (secretary@orienteering-havoc.co.uk) who will then send you the meeting link, and minutes of the 2024 AGM.

**Last Month’s Review**

It is normally a slow start to the year in September, after the extended summer break which sees very few events. This year was pretty much the same, and though there were a few events to go to, it is slightly harder to find them than normal!

The first weekend of September saw the Midland champs take place. We only had one entrant from HAVOC - Mike Muggeridge, defending his M60 title from last year. The results computer for the event broke in the rain, so they are having to recreate the results files! Mike is listed as finishing 15th on his course.

September started for me with the first of the SLOW winter street O series, this time in Woolwich. The series is jointly held by SLOW, LOK and DFOK, and this first event was hosted by DFOK, in the old Arsenal. This closed in the 1960s, and the MoD left in the 1990s. It is undergoing redevelopment and is now a thriving residential and retail district, along the river from Greenwich. There are still some left over traces of the Arsenal, with building names, statues and various sculptures of cannons and other artillery. Whereas most of these series have progressed to MapRun to register control visits, this one retains the written answer format. On the plus side this means you look around a bit more, and can see some interesting sites, that you may miss otherwise. On the negative side it slows your run into a series of stop starts, you can spend a while looking for the correct answer even if you are in the right place, and it means you have to carry a pen/pencil to write your answers, which is a bit of a pain, especially if it is raining! The event was affected by the tube strike that meant travel from central London was a bit tricky, and there were over 20% no shows from the start list. This was my first run in a few weeks, so I took things fairly easy. There was one annoying area of the map which showed a meeting of a path and a road, but there was a ten foot sheer wall there, and no way through. The way round was a few hundred metres back where I had come from. Generally though, fairly straightforward and I returned about 7 mins ahead of time. So, I could have got some more controls, but the hills away from the river are fairly steep, so I thought I would save myself, especially as we had an event the following night!

That event was the first of our Twilight series – an event put on by Seb Parris in South Ockendon. It looked like the weather was going to be miserable for this one, but the rains largely stayed away for the event itself. South Ockendon must be one of the flattest places in Essex – just the gentle rise up and over the railway, and the ramp up to the footbridge providing any semblance of climb! I didn’t head to any of the 50 point controls, which all seemed a little out of the way for me, so was good to see a couple of the photos after the event of the areas I missed! A wind turbine, and a stone circle! In the end, after getting back a bit early, I reckon I could have gone for the stone circle and upped my points by about 20%, but I when I missed it out, around halfway round the course, I wasn’t convinced I would be able to keep going at the right pace to get me back in time if I detoured to get it. We had a fairly small entry field for that one, as we too suffered from the tube strikes, and weren’t helped by the DFOK event the night before. We had arranged our event right in the south of our area to try to encourage DFOK as well!

There was nothing on at the weekend, as the Compass Sport Cup Final was taking place in the north east, at Redcar. We had failed to make the final of course, and given that SOS who just beat us in the heat, came last of 21 clubs in the trophy final, perhaps that was a good thing!

The first of the MV winter street O series was next up, in Epsom. I have run there multiple times of course, most recently at the SEOUL event just last month. I remember saying that it felt a little less hilly than before, and with this being a score event I was again able to avoid the worst of the climb – in fact looking at the map contours, I may have been imagining the steep climbs from before! I am trying to build my stamina back up at the moment, so am not running very quickly, but trying to last the course at least. It was going fairly well until I made a 90 degree error and got stuck in a dead end, resulting in a loss of 10 minutes or so to run round, and then I misread the map for another dead end a bit later on! So, not surprising then that I was well down the field to start this series!

Onto the City of London weekend, and the three events that are now put on each year. We had a shorter evening Park-O in Greenwich Park before the darkness fell on the Friday, the main City of London urban event, this year based at Rotherhithe, and then a traditional forest O on Hampstead Heath on the Sunday. I only did the first two, as Hampstead Heath is a bit of a trek for me, and the start times had mostly filled up before I looked to enter. So, off to Greenwich Park, and some lovely sweeping views over the Thames to Canary Wharf, and up into the city centre. Depending on the course design there are a lot of climbs in the park, and a series of uncrossable fences. I have run there quite a bit, so know the park quite well, but it is pretty open running, so not too much local knowledge advantage to be gained! Pleased to see that this year they had put the start at the top of the park, so you just had one climb up on the course, running down to the Naval college, back up to the top, and back down again to the finish. Pretty easy navigation – only real route choice was on the first two controls. I was pleased to get one of my better ranking scores of the year.

Not so good at Rotherhithe the next day. I didn’t make too many big errors, but there were two long (over 1km) legs, and I don’t think I took the optimal route on either! Early on in the course there were some tricky legs to negotiate where fences and other uncrossable boundaries could get in the way if you didn’t make the correct decision early on in the leg. Always nice to run in London though, and Rotherhithe is very flat, but benefits from significant amount of urban parkland, and canals which were taken advantage of in the course. Pleased to say there wasn’t a control at the very top of the only man made mound in the area (although I note there was one on M21!). I was a bit tired after Greenwich the previous evening, so didn’t finish that highly!

Just the one event the following midweek, and as it was my planned snooker O event in South Woodham, I didn’t actually run. We went with the snooker O format to inject a little extra route planning into the run. This meant it took me a bit longer to plan, and to draw up the special map, onto which I put snooker ball icons and a special rules section. So, come Monday morning, and with only 7 entries, I was unsure if we should run the event or not. I did one last burst of publicity to drum up some support, and we finished with 24 entries! The event itself went off without a hitch. Everyone seemed to enjoy the format, and only one competitor made an error in the control sequence. There were definitely some variations in the scoreboard, as a couple of people who walked round did much better than normal, presumably because they had time to plan their route more carefully on the way round.

We rounded out the month with our big forest event of the year, in the EAL and SWELL, at Epping Forest South West. We also hosted CHIG and DFOK in their club champs for the year, and had a healthy turnout of over 200. It was just a shame that we missed some of the juniors and their parents as a result of the clash with JIRCs. I always find Epping Forest difficult, and even though I planned our last event there, so should have a better knowledge of the area, it was no different this time! I knew it was going to be a long day when I couldn’t find the first control, and then at the northern end of the course I had bit of a disaster on a couple of controls, spending over 20 mins searching for them. Not be outdone I then went quite a bit too far on one of the easier later legs, and only just managed to scrape in under two hours! And, then, to cap it off I took the wrong path collecting in the Short Green controls after the event, and ended up about half a kilometer out of position searching for a control that obviously wasn’t there! One of these days I might have a decent run in Epping Forest. But, I doubt it. It was a successful event though, thanks to all who helped, and to Graham for planning, Paul for controlling, and Colin for organising.

**Team HAVOC and Club League**

As we all know, orienteering is predominantly an individual sport. There are only a few opportunities to run for your club. There are a couple of local leagues of course, where scores are totaled for the club, with club leaderboards and trophies. These are the EA League, and the SE League. For a number of years we dominated the EA League, winning it consistently year after year. However, the scoring rules were changed last year, and, as a very small club, we will now struggle to compete with the larger clubs putting out much larger starting fields. It’s a similar story in the SE League, where we consistently finish third or fourth in the second division, where the top two are promoted into the first division. Again, it is number of runners here that often makes the difference, a battle we are never going to win! The scoring algorithm for that league is also very tough, and only a very good run will secure you decent points.

The other team based discipline is Relays of course, although these tend to be only at the high profile multi-day events. BOF do put on a Sprint Relays competition, one we know well from the car parking help we gave this year, as the EAOA staged at RAF Honington near Bury St Edmunds. Indeed, those helpers benefitted from a free run round one of the relay courses, though not as a team of course. Looking at the BOF calendar, in the next year, the Relays listed include the British Relay Champs, next year in Port Talbot, the JK Relays, next year in Scotland, the Scottish championship relays, the Harvester Relays, and then next year’s sprint relays in Bristol. So, not a lot of opportunity for local HAVOC relay representation! The SEOA used to host a relay champs, by this was last held in 2019, so I think that competition is now in the past only!

Occasionally there are more local less formal relay events, but I don’t see any in our local two regions in the next year, so I guess we will have to stick to post race refreshments to maintain our team spirit!

So, back to our local leagues, and the EA League’s latest event was our Epping Forest SW event. We should have done quite well in the scores, but the big field from WAOC (29 entries!) will probably give them the advantage. Next up is the NOR Sherringham event on 19th October.

The SE League for 2025/26 starts in late November with the SAX event at Hindleap (although this is also the date of the last EA league event of the season, at Rushmere, from SMOC).

In the participation league, Mike retains his advantage, 2 events clear of Colin, and a further two ahead of Zbig and Jenny. The club league is much closer! Five events counted this month (either due to schedule or strength of entry). We had forest events at Hampstead and Epping SW, and then urbans at Rotherhithe, S Ockendon and S Woodham. Non-scheduled events don’t count for the calculation of number of events to consider for the interim tables, and at the moment we take your top 4 scores. Leading the way, with a full score of 400 is Guy and Paul, and one point behind is Colin and Mike. Within 10 points are Graham and Jenny. So, it ais all very close at the top, as we pass the quarter distance marker for the season. 34 of our members have run in at least one HAVOC league event this season so far, and we have logged 178 runs in total.

The BOF rankings continue to change, and it is a close run thing at the top. Ted has regained top spot as best club runner, but Guy keeps his lead in the forest only standings. We maintain four runners in the top 1000 in the country.

**This Month’s Highlights**

The nights are closing in, the clocks about to change, so it is all systems go for night orienteering. We start our midweek winter series with SOS, the first event, from SOS, in Bocking, Braintree on 22nd October. The Kent Night cup starts with an event at Kings Wood, on 9th October, the night after our Twilight series ends with a spiral O in Brentwood. There are a lot of urban races – midweek we have the next installments of the SLOW and MV street series, and at the weekends we have Ely (WAOC), Chichester (SO), Hertford (WAOC), St Albans (HH) and Cambridge (CUOC). If the forests are more of your thing, then we have Autumn in Anglia at West Harling, and a SAX regional on the first weekend in October, and then an EAL or a SWELL on the 19th. Looks like a week off the last weekend of the month, as the urbans take over!

**Local Fixtures**

These are the fixtures in our two regional associations for this month. This is taken from the BOF website, but please check before travelling to any, in case of last-minute changes. And, please remember that most events are pre-entry only at the moment, and entries may close early if restricted entry levels are reached.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sat 04/10/25 | Autumn in Anglia West Harling EA Sch Champs | SUFFOC | West Harling Heath |   |
| Sat 04/10/25 | HH Saturday Series - Panshanger | HH | Panshanger Park |   |
| Sat 04/10/25 | SO SOG A1 - Southwick Hill, Mile Oak, Portslade | SO | Southwick Hill |   |
| Sun 05/10/25 | Ely Urban- Autumn in Anglia | WAOC | Ely |   |
| Sun 05/10/25 | SAX Regional | SAX | Knole Park |   |
| **Wed 08/10/25** | **HAVOC Twilight Series No.3** | **HAVOC** | **Gardeners Arms pub, 27 Hart Street, Brentwood** | **HAVOC event** |
| Thu 09/10/25 | KNC1 | SAX | Kings Wood |   |
| Sat 11/10/25 | SO Urban - Chichester (part of the November Classic weekend) (UKOL) | SO | Chichester Urban event |   |
| Tue 14/10/25 | London Street-O Series | SLOW | Richmond |   |
| Thu 16/10/25 | KNC2 | SAX | Angley Wood |   |
| Sat 18/10/25 | SN Local event | SN | Wellesley Woods |   |
| Sat 18/10/25 | SO SOG A2 – Tilgate Park, Crawley | SO | Crawley |   |
| Sat 18/10/25 | Capstone Farm – KOL1 | SAX | Capstone Farm |  |
| **Sun 19/10/25** | **Sheringham Park** | **NOR** | **Sheringham Park** | **EA League** |
| **Sun 19/10/25** | **Local and SWELL event** | **CHIG** | **Harlow Town Park** | **SWELL** |
| Tue 21/10/25 | MV Street-O series | MV | Leatherhead |   |
| **Wed 22/10/25** | **Essex Winter Midweek Series 2025/26 No.1** | **SOS** | **Bocking, Braintree** | **HAVOC / SOS series** |
| Thu 23/10/25 | SO KNC1 | SO | Uckfield |   |
| Sat 25/10/25 | Hertford - WAOC/HH weekend | WAOC | Hertford |   |
| Sun 26/10/25 | St Albans City Race - HH/WAOC weekend | HH | St Albans |   |
| Thu 30/10/25 | KNC4 | SAX | Trosley country park |   |
| Sat 01/11/25 | Cambridge City Race | CUOC | Cambridge |   |
| Sat 01/11/25 | HH Saturday Series - Fairlands | HH | Fairlands |   |
| Sat 01/11/25 | SO SOG A3 - Abbots Wood | SO | Abbots Wood |   |
| **Sun 02/11/25** | **HAVOC SWELL** | **HAVOC** | **Dagnam Park** | **HAVOC event** |
| Tue 04/11/25 | SLOW Night-O Series | SLOW | Battersea Park |   |
| **Wed 05/11/25** | **Essex Winter Midweek Series 2025/26 No.2** | **HAVOC** | **Basildon** | **HAVOC event** |
| Thur 06/11/25 | DFOK KNC 3 | DFOK | High Chart |  |
| Sat 08/11/25 | SN Local event | SN | Horsell Common |   |
| Sun 09/11/25 | Kelling Heath | NOR | Cromer |   |
| Tue 11/11/25 | LOK London Street-O | LOK | tbc |   |
| Tue 11/11/25 | London Street-O Series | SLOW |   |   |
| Thu 13/11/25 | KNC6 | SAX | Rusthall Common and Urban |   |
| Sat 15/11/25 | KOL2 Shoreham Woods | DFOK | Shoreham Woods |  |
| Sat 15/11/25 | SO SOG A4- Slindon Wood | SO | Slindon Wood |  |
| **Sat 15/11/25** | **GO SE Night Champs** | **GO** | **Puttenham Common** | **HAVOC League** |

**Links:**

**HAVOC website** [**www.orienteering-havoc.co.uk**](http://www.orienteering-havoc.co.uk)

**HAVOC facebook page** [**www.facebook.com/pages/Havering-South-Essex-Orienteering-Club/277659605610134**](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Havering-South-Essex-Orienteering-Club/277659605610134)

**EAOA website** [**http://eaoa.org.uk/**](http://eaoa.org.uk/)

**SEOA website** [**https://www.seoa.org.uk/**](https://www.seoa.org.uk/)

**British Orienteering** [**www.britishorienteering.org.uk**](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/#_blank)

**Fabian4 (entries)** [**www.fabian4.co.uk**](http://www.fabian4.co.uk/#_blank)

**Racesignup (entries)** [**www.racesignup.co.uk**](http://www.racesignup.co.uk)

**SI Entries (entries) www.sientries.co.uk**

**The Orienteering Foundation** [**www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk**](http://www.orienteeringfoundation.org.uk)

**Street-O style basemaps** [**www.openstreetmap.org**](http://www.openstreetmap.org)

**MapRun UK** [**www.maprun.uk**](http://www.maprun.uk)