**Review of the year – 2023**

2023 marked a historic year for HAVOC, our 50th anniversary year, for our club founded in 1973. There is a brief history of the club on our website. Following a dip in the club’s fortunes a few years ago, where it was even mooted that we might have to merge with a local club, we now find ourselves in a bit of an upswing, as we are now putting on more events than ever before, have an increasing number of newer members and juniors, and have experienced both individual and club successes. We had our 50th anniversary dinner in 2023, and put on an anniversary event at Epping SW. At that event we gave out mementos of the occasion, in the form of club anniversary pens.

2023 was another full year of orienteering - we have now settled into the routine of having mandatory entry in advance, with some events allowing entry until up to the start window, and some limited entry on day.

Nearly exactly the same number of events of last year, just one less, with 251 events in total - SEOA had 181, and EAOA 70. HAVOC had participation in 144 of those events. 23 of the events saw more than 10 HAVOC runners, and CHIG’s Epping NW in December saw an incredible 21 HAVOC entries.

In total we logged 608 runs over the year. 30 different members ran in at least one event. Top participants were Chris P with 34, Colin 51 and David 106. Note these figures are only for the two local regions, runs outside the EAOA and SEOA are not counted (as it would take me too long to compile!).

There were 144 day events, 57 night events and 50 in the lighter summer evenings. There was 1 relay, 75 scores and 175 line events. 172 were in the forests and parks, 79 on the streets.

As a club we staged 12 events during 2023 – 4 in the summer midweek street series, 5 in the winter midweek street series, and 3 forest events – all 3 in SWELL and 1 also in the EAL.

Club success came in the form of our sixth win in a row in the GLOSS series during the summer. In what looked like a comfortable victory over the extended series (6 events this year instead of the normal 5), it actually came down to one result which would have turned against us given a minute or so difference in run timings. But, we continue to outperform the bigger clubs over this series, marrying high participation numbers which good runs against handicap to score well and maintain our stranglehold over the trophy. This year again saw strong fields at venues a considerable distance from HAVOC land, and some superb runs from a large number of club runners. We ended up being the only club fielding full squads at each event and didn’t finish outside the top 2 clubs in any event.

We were fourth in the annual Compass Sport Trophy Qualifying heat, competing in the SE heat, at Worthlodge, in an event staged by SO. As a very small club we will struggle to compete with the other small clubs in the heats – some of which are four times our size, but we always put up a competitive showing. We beat LOK and GO on the day, losing out to SAX, DFOK and MV who had a very close battle for first place.

As a club we again won the EA League champion club trophy, for the sixth year in succession (a recalculation of the scores last year gave us a narrow victory). The club scoring algorithm is changing for 2024, so we will see how that affects things going forward.

After narrowly missing out on promotion to Division 1 of the SE league last year, we fell back a bit this year, finishing fifth in division 2. A mix of clashing events with the EA League, and a number of far off events this year took its toll.

We were 93rd in the UK Orienteering League in 2023, a drop of 4 places from our 2022 position. There are 111 UK clubs listed in the league, which takes into account events across the country, and as a small club we are always going to struggle.

The club champions for the year are: Chris Prince, Chloe Fowler, Mike Muggeridge, Barbara Beckett, Charlie Maule-Lidbury, Hugo Maule-Lidbury and Amelie Maule-Lidbury.

The HAVOC League champions are Paul Beckett and Janet Biggs.

I can’t find the official results of the EA Champs anywhere, but looking at the individual results, I think the only HAVOC runner who beat all others in their age class was Mike Muggeridge (M60). Apologies if I have missed any other class winners.

We had two age class winners in the EA League this year – Charlie Maule-Lidbury (M14) and Jenny Gebka (W60). Just missing out were Amelie Maule-Lidbury (W10) and Guy Lidbury (M50) both coming second in their age classes.

In 2022 Garry Parmenter was individual age class winner (M75) in the SEIL, but this year fell back to 2nd.

In the SWELL series we had a few colour class winners – Amelie Maule-Lidbury on White, Hugo Maule-Lidbury on Yellow, Charlie Maule-Lidbury on L Green and David Float on Blue. David also won the overall Men’s title.

In the National Rankings we finish the year with 22 ranked runners (up 4 on last year). Leading the way is Chris Prince, who is ranked 444th in the country, and we have another four runners in the top 1000.

We were also active on the national scene with multiple club runners taking in the JK, the British Championships, and last summer’s festival in Scotland.

We have gained some new faces to the club in the last couple of months, so finish the year with 41 members showing on the BOF list.

As we look ahead to 2023, we continue to offer events in the SWELL series, have five forest events currently scheduled for the year, and continue to jointly run the midweek summer and winter street O series with our neighbours at SOS. We will be hosting a heat in the GLOSS series this summer.

It is yet to be agreed which heat of the Compass Sport Trophy this year, (EA at King’s Forest – SUFFOC, or SE at Esher – SLOW) on 18th February. The GLOSS series will take place in late June and throughout July, this year consisting of possibly six events again, and including our own hosted round at Bedford’s Park. Our club champs have yet to be determined, but the HAVOC league continues apace, and as we enter the New Year, Paul holds a slender eleven point advantage over Mike. Jenny is more secure in the women’s lead, and Charlie leads the junior competition.

We continue to expand our MapRun offerings, and are now up to 54 different courses to try at your leisure, which are a mixture of Long and Short line courses as well as some score options. They take in street, parkland and hybrid terrains. We also have three current Permanent Orienteering courses for traditional orienteering with posts to find in the forests.

Our website continues to host all details for events, results, social announcements and news. We will continue with newsletters during the year, which gives details of all upcoming fixtures in the two local regions, and the team spreadsheets, which shows current positions in the HAVOC league, amongst other statistics.

2024 starts on New Year’s Day, with events at Mote Park (SAX) and Hilly Fields (SOS). We have a couple of events in January, a street O at Pilgrim’s Hatch on the 10th, and then a forest Regional and SWELL at Langdon Hills on the 21st.

See you in the forests, and on the streets (and after – in the pubs!).

David