

# British TrailO Newsletter

March 2023



## Introduction from the Editor

Welcome to the first issue of a new **British TrailO Newsletter**.

TrailO is certainly not currently a major component of orienteering in the UK. Within any orienteering club there may only be one or two enthusiasts - that is if there are any at all! This does limit the opportunities for interaction and discussion and, in consequence, there tends to be a lack of information and knowledge about the discipline.

My hope, in offering to edit a Newsletter, is that this will support two different elements. Firstly it could help give TrailO enthusiasts a greater sense of belonging to an active and challenging sport. By reading TrailO news and reports about other events, there will be more opportunities to learn the skills required to do well and, hopefully to improve performance. Secondly I hope that the Newsletter will be seen by the wider community - whether current orienteers or perhaps others unable to participate in normal FootO events for whom TrailO could provide an additional challenge.

I hope this first issue will stimulate interest and I would welcome contributions for future editions. I am grateful to those who have been willing to contribute to this first issue without fully appreciating what the final concept would look like.

**David Jukes** (davidjukes@sky.com)



### JK 2023 - South Lakes - 7th-10th April

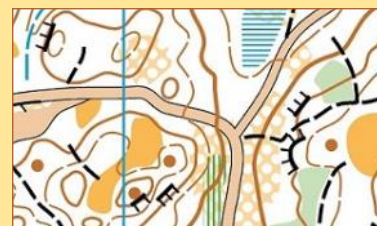
Friday 7th April: One man relay Williamson Park and University of Cumbria, Lancaster

Saturday 8th April: Classic PreO Rydal Showfield, Ambleside

Sunday 9th April: PreO Sprint Great Tower Scout Camp, near Newby Bridge

**Pre-enter by Sunday 12th March**

<https://www.thejk.org.uk/>



### Next Newsletter

Provisional plans are for the next Newsletter to appear in early June. Coverage should include TrailO at the JK, the Falco Cup in Lithuania and BTOC2023. Please let me know if you would be willing to submit a report or have some interesting news that you would like to share. Email: [davidjukes@sky.com](mailto:davidjukes@sky.com)

**Earlier submissions would be appreciated but all material should be submitted by 31 May.**

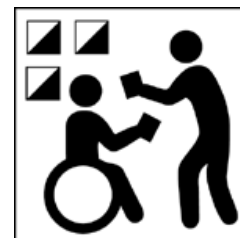
**Note:** The contents of this Newsletter are the responsibility of the Editor. The reports represent the personal views of the authors and should not be considered to represent the views of British Orienteering or the collective view of the British TrailO community. Attempts have been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained but apologies in advance for any errors that have slipped through. **David Jukes (Editor)**

### Cover Picture

Taken at the 'Big Weekend' in Edinburgh, the towering Arthur's Seat provided an impressive backdrop to some controls at the PreO event. For report, see pages 12-16.

(Photo: Rob Hickling)

## 2023 Event Calendar



The table below lists some of the main TrailO events taking place in 2023. Included in the table are all currently announced UK TrailO events and all designated World Ranking Events (**WRE**) and European TrailO Cup events (**ETOC**)

- P = PreO; T = TempO; PSpr = PreO Sprint

Date	Event	Status	Country
29 Jan	<i>Edinburgh Big Weekend</i>	(P)	UK (Scot)
12 Feb	<i>Hong Kong Champs 2022 (Pre O)</i>	WRE (P)	Hong Kong China
7-9 Apr	<b>JK23, Lake District - 3 events:</b> 1-person TrailO Relay / P / PSpr		<b>UK (Eng)</b>
28-30 April	Falco Cup 2023	2 x WRE/ECTO (T+P) + P + PSpr	Lithuania
5 May	<b>British TrailO Champs: PreO</b>	<b>BTOC</b>	<b>UK (NI)</b>
6-7 May	Stadi TrailO	3 x WRE (T+2P)	Finland
19-21 May	PreO i Väst	3 x WRE (T+2P) / 2 x ECTO (T+P)	Sweden
30 Jun-1 Jul	PreWTOC Adventure	2 x WRE/ECTO (T+P)	Czechia
<b>3 Jul - 7 Jul</b>	<b>WTOC 2023</b>	<b>WTOC/WRE</b>	<b>Czechia</b>
22-28 Jul	O-Ringen - 5 events		Sweden
2 Aug	PreO at Moray 2023 (Roseisle) - <i>'Rest' day at the Scottish 6 Days</i>		UK (Scot)
19-20 Aug	Philadelphia's Navy Yard Welcomes TrailO	2 x WRE (T+P)	United States
26-27 Aug	Hungarian weekend	2 x WRE/ECTO (T+P)	Hungary
15-17 Sept	Nordic Match	2 x ECTO (T+P)	Denmark
1 Oct	Coppa Italia TrailO	WRE	Italy
28-29 Oct	Etrusk Weekend	2 x WRE (T+P)	Italy
19 Nov	Hong Kong Champs 2023 (Pre O)	WRE (P)	Hong Kong China
26 Nov	Hong Kong Champs 2023 (Temp O)	WRE (T)	Hong Kong

When available, links to further details can be found on British Trail Orienteering website:  
[TrailO Fixtures Calendar](#)

## TrailO Development Steering Group Updates



The national Steering Group (SG) held a virtual meeting on Zoom in early February and these are some of the issues discussed:

- **Organising to support development:** The SG had considered this issue in December and discussed the matter again. The idea of forming two smaller Working Parties (WPs) was proposed and agreed. These would have two different objectives since it was felt that there were two separate groups which needed different approaches. The most obvious group was **existing orienteers** who had the awareness and understanding of orienteering maps and concepts. They could potentially be engaged by promoting TrailO both as a competition but also as a training aid. Current TrailO enthusiasts could be encouraged to build awareness in their own orienteering clubs by staging activities alongside existing orienteering events or training activities. The second WP would focus on **engaging physically challenged non-orienteers**. It was recognised that this was a more difficult task. It might be best to identify existing activities arranged for this group and to identify how to introduce map-reading tasks as a prelude to introducing TrailO (e.g. potentially using suitable permanent orienteering courses). Membership of the two WPs would be considered and additional people from outside the SG could be recruited.
- **International events and teams:** A new Chair of the Selectors has been appointed - **Neil Cameron** (NGOC and a former Chairman of British Orienteering). Draft selection policies had been reviewed and would be considered by the selectors - a meeting was about to happen. An invitation will be published soon to see if any new person has an interest in taking on the role of Team Manager.
- **Events:** The SG reviewed the progress of events in the 2023 calendar. Plans for the JK were progressing well. It was confirmed that BTOC would be staged in Armagh in Northern Ireland on the afternoon of Saturday 6th May (after the British Sprint Championships).
- **TrailO Video:** The Orienteering Foundation and British Orienteering have agreed to allow the IOF to use the TrailO video, and to add IOF branding, which will increase the value and use of the video, and underlines the quality of the work.

The next meeting is likely to be in late March or early April but the date has still to be confirmed.

Minutes of Steering Group (*once approved*) are available on the main British Orienteering website - see: **Governance: Steering Groups**

## International Orienteering Federation (IOF) Updates



### IOF Council - January 2023

#### 8.5. ToePunch Final Approval

Council had given preliminary approval for use of the ToePunch punching system in Trail Orienteering in Council Meeting 210. During 2022, the system had been tested in five WREs in four countries. The system fulfilled all the requirements for approval, and the relevant commissions and TrailO Athletes Advisory Group had been consulted and recommended a final approval of the system. Council therefore gave final approval of the ToePunch punching system for use in Trail Orienteering.



**ToePunch** is the short name for the new 'Trail Orienteering Electronic Punching System'. As indicated in the above minute from the IOF Council meeting, the system had been given preliminary approval in January 2022. As such it was used for a number of WRE events last year and will have been experienced by those travelling to these events (including the Nordics event in Finland in September).

The system has been developed by Libor Forst (CZE), Ján Furucz (SVK) and Martin Locker (CZE). The final approval allows for its use at the forthcoming WTOC in Czechia in July. According to the announcement on the WTOC2023 website, 'It brings a whole new level of comfort, clarity and speed for both organizers as well as competitors.'



To see more details of ToePunch, see the website at: **<http://toe.yg.cz/>**

## Amendments to the Competition Rules for IOF TrailO Events

IOF have published updated versions of the Rules applicable to events staged with IOF recognition (such as World Ranking Events, Regional Championships and World Championships). The new versions came into effect on the 1st February and updated the previous versions (published January 2022).



One significant change is that, previously, the rules stated that:

- ‘The World Trail Orienteering Championships (WTOC) are organised in every year’

but the 2023 version now states (**Rule 3.2**):

- ‘The World Trail Orienteering Championships (WTOC) are organised every second year (in odd years).’

Most of the changes relate to either eligibility issues or to the use of electronic devices for recording decisions. The following are the main changes:

- P class competitors must submit a completed eligibility form to IOF at least 3 months before WTOC (previously 8 weeks) (**Rule 5.3**)
- There are stricter rules on citizenship (and changes to citizenship) and representing a Federation (**Rules 6.1 and 6.2**)
- A new provision covers the allocation of starts at WTOC when a class has more than 50 competitors. This provides for competitors to be grouped according to the ranking list and then those in a group to be drawn at random. The best ranked group will start last. (**Rule 12.6**)
- At PreO timed controls, the following has been added to the Rules: ‘The default method is to answer orally. If a competitor wants to use a pointing board they must inform the officials upon arrival.’ (**Rule 16.14**)
- In a PreO competition, if a non-electronic punching system is used, a new provision now recognises that ‘the competitor can be allowed to carry their own punch.’ (**Rule 20.5**)
- There have been linked amendments suggesting that, where an electronic system is in use, there is flexibility in the type of back-up system used. Previously, it had been stated that ‘If electronic punching is used, a backup punch must be provided.’ This has been replaced by: ‘If electronic punching is used, a backup system must be provided.’ (**Rule 20.5 and related changes in Rule 20.6 and Appendix 4**)
- With the increased use of electronic systems, a more detailed provision covers the interpretation of the recorded decisions: ‘Any control with no selection recorded is deemed to be incorrect. If a non-electronic punching system is used, any control with more than one selection recorded is deemed to be incorrect. If electronic punching is used, the first selection recorded at a control is deemed to be the competitor’s decision, all other selections recorded at the control are ignored.’ (**Rule 20.8**)
- There is a minor change to the rule on bibs - the numbers are no longer required to be ‘at least 10cm high’. (**Rule 21.2**)
- After crossing the finishing line, the Rules now include: ‘If an electronic punching system is used, a printout of the recorded punches must be provided to the competitor.’ (**Rule 23.6**)



To view all the complete documents, see the IOF page:  
[Competition Rules for Trail Orienteering](#)

### British TrailO Championships (PreO)

17:00 to 19:00 Sat 6th May - Armagh, Northern Ireland

Venue: Armagh Palace Demesne

For details, see [Lagan Valley Orienteers - BTOC](#)

**Pre-enter by Tuesday 11th April**



# International Selection Arrangements - 2023



During 2023, there will be a single event at which a team representing Great Britain will be chosen. This is the World Trail Orienteering Championships (**WTOC**) being staged in Zákupy, Czech Republic from 1st July to the 7th July.

Following consultation with the Steering Group and a consideration by the selectors, British Orienteering in February published the policies governing the selection of the teams to compete at the event.

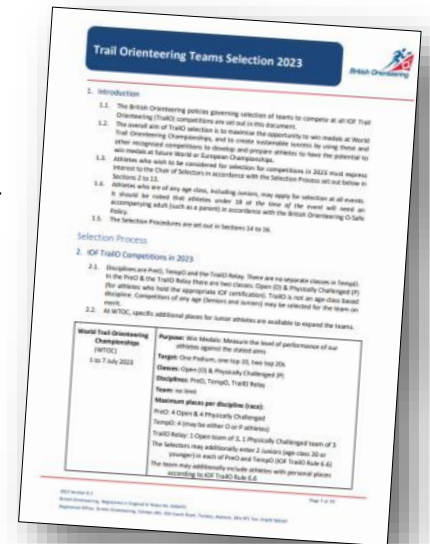
The document indicates the maximum members per discipline (race) as stipulated by IOF:

- PreO: 4 Open & 4 Physically Challenged
- TempO: 4 (may be either O or P athletes)
- TrailO Relay: 1 Open team of 3, 1 Physically Challenged team of 3
- The Selectors may additionally enter 2 Juniors (age class 20 or younger) in each of PreO and TempO (IOF TrailO Rule 6.6)
- The team may additionally include athletes with personal places according to IOF TrailO Rule 6.6

Athletes should inform the Chair of Selectors by **20 March 2023** if they wish to be considered for selection for events in 2023. Only athletes expressing interest by this deadline will be considered for events in 2023. Selection for WTOC 2023 in Czechia, 1 to 7 July 2023 will be made by 15 May 2023 at the latest.

The policy indicates that evidence of performance may be taken into consideration, and athletes should submit relevant details. The following are listed as relevant with those seeking selection being required to submit supporting evidence using a special form provided with the policy:

- Performance in IOF competitions and selection events in 2023 and previous years, as follows:
  - \* World TrailO Championships 2022
  - \* European TrailO Championships 2022
  - \* British TrailO Championships 2022 and 2023
  - \* JK TrailO events 2022 and 2023
- BriTOL Events.
- Opportunities that athletes may have had in any other competitions (e.g. ECTO & WRE events).
- The IOF TrailO World Ranking list.
- The race disciplines, terrain and nature of the courses at the events.
- Performance in virtual or online TempO events (e.g. the Torus Cup) may also be considered alongside performance in real events.



There will also soon be an advertisement for the position of **Team Manager**. If you would like to be considered for this role in supporting the selected team, keep a watch on the **News** page of the [British Trail Orienteering website](https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/).

## More Details

The Policy and Results Form can be accessed from the BOF website using these links:

[Trail O Selection Policy](#) and [Trail O - Results Form](#)

For more details about the **WTOC 2023**, see:

<https://www.wtoc2023.cz/>



**Scoring:**

The International Orienteering Federation has adopted a single 'World Ranking' document covering all orienteering disciplines. This can be found on the IOF website - see the final item on their [Competition Rules for Orienteering page](#). For TrailO, see in particular paragraphs 7.8-7.11.

Two formulae are used to determine each competitor's score in PreO and TempO. In both cases, excellent performances will give a score close to zero with poorer results getting progressively larger. The maximum score allocated for any event is 15. A competitor's best 6 scores over a specified time (see *next paragraph*) are used. If less than 6 scores are available, any missing score is allocated 15. The maximum score is therefore 90.

**Time for 'Best 6'**

It had been standard practice for the 'Best 6' to be based on results from the previous 18 months. However, during the Covid pandemic, due to the cancellation of many events and the difficulty with travel, IOF progressively extended the maximum time. This process stopped in June 2021 when the maximum time had reached 33 months. This was retained throughout 2022. However, from January the maximum time reverted to 18 months. Therefore some significant changes were possible for those whose ranking position included events from more than 18 months ago.

**Scores:**

The table below shows, for British competitors, the list as provided at the start of January and includes an indication of the positions in December using the longer time span. Note though that there have been some minor changes since January. For the up-to-date listing, see: [IOF World Ranking - TrailO](#)

All		P Class	J Class		
Jan 2023	Dec 2022				
1				<i>Antti Rusanen (FIN)</i>	1.79
15			1	<i>Ondřej Macek (CZE)</i>	7.06
40	43			John Kewley	13.42
58	65			Tom Dobra	17.66
72	78		6	Ben Kyd (J)	22.42
75	79			Charles Bromley Gardner	23.07
82		1		<i>Michael Johansson (SWE)</i>	25.83
89	99			Ian Ditchfield	29.34
94	103			David Jukes	31.12
101	116			Iain Phillips	35.31
114	119	8		Graham Urquhart (P)	40.83
162	93			Nick Barrable	58.49
198	231			Elizabeth Urquhart	68.41
238	268			Alain Kyd	73.41
246	277			Dominic Wathey (J)	74.17
264	290	34		Colin Duckworth (P)	76.05
292	316	37		Peter Roberts (P)	78.41
298	321			Christine Roberts	79.24
319	341			Peter Hornsby	80.84

## Know your fellow TrailO Competitors

*This is intended to be a regular feature for these Newsletters. With TrailO enthusiasts being thinly spread around the country, outside of events there are few opportunities to meet up and to chat. For this first issue, I am grateful for **Colin Duckworth**, one of our International P Class team, for responding to my questions.*

### Colin Duckworth



*Age/Class?* M65 / P Class

*Family circumstances?* Married with two grown up children

*Hometown?* Malvern, but now living just north of Reading.

*How did you start orienteering and/or TrailO?* Dave Kingham, a fellow Natural Scientist at Cambridge, would go off orienteering every weekend returning with a new map which he put on his wall. In my second year, he persuaded me to help at the Icenian event as a car park marshal but with little idea what the competitors were doing in the forest. At the start of my third year (1977), I did a CATI event in Thetford forest followed by an event in Epping Forest and was hooked immediately. I started TrailO when my performance in FootO started to decline. Anne Braggins, who I had known from my time in WAOC, encouraged me to continue and then persuaded me that I could become a P Class competitor. My first event was BTOC 2015 in the Forest of Dean, where I tried the standard class. I have competed in the elite class in subsequent events.

*What is the nature of your disability and when did it happen?* I was diagnosed with Parkinsons in 2010, which explained why my performance in FootO had been gradually declining.

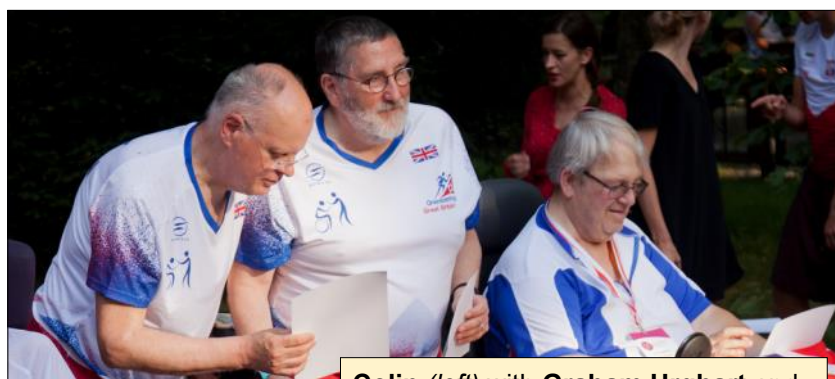
*Clubs?* I started in CUOC, then UDOC, LO, LOK, WAOC, and now am in TVOC and DRONGO

*Best achievement/success?* In FootO I had only one race where I achieved Championship standard (and I was 10 minutes inside the standard) at the Midland Champs on Brown Clee in about 1982. In TrailO 6th place in the P Class relay at WTOC 2022 in Poland with Peter Roberts and Graham Urquhart. I was 8th in PreO day 1 at WTOC 2019 in Portugal, but was 15th on day 2 and 15th overall. I was British TrailO P Class champion in 2019.

*Most enjoyed event?* WTOC 2022 Relay

*Worst event/most embarrassing TrailO moment/biggest goof?* I think I have made all the silly errors in FootO and hopefully learned from them, but certainly not in TrailO. Folding the answer card incorrectly and punching two controls at once was annoying, working out the correct flag and then miscounting the flags was worse, but most embarrassing was at the JK in Beaudesert when I solved the problem at a crag with a wall next to the track, set off to the next control and came across another identical feature which, of course, was the one with the control circle on it.

*International experience/selection?* I have been selected for the GB TrailO team for the World Championships in Portugal (2019) and Poland (2022) and for the European Championships in Finland (2022). I have also competed in TrailO in Latvia, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.



**Colin (left) with Graham Urquhart and Peter Roberts with their P Class Relay 6th place Diplomas at WTOC 2022.**



*Favourite area and/or terrain?* I particularly enjoyed the WTOC 2019 areas. They had large and complex rock features set in open woodland with good visibility and the problems were solvable with care - see example on the right.

*What have you put back into the sport?* I am a grade A controller and have controlled at the JK twice, British long distance champs, British sprint champs, Southern champs and British TrailO champs as well as several smaller events. I have planned at the JK three times, the British Universities champs and many others. I controlled the European TrailO championships in 1995, long before I knew what TrailO was! I was recently appointed as an IoF event adviser so hope to be able to act in that capacity now that I have more of an idea of what TrailO is.

*Other activities/interests?* I was a keen hill walker, an interest inherited from my father.

*Employment?* I started my working life as a physicist modelling the processes for making silicon chips, but transitioned to management accounting. I retired in 2020.

*What training do you do?* I try to get to as many TrailO events as I can and compete in online TrailO. I have learnt so much from discussions with the elite competitors.

*Do you compete in on-line TrailO event and, if so, please comment?* I have taken part in almost all of the on-line events and the subsequent analysis calls. This has improved my Tempo so much that I was selected for the open Tempo team for ETOC 2022.

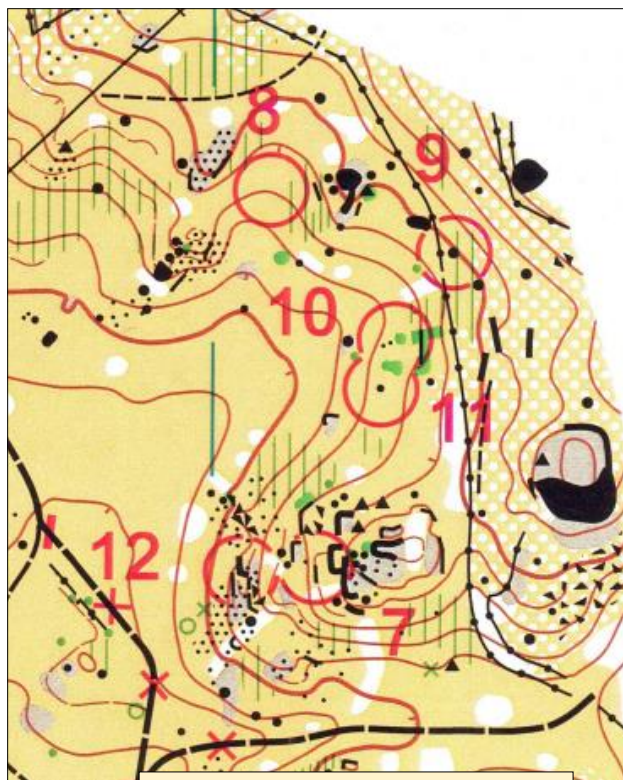
*What is the best thing about TrailO?* It has allowed me to continue with the sport that I have been addicted to for all my adult life. Fellow competitors have been generous with passing on their knowledge and expertise.

*What is the worst thing about TrailO?* Queuing for Tempo stations.

*TrailO ambition?* I never thought that I would be able to compete for GB in any sport and to get on the podium, so I am delighted to have achieved that. But I plan to keep improving ....

*What have you done that no one else is likely to/will have done?* Two walks in US National Parks stand out: climbing Half Dome in Yosemite and walking up the river to the Narrows in Zion where the walls are 1000 feet high but only 20 to 30 feet apart.

*Favourite music/book/film, etc?* I don't have a favourite book or film but could listen to Beethoven's violin concerto over and over again.



An extract from the PreO-1 at the WTOC2019 in Portugal.



Colin taking part in the Tempo event at WTOC 2019 in Portugal  
(Photo: WTOC2019 Facebook).

# 14 January 2023: National Coaching Conference, Bracknell

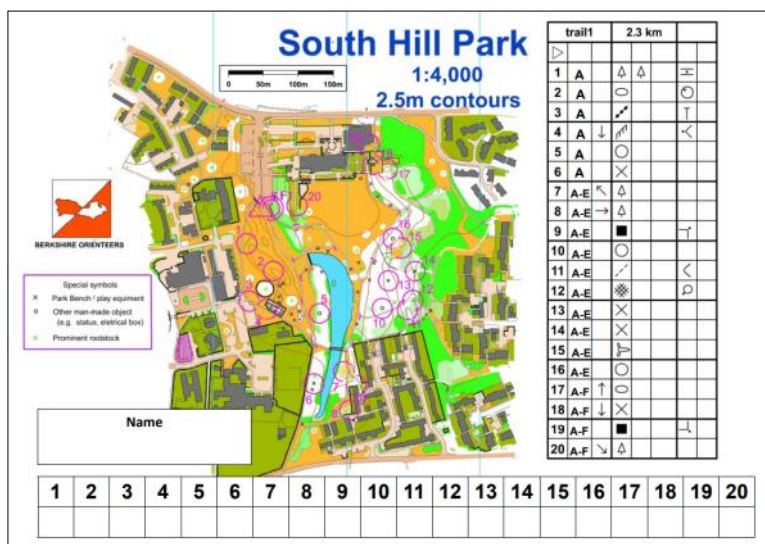


## David Jukes reports

"I am trying to pull together the next Coaching Conference being held on Sat/Sun 14/15 January 2023. Do you think that a session of some aspect of TrailO/TempO might interest people, please?"

That was in an email from Liz Yeadon (WIM) to Dick Keighley (also of WIM) back in early November 2022. Dick suggested she contact Graham Urqhart and, as the Conference was being held in Bracknell, he suggested me! As the local BKO TrailO enthusiast and as I had also updated the local map for an urban event in February 2022, I agreed to be planner for a suitable exercise.

Discussions followed, options were considered and a plan was ultimately agreed. We would have a two-hour slot on the Saturday afternoon with time for a short presentation by Graham in the Sports Centre first, then a practical 'PreO' session lasting about an hour led by me and, finally, back at the Sports Centre, a wrap-up session with Graham. The practical would be in South Hill Park, just a short 5-minute drive from the Sports Centre.



At the outset, it was agreed that the overall aim was not to promote TrailO as a separate discipline but to try and encourage the participants, all orienteering coaches, to consider how TrailO techniques could be used as a training tool for orienteers more generally. This led to the title of Graham's presentation being: 'Assessing terrain: skills for fast orienteering'. The emphasis being on providing an enhanced ability to accurately read the map and to navigate. However, the practical task would be a PreO type session with a combination of A-Z controls and a set of viewing points – in total, about 20 controls. As I had never planned any form of TrailO before, this seemed a good opportunity to have a go without the pressure of having to set a fair competition. But it still needed to illustrate effectively the skills involved in identifying correct and incorrect flags.

My first visit to the area to consider my options was in late November. It was a foggy day and views across the park were quite restricted. However, I got a sense of how much work would be needed to improve the map. Although I had updated the map just 12 months earlier, I recognised that I had not worried too much about the precise location of individual trees and patches of vegetation - things which are more critical in TrailO. Overall though the area had sufficient for the required task.

Over Christmas, based on a study of the map, I identified potential control sites with possible options for the positioning of the kites – some correct and some incorrect. I knew though that these would need checking on the ground with potentially more map corrections. About 10 days before the event I had my second visit. Visibility was much better and I was able to spend more time checking my options and revising the course. However, I appreciated that I could not finalise my plans as I had not taken a control kite with me. Would it be possible to see a kite from the viewing point? In several cases, I simply could not tell. So, on the Monday before the conference, I collected the club kit that I would need and had another visit. This made it obvious that some changes would be needed and that the choice of viewing points could be quite critical. It was annoying, when setting viewing points in the wooded section, how often the trees got in the way! I also realised that having kites at the standard height of 1 metre caused difficulties as, in



some cases, low obstructions obscured the view. I solved this last problem by investing in some 2-metre tall bamboo canes and 5 of the kites would be hung on these. This is probably not a solution in a TrailO event but, as this was a demonstration exercise, I felt it would be acceptable and unlikely to be challenged!

The Saturday of the Conference started very wet although the forecast was for it to turn dry at about midday. Graham and Liz Urquhart arrived in good time with Graham heading off to the Sports Centre. At 12.00, I was sitting in the park's café with Liz watching the heavy rain and wondering if the forecast was correct. Luckily, within 10 minutes, the rain stopped and the cloud thinned. Time to set out the kites. Here it was very useful to have Liz to help. I could put out the 25 kites with Liz at the viewing points confirming (or not) their visibility. We had everything ready by 1.45 with about 30 minutes to spare before the participants arrived.

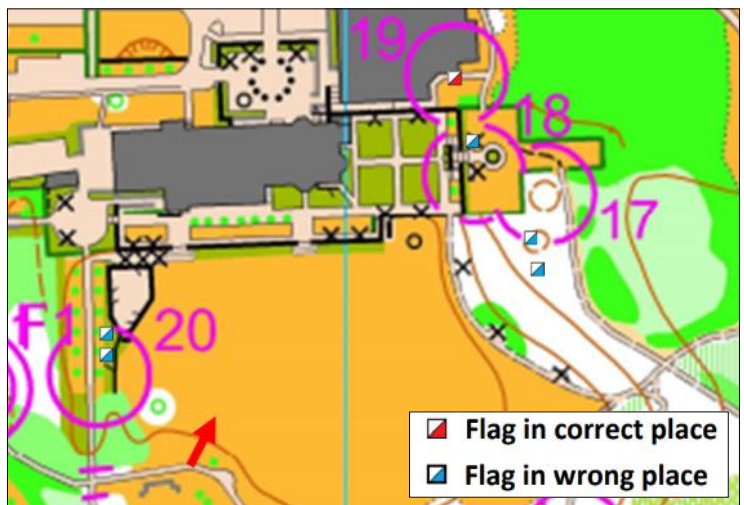
The task consisted of 6 A-Z controls on the initial section of the map using an open area with a large artificial hill and an area of children's play equipment. There were then 4 viewing points – 3 were A-E and the final one was A-F. What I found most difficult was to determine how difficult or 'tricky' the challenges were. Also, how many 'Z' controls were appropriate? I found it very tempting to put in 'Z' controls and I ended up with there being 9 of the 20, perhaps too many.

Overall, the group seemed to become fully involved in the task and to see the value of TrailO as a way to enhance map-reading skills.

*Experiencing TrailO at the 2023 BO Coaching Conference - Kirsten Strain gives her account:*

At this year's British Orienteering Coaching Conference, one of the most enjoyable sessions was the one all about TrailO. The session comprised a mixture of practical and 'classroom' elements. We began in the classroom setting, with a presentation given by Graham Urquhart, which introduced the basic concepts of TrailO and encouraged us to think about how it relates to FootO and could be relevant to coaching.

After the introduction, we gathered in a mapped local park where we were met by David Jukes who set us off on an actual practical TrailO course. In line with proper TrailO, the allowed path route was clearly marked out and we were not allowed to leave the path to get a better view. On the other hand, in contrast to competitive TrailO, we were encouraged to work together in twos or threes, discussing our thoughts with one another at each control. The first 6 controls were A-Z controls. This meant that for each control, there was only one flag hung and we had to decide if it is in the right place ("A") or is not at the right place ("Z"). For these types of control, there does not need to be a specific viewing spot, and we quickly realised that it was helpful to try walking/running up and down the path to get different views of the terrain and the flag's position. When it was being explained beforehand, I imagined it would be quite easy – after all, as a coach



The final group of controls. The photo shows a discussion about the kites for controls 17, 18 and 19. An enlarged part of the image is also shown with the C and D kites circled. The kites were more visible than the photo suggests!

we have to be confident at hanging controls in all sorts of terrain, and a local park was not expected to be technically challenging. I was surprised how difficult it was once we were there. The controls were much further from the path than I'd expected and often the view was partially obscured by vegetation or land shapes. Several times, the correct control position was not visible from the path at all. For the second half of the course, the controls had more options, such as A-E/Z. There were designated viewing points, where you could identify which flag corresponded to which letter option. However again it was sometimes helpful to try looking from different places along the path, to get a clearer view. I continued to be surprised how difficult it had been made, by having the flags placed over 100m away from the viewing route.

Once we had completed the course, we were given the correct answers and there was lots of discussion with various people agreeing or disagreeing. Back at base, Graham wrapped up the session with a final presentation reviewing the course and showing us other examples, including a website that has an online version of TrailO with free access.

Many thanks are due to David and Graham (and anyone else that helped behind the scenes) to put on the session. It was well organised and was just difficult enough to be challenging but not depressing. The practical bit was a great chance to get outside, get some fresh air and spend time looking at a map, without getting too wet/muddy/hot/sweaty for the rest of the day. Working in small groups made it even more sociable, which added to the fun



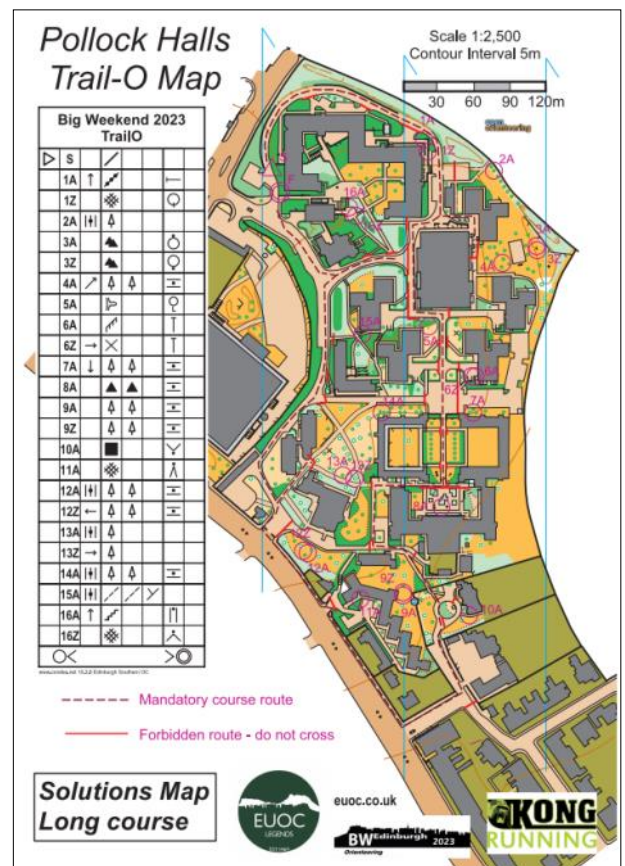
This shows Kirsten (on the right) assessing Control 20.

## 29th January 2023 - TrailO at the Big Weekend, Edinburgh

### Report by Anne Hickling & Roger Scrutton (ESOC)

For the second year running we were very pleased to be able to put on a TrailO event as part of **EUOC's Big Weekend**. For those not familiar with this, the Big Weekend has been running for around 15 years, always on the last weekend in January, and involves a Friday night sprint, Saturday urban race, Saturday evening ceilidh, Sunday classic race on Arthurs Seat... and now Sunday TrailO too.

The initiative to include TrailO in the Big Weekend came from EUOC, and weekend coordinator **Fiona Bunn** explains their thinking.. *EUOC as a club are really interested in how we can improve our inclusivity, and we also realise that there are not many opportunities in the UK for giving TrailO a go, so we thought it would be a great way to help with both of these problems at once! We are aware that our Classic race on Arthur's Seat is quite a severe physical challenge, especially to our older competitors who might find the steepness too much but still want to have a full weekend of orienteering, therefore we chose to have the Trail-O alongside the Sunday race. We allowed entry-on-the-day for the Trail-O at low prices to encourage people to try it out, as well as offering a shorter beginners course and quite detailed instructions. We would be interested to know if the Big Weekend offering is catering to the needs of both experienced Trail-*



*O participants as well as beginners, and how we could modify the format in future years to improve the experience for both audiences.*

Co-locating the TrailO with the Sunday race means that the options are limited. Last year we were able to use the western edge of Arthurs Seat where there are sufficient accessible paths to offer some technical controls. This year the main event assembly moved to the southern part of the hill which was not suitable for TrailO, but the nearby Pollock Halls campus provided an alternative venue of a quite different nature. The course route through the campus was marked on the map along with a multitude of red 'do not cross' bars – it was not feasible to tape all of these – and of course we had to trust people not to stray off the route. As last year, all the controls were AZ. The technical level was not high, and so the event could best be described as CATI TrailO.

The competitors were a mixed bunch – just a few regular TrailO people, some occasionals and some completely new both to TrailO and to orienteering. Even a straightforward format as we used at this event may not be suitable for those with no orienteering experience; getting to grips with a complex map and mysterious pictorial control descriptions require some prior training. We need to give further thought about how to introduce complete newcomers to TrailO.

It is a relatively straightforward task to put on a simple AZ course like this, just one kite to put out at each control point (some correctly placed, some not), so far simpler than the usual A-E model which requires much more careful placement of up to 5 kites and a decision point too at every site. It could be easily added at a local club event with a good path network. Why not persuade your club to give it a go?

An unexpected delight on the day was the attendance of a small international contingent – from Spain, France and Hungary – who had discovered TrailO through the online opportunities which began in the Covid days.

We could not have run this event without the initiative and enthusiasm of Fiona and the help of some excellent volunteers from EUOC. We look forward to another Big Weekend TrailO next year.

### **Sam Drinkwater provides this account as a competitor:**

I hadn't been back to the Edinburgh Big Weekend since 2018, as it's quite a long train ride from my home in Snowdonia and January is usually too busy to fit in a weekend away. However, when I saw there was a TrailO event included this year I couldn't resist!

Walking round to **Control 1** was a chance to orientate myself and get used to the map scale, before reaching the control site. A couple of other competitors had clustered around the bend in the road and we craned our necks to see if we'd missed anything on the little path below, but there was no flag anywhere nearby. **Control 2** was a good little test, requiring you to look through a narrow gap between thickets to see a flag clearly on a tree. But it wasn't clear if this was the correct (second) tree in the line. A few different perspectives along the path cleared things up and the tops of the trees were helpful as they poked over the thicket.

**Control 3** was actually my biggest loss of time despite being far from the hardest problem. From its position on the side of the low hill and after judging the angles based off nearby trees it was clear that the flag was on the small group of boulders as expected. But it was also clearly on the south

Although the course was suitable for wheelchairs, these competitors tested the concept using a wheeled office chair!

*(Photo: Anne Hickling)*

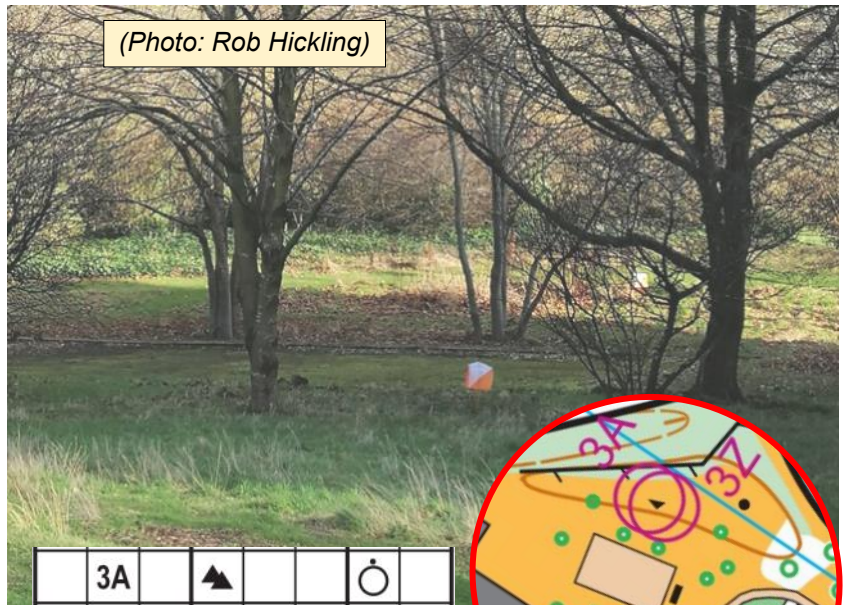


side, rather than the north as given in the control descriptions. A definite zero then and that should have been the end of it, but I started to second guess myself and question if I had understood the rules correctly - 'I should have asked about zero tolerance!' I thought as I fuffed about looking at it from every angle. I'm still fairly new to TrailO so I'll put that one down as a learning experience and despite the time loss I'm glad I stuck with my initial decision and trusted the control descriptions.

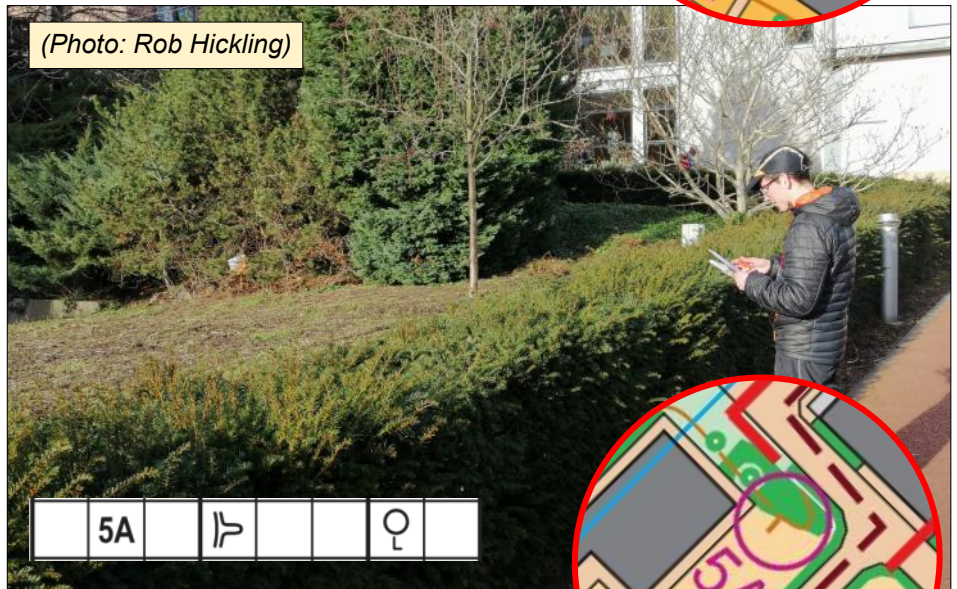
**Control 4** was between the wrong pair of trees, although we found out later it was actually placed incorrectly so that control was voided – but no harm done!

I spent a bit longer than necessary on **Control 5** considering that the flag did perfectly fit the description - south foot of spur. It was the thicket obscuring the spur which made me pause and I spent some time trying to judge the distances precisely before accepting it.

**Control 8** was quite interesting, as instead of being between two trees it was positioned between two boulders. But on the ground, it was between one large boulder on the left and a pair of large boulders on the right. The pair of boulders (or more accurately stone monoliths!) were so close together I couldn't confidently judge if the flag was on the line joining the left-hand boulder with the right-hand front or the right-hand back boulder (as mapped). In the end I decided that the flag would be close enough to the



	3A	▲			○
	3Z	▲			○
	4A	↗	↑	↑	≡



	5A	⤵			○
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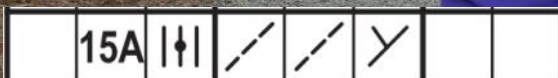
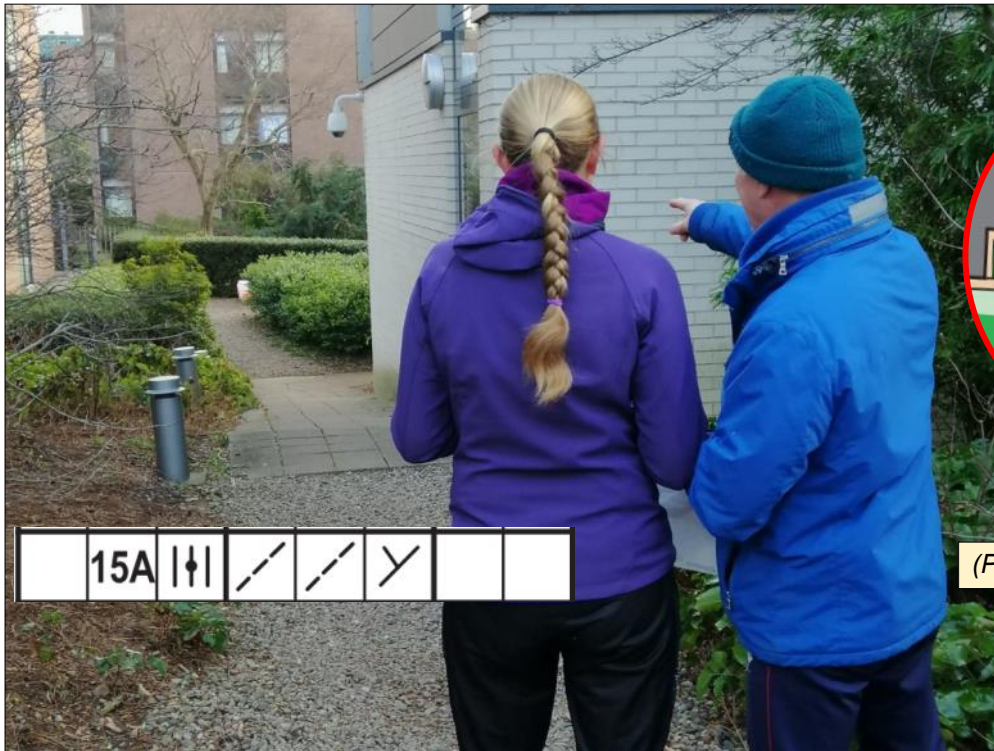
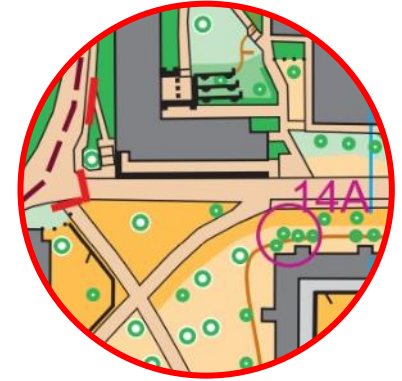


	8A	▲	▲		≡
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midpoint of either line and as the control description didn't give any more specifics to decide from, I was happy to go with Alpha.

I think **Control 9** was the hardest of all. A little further from the path than most and partially obscured by another thicket meant it was difficult to find a good viewing angle. Described as being between trees, the flag was undoubtedly between the trees in question. But the angles just didn't seem right for it to be directly in the middle of them. My initial impression was that it was just too close to the nearer tree and after careful consideration of its position relative to the edge of the building I decided it was far enough away to call it a zero. I wasn't completely confident though and the results show that this control caused the most problems with almost half of the competitors getting it wrong.

**Control 14** was difficult as the four trees were very close together and located a fair way from the path. Careful study of the map was needed to decide which two trees it should have been between and then even more careful positioning was needed to find a suitable viewing angle where the flag was visible. The more distant controls like this certainly added another fun dimension to the event and I think I am gradually improving at judging distances to flags based on their size.



(Photo: Rob Hickling)

**Control 15** was a middle path junction with several other path junctions very close by. Again, the surrounding thickets made it difficult to get multiple vantage points and I had to rely on following the line of sight along the central path, with smaller paths intersecting from the sides.

We had a nice finish at **Control 16** (see next page) as the building closest to the path was large enough to almost appear as two separate buildings, while the actual second building was not clearly visible behind it. This made judging distances harder than normal, especially as the control site was on a slightly raised 'plateau' relative to the viewing position. Despite this it was possible to see the top of the correct staircase in the distance, with the flag actually positioned at the top of a different closer staircase.

All in all, I had a lot of fun on the course. All of the challenges were fair but still made you think carefully, without being so difficult that you were spending a long time desperately searching for more and more viewing angles. As someone progressing on their TrailO journey, every extra event I do is a great experience and I really appreciate the time and effort that the planner and helpers put into the course. It was also great to see people completely new to TrailO taking part and the best description I heard was from someone describing it as a calm, peaceful 'Zen' state of orienteering. In summary, it was a wonderful addition to a great weekend. Thank you Anne, Roger and everyone involved.



(Photo: Rob Hickling)

**Sprint PreO Long:** 16 controls (1 voided)

**Sprint PreO Short:** 10 controls

Long	Name	Controls	Time (m.s)
1	Zoltan Mihaczi (TIPO OC) (Hungary)	15	27.02
2	Samuel Drinkwater (MDOC)	15	28.03
3	Don McKerrow (SLOW)	15	30.40

Short	Name	Controls	Time (m.s)
1	Robertson family (ESOC)	10	19.16
2	Bleakley family (ESOC)	10	21.38
3	Zander Willacy (SOLWAY)	9	31.52

## 20th February 2023 - PreO at the Portuguese O-Meeting (POM)

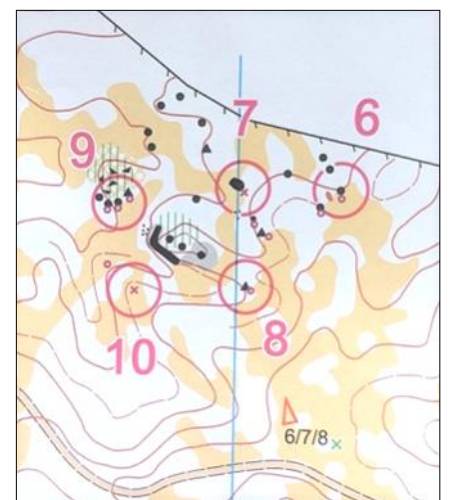


*The Portuguese O-Meeting is an annual event which provides up to 5 days of orienteering. It is held on the holiday weekend which precedes Shrove Tuesday. This year's event included a model event, 4 forest FootO events, an urban night sprint and a PreO event. All events were based in a small village, Ste Bartolomeo do Outiero, near Evora, about 130km south-east of Lisbon. This was the same venue as POM 2018.*

### Introduced by Liz Urquhart:

The European PreO season launched in fine (and sunny) style on 20th February, with a PreO event offered as one of the attractions of this year's Portuguese O-Meeting. This wasn't our only reason for going to the POM, which is a good- and usually sunny- long weekend of orienteering activities, but it was definitely a major inducement.

The terrain was typical of the area, open cork-oak woodland punctuated with rough cistus thickets and complex rock-features varying from piles of small boulders to massive rock pillars- not surprisingly, similar to that used for WTOC a few years ago, and also used previously for the 2018 POM. The planner, Alexandre Reis, was also the mapper, so well acquainted with its potential for tough but fair PreO problems. These ranged from subtle contour features to interpretation of what was where in huge piles of rock via "How do I tell a distant knoll from a boulder when I'm at the 19th control and my head hurts?"



Since this PreO was a selection event for potential Portuguese WTOC competitors, and would be



relatively easy for Spanish competitors to reach, it was guaranteed a good turn-out, but in fact quite a few of the competitors seemed to be groups of comparative beginners learning about PreO -and apparently enjoying it! - which bodes well for the future of PreO in Portugal.

## Déjà vu? Ste Bartolomeo do Outiero

**Additional comments by Graham Urquhart:**

While we knew we were in the same general area, and perhaps were reusing an assembly from 2018, a real surprise was that we revisited precisely the same mapped area for the PreO. This was more a distraction than a help, as the area had been remapped to ISSprOM, but does show how different mapping can offer completely different control areas.

On the right are extracts from the solutions maps for 2018 and 2023. Note in particular the changes in the ponds!

It reminded me (but unfortunately only after I had made my answer) how much the pond features can vary in size in dry weather. Control 2 in 2023 should be at the bottom of a small earth bank close to the pond. Th Delta flag was perfect for me, but looked like it was at the top of a small earth bank and nowhere near the pond, so in the end I Zero-ed it.

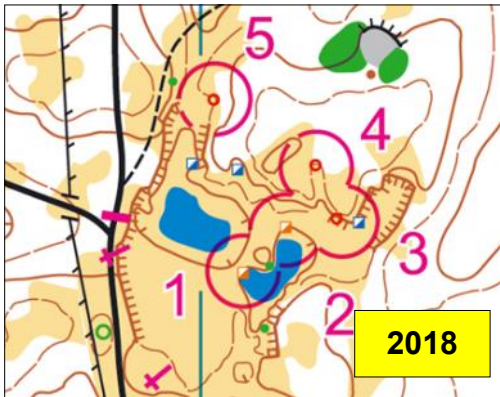
On the bus back to download I realised that the pond was so low as to open up several meters of beach below the earth bank, and this was what I had taken to be the earth bank so Delta was the intended answer. You can see the massive variations in the ponds between the 2 maps with one area dry in 2018.

Fortunately this confusion had impacted a good proportion of the top orienteers in the Open class (most of whom were competing for places in the Portuguese WTOC team), and so by the time results were final the control had been voided as ambiguous. This change didn't really benefit me, as Miguel Angel Garcia still won the P-Class on the timed controls. The lesson – blue features may be larger or smaller than mapped and so don't be misled by them.

*Graham came second in the P Class and was awarded a commemorative memento to mark his success.*



At the time of writing, no photos have appeared from the 2023 event. To illustrate the terrain around the first set of controls, this photos is from the PreO at POM 2018.



Open	Name	Controls	Time (s)
1	Nuno Pires (POR)	19	14
35	David Jukes (BKO)	17	96
59	Martin Wilson (BKO)	13	167
64	Liz Urquhart (OD)	12	168.5

Open	Name	Controls	Time (s)
1	Miguel Angel Garcia (ESP)	18	95
2	Graham Urquhart (OD)	18	159

**PreO:** 20 controls (1 voided) / 1.1 Km, / Max time: 90 or 100 (P) mins / 1 Timed control

## TrailO Development Steering Group

As an orienteering discipline, TrailO in the United Kingdom comes under the jurisdiction of British Orienteering (BOF). Many aspects of the organisation of TrailO are delegated to the TrailO Development Steering Group. Included within its responsibilities are:

- Monitoring and reviewing all Trail Orienteering activities and programmes
- Production of a programme to deliver sustainable international success and capable of supporting athletes to achieve the annual targets; reviewing the programme on an annual basis
- Supporting, volunteers and staff in the delivery of the programmes and the international team by ensuring it is given the opportunity to achieve the agreed goals and medal performances
- Advising the Board on disability awareness and other matters concerned with the involvement of disabled people in orienteering activities

Current membership of the Steering Group:

### Members

- **Chair – Graham Urquhart**
- EMOA – Iain Phillips
- NWOA – John Kewley
- SCOA - Colin Duckworth
- SEOA – Ian Ditchfield
- SWOA - Richard Keighley
- YHOA – Christine Roberts
- British Orienteering Rep. - Scott Collier
- Team Manager - Elizabeth Urquhart

- IT/Software - Tom Dobra
- Website - David Jukes
- Co-opted: Charles Bromley Gardner
- Co-opted: Nick Barrable

### Correspondent Members

- NIOA – Wilbert Hollinger
- SOA – Anne Hickling
- IOF liaison – Clive Allen

Minutes of the meetings of the Steering Group can be found on the BOF website at: [Governance - Steering Groups](#).

## British Orienteering: TrailO Selection Panel 2023

**Chair of Selectors:** Neil Cameron

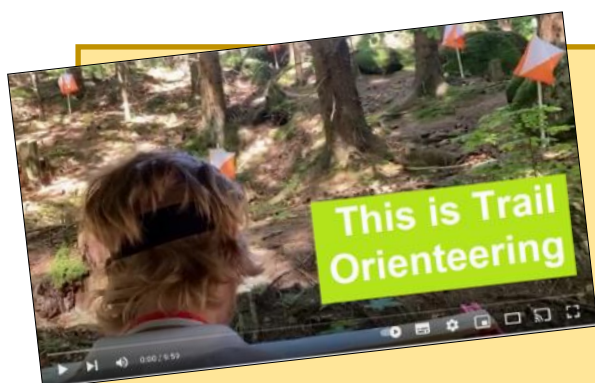
**Selection Advisers:** Clive Allen and Wilbert Hollinger

## UK Involvement in International TrailO

**Member Trail Orienteering Athletes' Advisory Group:** John Kewley

**Member IOF Athletes' Commission:** John Kewley

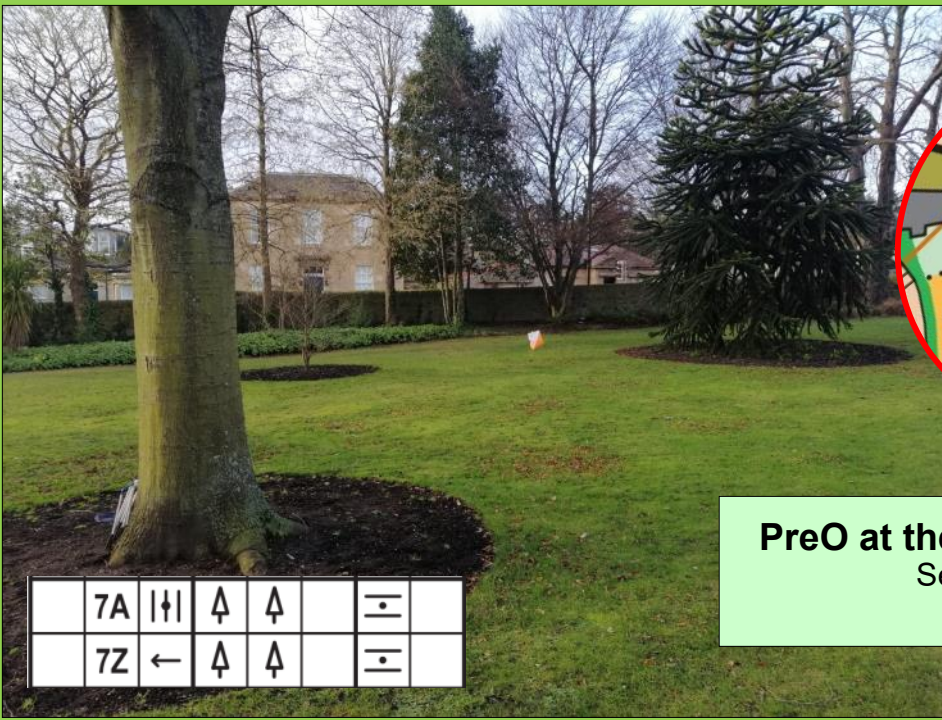
**Qualified Event Advisors:** Charles Bromley Gardner, Colin Duckworth, Richard Keighley, John Kewley, Iain Phillips and Graham Urquhart



## This is Trail Orienteering A video presentation on YouTube

This 10-minute video provides an introduction to the sport. It was produced in the UK during 2022 and made by Katherine Bett with the generous support of **The Orienteering Foundation** (see [The Orienteering Foundation](#)).

You can see it at <https://youtu.be/DX9zy-aX8XA>.



**PreO at the Big Weekend, Edinburgh**  
 See report pages 12-16  
*(Photo: Rob Hickling)*

7A	↑	↑	↑		—•
7Z	←	↑	↑		—•



**TrailO at the National Coaching Conference, Bracknell**  
 See report pages 10-12  
*(Photo: Rob Lines)*



**POM 2023 PreO:**  
**Graham Urquhart (left)** with his award for 2nd place in the P Class. See report pages 16-17  
*(Photo: Lyn West)*

**For more information on TrailO, including news and events, see:**  
**[British Trail Orienteering](#)**