

# MDOC NEWS

Newsletter of Manchester & District Orienteering Club

September 2022



Featuring: Tytherington,  
WMOC, Countryside Score,  
Italy 5 Days, Coast & Islands,  
plus photos, fixtures and more!



# Editorial

Welcome back to MDOC News. This summer delivered a vast array of orienteering opportunities and MDOC members have been making the most of them. The Lakes 5 Day festival was a memorable week for many reasons: incredible weather, physically demanding fell courses, fantastically technical forest courses, long/steep walks to the start, some unfortunate injuries and lots of hard work by the dedicated volunteers.

We had plenty of good results including wins for Jim Trueman on M55L, Kath Speak on W60S, Marie Roberts on W60S, Mark Burley on M35L, Andy Thornton on Light Green, and 4 wins for Martin Green on M65S. Martin also took the overall festival title for M65S! However the true heroes of the week were those club members who helped the event to go ahead by providing computing and central services for the whole week - take a bow Eddie, Kath, Julie, Tony and everyone else who helped out on one day or more. These wonderful people and all the other volunteers like them are the reason we have such a fantastic sport to compete in.

Further afield, three MDOC members made the GB team for the TrailO World Championships in Poland in July. Along with seasoned TrailO campaigner John Kewley, Dominic Wathey and Benjamin Kyd picked up their first GB vests and acquitted themselves very well in their first taste of international competition. They actually finished ahead of several of the more established members of the GB squad and I'm sure this is the first of many international caps for them both.

In the speed based TempO competition Ben was the only Brit to make it through the harsh qualification rounds, with John and Dominic just seconds outside the cut-off. In the final, Ben secured a great 21st place and a lot of valuable international experience to go with it. Meanwhile in the accuracy based 2 day Precision Orienteering competition John Kewley finished 37th and was 2nd placed Brit, Ben finished 65th, and Dominic 78th. We also had David Wathey competing in the open public race, where he finished in a great 21st place.

Also in this months edition we have two articles from separate orienteering trips to Italy, a review of the Coast & Islands orienteering week in Scotland and a great selection of photos from the Tytherington urban event, courtesy of Peter Cull. On top of all this, Countryside Score coordinator Simon Freytag has written a summary of the very successful revival of this popular series of events.

Lastly, after 15 editions I'm sad to say that I will be stepping down from my position as editor of MDOC News at the end of this year. This means we are now looking for a new newsletter editor. Applicants do not require any previous experience, just enthusiasm and a willingness to chat to lots of different members of the club. The job can take up as much or as little time as you are willing to put in and it's a great way to get to know people in MDOC and the wider orienteering community. Speak to me or any of the committee if you are interested!

I hope you have enjoyed the last 4 years of newsletters - sorry about the many spelling and grammar mistakes - my thanks to all who have contributed through articles, photos, quizzes and of course lots of helpful feedback. I plan to put out one more edition later this year, so any more contributions are greatly appreciated. Thank you all for your help!

*Sam Drinkwater*

# Tytherington photos by Peter Cull - Saturday 21st May



*Liam Corner on his way to 5th on the Men's Veteran course*



*Simon Freytag in action*



*Planner Jillyan happy with a job well done*



*Orienteers scattered through Riverside Park during the prelude to the urban action*



*A happy controller means a happy event!*



*Mike Greenwood teaching the next generation of orienteers*



*Peter Ross explores Tytherington with the family*



*Pete Hayes racing through the alleys*



*The evergreen Sue Birkinshaw had a good day out enjoying the challenge of Tytherington*

# Italy 5 Days

*Peter Ross*

Picture this: Stage Two of the Italian five days and we were at an altitude of 2,000m, squashed into a corridor within the cablecar station at Groste. We - this Czech lady and I - were sheltering with many others from a severe thunder and lightning storm. Next to the station was the Finish, the Assembly area and the Refugio. There was a very loud crack, followed by an exceptionally loud bang, which could only have come from an adjacent lightning strike - possibly the station roof. We were debating what to do about starting. She confided in me that although it would probably mean missing her start time she didn't want to leave the station and walk the 800m up to the Start because she had been struck by lightning in the past and didn't want to be struck again. She appeared to me to be genuine, but I'm not familiar with Czech humour - unless you count 'The good soldier Svejk' - which isn't terribly funny in my opinion, but it is dark.

We shared similar start times and consequently the same predicament of having only five minutes to decide either to let's do this thing and sod the consequences (for those of a heroic disposition) or to be sensible and safe but late (for those of a timid disposition and previously struck by lightning). We also shared similar anxieties about family. "Where is your wife now?" she asked (we'd been quite chatty). I looked at my watch. "She's just this minute started." I replied.

I'll never forget her look of pity and concern.



*Groste*

What to do? Well, it had already been done, but nobody had told us corridor people that the event had been abandoned, and the contingency plan had been put in place. Jillyan had been just two minutes from starting when the decision had been made. Racing back to the safety of the Assembly/Refugio as per the plan, which could be summarised as RUN FOR COVER, she had seen - or rather felt - the lightning hit the cablecar cables.

Exciting times. Not unreasonably, the cablecar was de-commissioned for health and safety reasons. Every competitor was now marooned up the mountain and we mostly sheltered in the Refugio. The lucky runners on the course were those hunted and hailed down by the genuinely heroic event safety team, the unlucky ones did the best they could. We heard some details later. The open ground provided no cover from the lightning and things were mighty dangerous. It was both cold and wet, just about everyone was in short sleeves and no-one had a cag. One group flattened themselves against the ground because they couldn't risk the exposure of standing up, and another lady abandoned her metal poles to crouch in a pit. The plan to run for cover was not as straightforward as it may first have appeared. An accelerated leopard crawl may have been the answer but who can do that these days?

Meanwhile it was quite jolly in the packed Refugio. True, there were cries of despair from the coffee queue when the lights went out and the DeLonghi stopped working, but the crisis was over in minutes when the standby generator started up. An Australian couple we met had a tale to tell. He had been hailed at the start triangle, but she had started earlier and had made it as far as her fourth control. The rain had turned to hail so she was hailed down whilst being hailed upon. What a coincidence! And there's more: they were from Brisbane and were members same orienteering club as Peter Effenev - Mr MapRun himself!

Eventually the sun came out, the cable car started, and we all got off the mountain safe and sound.



*View from the Refugio in happier times*

The day before had been quite different. Madonna di Campiglio is a beautiful ski resort stretching up a valley in the Italian Dolomites. It is clean, pretty, with chalets, family owned hotels, designer shops, a high end delicatessen and an ornamental lake next to a manicured public park.

The park had been chosen to be the location of the Finish and assembly area of Stage One - the urban sprint orienteering event. It was the perfect spot and a glorious summer's day.

The Start was on the edge of the forest at the top of the town so the courses were pleasantly downhill. Downhill didn't make for intellectually easy. The final details showed us a section of the map that - we were told - depicted a building on three levels. There were 'helpful' purple arrows and rows of black triangles, both of which required serious time on the IOF mapping standards web page until - eventually - it dawned that the levels were not vertically placed but side-to-side. The building spread down a steep hill. It is an alpine region after all. I asked some other competitors if they too been puzzled by the 'helpful' diagram. From their replies my guess is that Google analytics are probably informing an ecstatic IOF mapping guru of the sudden interest in ISSprOM 2019-2

Jillyan had a great run coming second by a single second, lost between the last control and the finish box, or more precisely, actually at the finish box which didn't beep as speedily as it should have done. The prize for the stage win was a tray of apples.

To continue to Stages Three and Four which were held at Fortini which is at the foot of the Groste cablecar, forested and a delightful place to orienteer. The Italian Forestry Commission, if that is what it is, do not seem to be under the same pressure to cram their trees together as much as our Forestry Commission. They also seem quite happy to leave plenty of clearings in the forest so the map looks like an irregular quilt of white and light brown. They are also quite relaxed about having large open areas. I don't suppose the forests are terribly easy to map, what with contours and boulders and all, and the navigation isn't too easy either, but the orienteering is pure class.

The weather gods were kind to Stages Three and Four. A purist might say that both Stages used the trick of reducing the climb on the course by including a stiff climb to the Start. It may be a bit Peter Rabbit who, as aficionados know, only ever goes downhill, but it works for Peter, and it works for me too.

Finally Stage Five, and return to altitude at Groste. The weather was sunshine with non threatening cloud. The courses were billed as middle distance with minimal (30m) climb. The terrain was perfect for it. The map was a complex mass of contours and form lines, speckled with pits, depressions, boulders and the occasional tree. There was very little else.

The stage seemed set to be a fabulous navigational challenge. Sadly it didn't turn out that way. In practice the courses were too long, with too few controls and the climb was severe. "Che brutto di un corso" was the local verdict and it's hard to disagree.



To sum up the Italian 5 Days:

The terrain at Greste and Fortini were both special in their different ways. The urban was great fun, and all the maps were excellent.

The organisation was first class: the car parks, the assembly and the finish could not have been more conveniently placed. The results appeared in real time on the web.

The planning was not as good as it could have been. There were never really enough controls put out with the result that they were always too busy, and the elephant tracks into and out of them appeared too readily. In particular the last stage - the middle distance at Greste - was a wonderful opportunity squandered.

Will I attend another Italy 5 Day? Yes, I jolly well will if I can. If only for the terrain and the joy of being in the outstandingly beautiful Dolomites.



*A successful finisher after stage 5*

# Coast and Islands 2022

*Steve Bingham*

I was looking for one event to do on my way back from a holiday in the Cairngorms and found this in the fixture list. Seven events on Kintyre and the Isle of Arran. I remembered John Britton raving about last year's event and had assumed that to be a one-off. Not so. Coast and Islands is a low-key, low volume multi-day event holiday with Chris Smithard (FVO) at the wheel as co-ordinator/planner/organiser/mapper/control putter outer/downloader at the finish. He has a small group of friends to help and there are other big-name mappers but the whole thing revolves around Chris.

For 2022, there were four events on consecutive days on the Kintyre peninsular, then a rest day, then the last three were on Arran over two days. None of the areas had been used for orienteering before. Based on competitor times in last year's results, I entered the Short Technical.

Day 1 - Tarbert

Streets, park, woods and ruined castle.

Quite straightforward first section in the town. It all became suddenly 3 dimensional with the castle section in the north east. The map detail and the concentration required caught me out, I overshot a couple of controls around the castle. 23.28 min, 50th/101, 1.75km. Nice BBQ afterwards.



## Day 2 - Tominturk

Mixture of conifer and native woodland with contour features and rock.

Billed as the best of the seven areas, Chris's notes said 'The terrain should make up for the parking arrangements'. The terrain was mind blowing. At the start was a note to say that the tide was such that it would be ok to run across the bay (my leg 11). As requested, many of us arrived by bike to relieve pressure on parking. Two arrived by Kayak! 57.10min, 4th/42, 2.42km

The event was directly across a sea loch from where most of us were staying. The cycle ride was a circuitous and hilly 9.5km. Kayaking was the smart option at 2km.



## Day 3 - Corranbuie South

Oak and birch woodland.

The start was walkable from my pod accommodation. Made a hash of control one as I hadn't seen the path fork on the ground on the way to the circle. That aside, very enjoyable orienteering. 47.45 mins, 3rd/41, 2.26km.

## Day 4 - Corranbuie North

Conifer plantation. Lots of ridges and clearings. The latter were long grass or heather making the white and light green more runnable than the open. 51.41 mins, 1st/45, 2.47km



## Rest Day

Before the event, there had been much discussion regarding the crossing to Arran. The most convenient ferry (Claonaig-Lochranza) is small, non-bookable and with few sailings per day. Our event would have about 100 cars/campervans competing for the crossing with an unknown number of tourist and freight supply vehicles. The only way to add certainty was to book the larger ferry to the east side of Arran (Ardrossan-Brodick) but that would entail an extra 3-hour drive via Glasgow. I decided I was going to risk it - arrive early for the small ferry, sit in the queue and read a book. I arrived at the ferry port well before the first sailing, amazed to see just one campervan there, curtains closed as if it had been there all night, so I parked up behind it on the steep downhill slipway and had my cornflakes and cup of tea. The van was surely a placeholder - no one would sleep in a van on a steep slope feet away from the icy Firth of Clyde, would they? Yes they would - an hour later the curtains opened and two notable Moravian Orienteers cooked breakfast!

It had been difficult to plan a rest day with the uncertainty of the crossing, but this day would be the only chance I would get to climb Goat Fell, one of four Corbetts on Arran. So I took it. A bit of a slog (874m) but terrific views from the top.

## Day 5 Part 1 - Merkland

Plantation conifer forest on a slope. This was heavy going with slippery rhododendron brushings lying deep in some areas. Not my finest hour, or in this case 33.07 minutes, 13th/37, 1.81km.

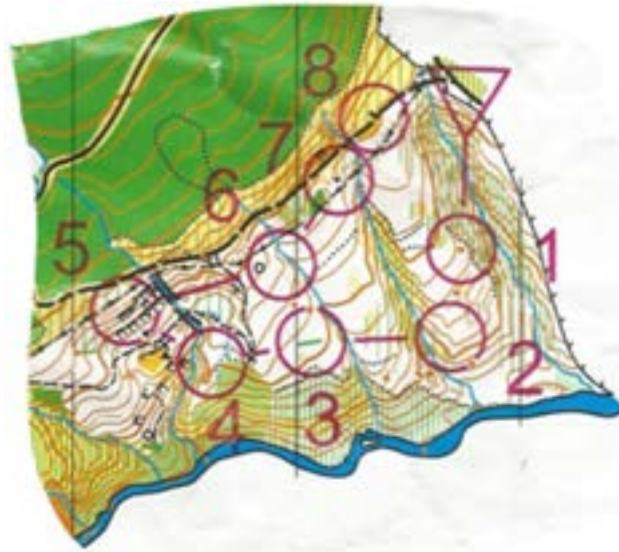
## Day 5 Part 2 - Brodick Castle

Garden and grounds of the castle. Fast and furious. In Chris's notes - 'one of the ponds looks like a lawn on the map, please don't run into it!' I was only beaten by teenagers here, so I'm calling that a win. 13.37 mins, 5th/43, 1.52km.



## Day 6 - Glenashdale/Arran Community Land Initiative

Steep runnable plantation forest/overgrown farm. Double sided map. I found this too rough and gave up on the first half and flipped over the map to do some of part 2, different map scale, different terrain. Reading the map on the run it was hard to fathom how control 8 on both maps could be the same control, but it was.



Chris's notes on Arran were spot-on...

'We'll be honest, the terrain on Arran isn't to the same high level as Kintyre (we looked at 20+ potential locations) but we've managed to find areas that provide interesting challenges! The gardens of Brodick Castle are our favourite with a maze of paths, bushes and water features.'

All in all, a memorable week, and a demonstration of what's possible with an enthusiastic co-ordinator and low volume entries.

# Countryside Score 2022

*Simon Freytag*

We rebooted the Countryside Score for 2022 at the last minute, getting going with it in mid-May. Given the lack of time, the plan was very much to do things as they had been done before, including making use of the previous maps and control sheets as much as possible.



However, a few things have changed since the last edition of the CSS back in 2019. The NSL people have perfected SI timing and individual starts. MDOC Entry had been created. MapRun expertise was building. And pubs seem quite short-staffed, putting pressure on their kitchens.

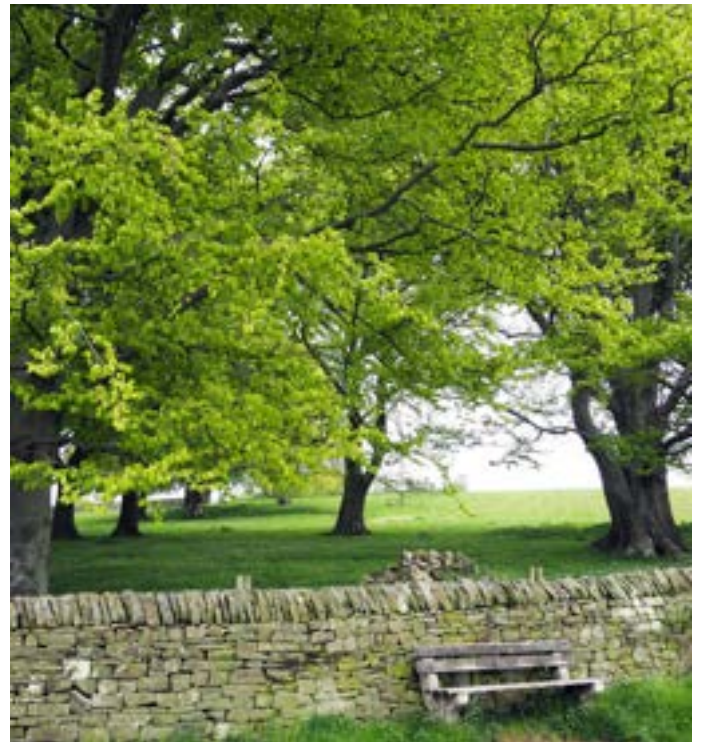
We were discussing all these ideas a bit, but then I was talking to the Crown in Hawk Green and they were really reluctant to keep the kitchen open late enough to run the usual mass start format. A hasty decision was made on the spot to try the punching start idea to solve this problem.



Eventually it seemed sensible to try a bit of everything to see what works - or doesn't! After a bit of discussion this approach seemed acceptable, so long as the various format changes were explained clearly to the participants - you! So I hope that was the case and you were able to work out what was going on.

In the end we had five events, trying out a range of things:

1. New Mills from the Golf Club, which used MDOC Entry and SI Timing with individual starts.
2. Marple/Hawk Green from the Crown, which used MDOC Entry and SI Timing with individual starts. It had a MapRun option.
3. Adlington from the Miners, which used MDOC Entry and SI Timing with individual starts.
4. Bollington from the Poachers, which used MDOC Entry and a mass start. It was MapRun-only for controls and timing.
5. Bollington Poachers2, which used MDOC Entry and a mass start. It was MapRun-only again, with no control descriptions.



This series was only able to happen in such a short period of time because so many people got stuck in, so thanks to what seems like EVERYONE for helping, from people sharing their knowledge, maps and clues from the past, through advice and help on the way, to the people who helped on each day.

Countryside Score will hopefully be back for 2023 - watch this space...

# Notes from WMOC 2022 – Vieste, Italy – July

*John Britton*

Gargano is a sticky-out limestone bump on the NE coast of Italy just above the heel, apparently little visited by non-Italians. The vast majority of the bump is an old beech forest (Foresto Umbria). Dotted about the outsides are a few little hilltop and coastal villages, oodles of excellent beaches with a very very warm sea, and Vieste as the main town/port/resort.

## **It ain't half hot...**

- On Sprint Finals day, I spent some time getting a great position to take a photo of Chris coming in wearing his special bib as a top-10 qualifier. When the moment came ... my phone said "Sorry, I'm too hot to function properly". Never seen that before, but it became a regular issue through the week.

- It had been just as hot at home. When I read my solar panels for the heatwave month I was amazed to find the numbers were below my average for the last 10 years of Julys. Then I discovered that panel efficiency degrades above 25 degrees C, so it maybe shouldn't have been a surprise. Does make you wonder about the fields of panels you see round the Med or various deserts!

## **Maybe the best maps ever (attached)...**

- After pottering round the very tame Model Sprint map around the event centre in Vieste, we ventured out to another model event in a hilltop town called Monte Sant Angelo. This may well be the best urban map and course I will ever see. Wiggly alleys and staircases all over the map and umpteen choices about how to do each leg. Wonderful fun and total concentration required even at walking pace. Not to mention a castle on the top and a major church built into holes in the rocks. Would have made a brilliant Sprint Final venue, but possibly too far away and too much of a tourist honeypot.





- All three forest events used the same arena and Finish. When you look at a bit of map we didn't need to visit, you can see why – there was quite simply enough good stuff to sustain it. The arena was in the middle of a vast beech forest on karst, with all manner of sink holes, lumps and bumps and rocky bits and almost no paths (and certainly few paths you could actually see). The forest floor was a thick layer of leaves over assorted rock; visibility was limited due to quite a lot of young trees; runnability for old people was limited due to quite a lot of young trees ... so, staying on a bearing was pretty tricky, and if you lost contact you could easily spend a long time failing to relocate. Most of the UK worthies we knew had disasters at various times. I thought my 25 minutes on a longish leg in the forest qualification race was pretty dismal, but the GB M70 sprint champ spent 32 minutes on a much shorter leg. And Peter Gorvett, having won the M75 sprint final, was well beaten every day in the forest.



The whole event was almost completely excellent – great maps, decent courses, top competition, not a lot of travelling, roads closed by enthusiastic police.

#### **Non-excellent bits:**

- Nowhere near enough toiletries on day 1, half fixed on day 2 and better in the forest - just one little block of urinals would have saved a huge amount of inconvenience.
- Maybe all three days at the same venue was one too many – just to make for a change.
- Sprint planning wasn't overly challenging, though hurtling up and down steps and round corners in narrow alleys will always be great fun.
- Almost everyone I know went home with Covid – in my case, my first go despite 3 vaccinations and completely unwelcome as it totally wiped me out for the Lakes 5.

#### **Tourist highlights:**

- Boat trip to the Isole Tremiti – a set of islands with caves, swimming and a vast monastery/fort/hill top boulevard. Perfect for the rest day.
- Monte Sant Angelo. A great place to spend a day, as above.
- Pompeii (near Naples airport, on the way back). Nuff said, but I have to say that given the iconic amazement of it, they've made very little effort to make it a decent tourist experience - rubbish maps and signage, very little info, quite a bit closed (including most of the museum).

So, should anyone over 35 think of going to a WMOC, I would definitely recommend it. I've done quite a few now and enjoyed them all. You get to do the best the country can offer, usually well off the beaten tourist track.

## Caption Competition



Send in your best captions to [editor@mdoc.org.uk](mailto:editor@mdoc.org.uk)

## Last editions winner



*"Tee, Hee! I'll hide another couple of controls behind this tree and then they'll never find them!" - Jillyan Ross*

## Fixtures

Saturday 24th September - DEE Local - Everton Park, Liverpool

**Saturday 1st October - MDOC Autumn Series - Sale Water Park**

Saturday 8th October - NWOA Sprint Champs - Edge Hill, Ormskirk

Sunday 9th October - DEE National - Ainsdale Dunes

Wednesday 12th October - PFO Local - Wilson Field, Clayton-le-Moors

Saturday 15th October - PFO Local - Calf Hey, Haslingden

Sunday 23rd October - BL Cumbrian Galoppen - Penrith

Saturday 5th November - PFO Regional - Dean Clough, Blackburn

Sunday 6th November - WCOC Cumbrian Galoppen - Keswick

**Saturday 12th November - MDOC Autumn Series - Werneth Low**

Saturday 3rd December - PFO NWNL - Hurstwood, Burnley

Sunday 4th December - PFO Regional - Hurstwood, Burnley

**Saturday 10th December - MDOC Autumn Series - Longford Park**



*Enter the MDOC Autumn Series and you could be as fast as Dave!*



Photo: Peter Cull