



# Orienteering

## Newcastle and Tyneside



British Orienteering

Issue 2026/2

March 2026



Credit: Sue Metcalfe

### CompassSport Trophy



### Berwick Upon Tweed Urban: June 6th

Having invested in a professionally surveyed map of much of Berwick's urban area, the club looks forward to mounting a UK Urban League [UKUL] event. As Roxburgh Reivers will hold a similar event the following day at nearby Eyemouth, you can look forward to a weekend of excellent orienteering.

Photo: English Heritage with permission

<https://www.newcastleorienteering.org.uk/event/berwick-upon-tweed-urban-ukul/>

<https://roxburghreivers.org.uk/event/eyemouth-urban/>

# CompassSport Trophy 2026

On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 18 club members made up the team competing for the annual CompassSport Trophy at the heat at Lazenby Bank and Eston in Cleveland. The (maximum) 13 runners whose scores counted amassed 1228 points to come fifth in a fairly closely fought heat.

## Compass Sport Trophy

Pos	Club	Scorers	1 Open Scorers	2 M18-/M45+ Scorers	3 Women Open Scorers	4 M55+ Scorers	Score
			5 W18-/W45+ Scorers	6 M65+ Scorers	7 M75+/W60+ Scorers	8 M80+/W70+ Scorers	
			9M M18- Scorers	9W W18- Scorers	10M M14- Scorers	10W W14- Scorers	
1st	NN	13	194 (2) 100 (1) 98 (1)	194 (2) 0 (0) 198 (2)	99 (1) 97 (1) 198 (2)	98 (1) 0 (0) 0 (0)	1276
2nd	CLARO	13	97 (1) 98 (1) 0 (0)	96 (1) 289 (3) 0 (0)	197 (2) 99 (1) 96 (1)	295 (3) 0 (0) 0 (0)	1267
3rd	EBOR	13	91 (1) 188 (2) 100 (1)	91 (1) 99 (1) 0 (0)	93 (1) 196 (2) 0 (0)	95 (1) 294 (3) 0 (0)	1247
4th	EPOC	13	96 (1) 99 (1) 0 (0)	198 (2) 100 (1) 0 (0)	191 (2) 282 (3) 0 (0)	97 (1) 182 (2) 0 (0)	1245
5th	NATO	13	98 (1) 189 (2) 0 (0)	190 (2) 283 (3) 0 (0)	192 (2) 185 (2) 0 (0)	91 (1) 0 (0) 0 (0)	1228
6th	HALO	6	100 (1) 97 (1) 0 (0)	0 (0) 181 (2) 0 (0)	0 (0) 95 (1) 0 (0)	0 (0) 76 (1) 0 (0)	549



Photos: Sue Metcalfe

## Happy New Year, (or how I ended up with a full diary!) – the Ramblings of One Club Member – Patrick Smyth

It all started at the Christmas Party! Also I cannot use the excuse that I had too much to drink as I was driving. Maybe I was distracted by the dingbats and anagrams decked about the table as we tried to answer Fred's devious quiz questions.



Hopefully Peter has included in this edition two adverts about “Junior Fun” and “Summer Evening Coaching”, which are the result of idle talk at the Party.

For some reason the conversation turned to Club Development and I was quite vociferous about what was needed. Anyway some ideas were mooted and recorded on a scrap of paper. Some time in the New Year the note taker emailed me to propose that we try to put into practice those ideas to help develop individuals within the club. As a “controller” and a “coach” with many years of experience (there are a few grey hairs showing now) I probably was asking for the task of organising the ideas I had put on the table at the Christmas Party. I was also keen after spending a couple of weeks (and walking over 200 kilometres) drawing a new map of Prudhoe (the western half – to complement the eastern half already done by club members), especially as there are some quite complex areas,

So back to the discussion. It mentioned three areas: juniors, poor planning and individuals' skills, especially among newer club members. Well, I was shanghaied into work in all three areas; although I will say quite willingly, as it gives me a chance to consolidate those skills, which I am trying to pass on, myself.

So the Juniors. The aim of the Easter series is to provide some fun activities which have at the core a “score” race. Each day there is a different theme but basically while the competitor has to visit the controls there is also fun to be had. The Tuesday events are quite simple – visit as many controls as possible but also keep an eye out for the “bigger” prize. The courses are suitable for adults (although there is a longer option also available). The Saturday events are more complicated score events each with its own theme. The aim again is to collect as many controls as possible but within certain rules (based on the games – Monopoly and Snooker).



And Coaching. I discussed with people the idea of a single coaching day but there did not seem to be a suitable date and also the idea of several sessions to teach different skills came up. The aim of these Wednesday evenings (in May and June) is to allow individuals to either learn or reinforce a set of basic skills. Skills which are easy to forget in the heat of a run and skills which may come as completely fresh to some club members. There will also be the opportunity to socialise after the run (hopefully if the weather is kind in the beer garden).

## Finally Planning.

I enjoy orienteering as it provides the mental as well as the physical challenge. However today all too often the planning leaves a lot to be desired and the mental challenge is not as stimulating as it should be. Remember the planner is trying to set a problem which the competitor has to solve while out running the course; the old definition of orienteering – a cross country run while attempting the Times crossword. We will be holding a “seminar” on planning in the afternoon following on from the Saturday LOP at Seaton Sluice in June. The aim will be discuss what makes a good course, leg and control using a mix of discussion and teaching. It will be invaluable both for novice and experienced alike.

Patrick Smyth

## Easter Holiday Fun Activities in Prudhoe

On each date a “score” course aimed at Juniors with an engaging fun theme. Also a longer more challenging option for Seniors.

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April:** An Easter Egg themed “score” event (45 minutes approx 3km). Senior option; 60 minutes & 7km). Parking & Registration in the car park at the Tyne Riverside Park. Starts 15:00 till 19:00. Map 1:7,500; SI punch for start/finish. You will need a pen to record a letter from each “egg”. Easter egg rewards.



**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April:** MonOpoly themed “score” event. 45 minutes for Juniors or 60 Minutes for Seniors. In Castle Estate Prudhoe. Road side parking on Western Drive. Starts 10:00 till 11:00. New map at 1:4,000 (A3). SI punching through out. Collect extra points each time you punch the “Go” control.



**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April:** Clued“O” course of approx. 3km (Orange standard). Senior course of approx. 6km. Parking and Registration in the car park at the Tyne Riverside Park. Starts 15:00 till 19:00. Map 1:7,500; SI punch for start/finish. Pen required to record the clues you find at the controls until you discover “Who Done It”.



**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April:** SnOOker themed “score” event in the Riverside Park. After each red control pot a colour control. Starts 10:30 till 12:30. New map at 1:4,000 (A4). SI punching through out. (Approx 30 mins). Alternative/additional medium length (5km) urban race for Seniors (no under 16's) new map at 1:4.000.



Cost = £5 for seniors and £2 for juniors.

More details of each race on our website [www.newcastleorienteering.org.uk](http://www.newcastleorienteering.org.uk)  
Or from Patrick (07960 918 163, [patrickcsmyth@outlook.com](mailto:patrickcsmyth@outlook.com))

## Red Squirrels

Following the club's Local League event at Ashington in December the following message was received which explains how the squirrel population is closely monitored.

"Yesterday I got a call from a guy at Ashington Community Woods, who does maintenance work there, explaining that one of the ladies in the orienteering group yesterday told him she had found a dead grey squirrel in a trap. This should never happen and so I visited the woodland and, based on the directions she gave, I did find a trap with a dead squirrel in it. I am writing to you now in case this is mentioned by anyone in the group and you want to provide them with an explanation.

Our native red squirrels are under threat from the non native grey squirrels. The threat takes a number of forms, the worst being a squirrel pox which kills all of those reds exposed to it but is harmless to the greys. Since the introduction of the greys in 1870 the numbers of red squirrels have declined from over 3 million to around 130,000 in UK. Most of these are in Scotland. In the same period the grey population has grown to well in excess of 3 million.



© Peter Trimming  
<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/4661750>

In Northumberland and Cumbria we have some of the last surviving colonies in England and the red squirrel groups are in a constant battle to protect them. Culling the grey squirrels, whilst not an ideal thing to have to do, is the primary way of protecting the reds. We are not allowed to shoot greys in "public" woodland and so we use traps set in areas where we have evidence of grey squirrel activity. If any red squirrels are in the area, the traps are monitored with real time wifi camera feeds so that any reds straying into a trap can be released quickly.

Once a trap is set it has to be visited twice per day to ensure that any animal caught is dealt with as soon as possible. The traps are also encased in heavy duty plastic to protect the animal from the elements. If the temperature is going to fall below zero overnight then traps are shut. We usually trap a particular area for 3 to 5 days consecutively. Once we are finished we will empty any remaining bait from the trap and close it. When a trap is closed a metal bar springs to the back of the door to prevent an animal entering it when we are not going to be present to handle it. In this particular case the trap door appeared to be functioning fine and so I had to conclude that somebody had found the trap and reopened it.

All of our traps have a plastic tag which carries details of our group and who to contact for information. They also remind people that it may be an offence to tamper with a trap. It is illegal, for example, to release a grey squirrel from a trap.

### Red Squirrel Groups in the club area

<https://www.northernredsquirrels.org.uk/nrs-groups/northumberland-groups/>

<https://www.northernredsquirrels.org.uk/nrs-groups/>



© Copyright [Walter Baxter](#) and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](#).