

Chair's report



Well, 2020 is certainly going to go down in the history books as a “different” year. I know we’ve all faced challenges and disruptions that we could never have imagined a year ago. As a club it has been a particular challenge as we thrive on being social. We’ve had to make some massive adjustments to the way we do things. One thing that has been very clear this year is how we support each other within the club to make things work, whatever restrictions life throws at us.

Let’s go back to the start of the year. We finished 2019 and started 2020 with our 5th Northern Night Cup. This year it was our turn to host the final event and Burns Supper. I’m sorry to say that I couldn’t make that event. We had a couple of podium places - Alice came first on the medium course and Izzy came second on the long. Well done to both of you, and to everyone else who took part. Special thanks to everyone who helped out.

The Scottish Night Championships took place at Findhorn in February. A number of members travelled up to the coast for the joint weekend of the championships and the first (and only) SOL of the year. Thanks to Hilary who controlled the Night Championships.

The final event we attended was the CompassSport Cup heat at Errochty in March. The CompassSport Cup is a club competition at which larger clubs tend to do best. BASOC did amazingly well; we had a full 13 counting club members and came 4th in the Trophy competition, losing out on 3rd place by a mere 5 points. Well done to everyone who took part and scored points for BASOC!

Then came the disruptions from March to July. Our regular Tuesday training became an online social occasion, where we got chatting about cooking, gardening and anything else that came up. It doesn’t seem like many of our members were bored during lockdown; we even had to move our socials to later in the evening because people were too busy at 6:30pm!

Other opportunities also came along during the lockdown. It was an opportunity to develop MapRun courses in the area, for BASOC members and visitors to use at any time. We now have several courses in Grantown, Aviemore and Kinraig. Thanks to Lynne and Kat for getting them set up.

Tuesday training was able to start up again in July. It took a bit of adjustment to get back into running around the forests again but it was finally a chance to return to some form of normality. It felt like I spent far longer eating blaeberries than actually running around for the first few weeks, and I’m sure I’m not the only one.

Although many events have been cancelled or postponed this year, there have been a small number of events that have taken place. All the junior camps were cancelled, but the Junior Selection Races took place in August in the Lake District and, as a result, Faith and Alice were invited to attend a Talent Squad assessment weekend in Edinburgh in October. Congratulations to both of you. You can read Faith’s article about the weekend on our website.

Later in the year, some clubs have opened up their small events to non-members. Several BASOC members have been to events run by Moravian and other local clubs. Just a reminder - at the moment we can only attend events in Level 1 or 2 areas - that currently restricts us to the wonderful forests locally and over in Deeside. What a shame!

Into autumn, moving into Dark-O brought the usual challenges (where did I put my head torch?!) but it's one of our strengths as a club. Getting lost in the forest in the dark is fantastic training. We won't be holding a Night Cup this year but Moravian are putting on several night events that BASOC members are welcome to attend.

One piece of positive news we've had in the last week is that no orienteering club in Scotland has been contacted by Test and Protect. It's excellent news, but doesn't stop us needing to be careful when we meet. At every Tuesday=O that I have been to since we restarted, people have been really sensible about keeping their distance, not sharing equipment and all the other things we now have to think of every day. Thanks to everyone: you have been so sensible and shown how much you care for everyone else. I wouldn't have expected anything less from you all.

I know many people, myself included, have changed trajectory slightly with everything that has been happening this year. We will, sadly, have members who choose not to renew next year as their lives take a new turn. I wish to take this opportunity to say: You will always be welcome within the BASOC community, to attend our training, events and socials, and we sincerely hope our paths will cross again in the future. Best wishes with your new ventures.

As we look forward to 2021, I want to thank everyone who has helped out over this strange year, whether on the committee, planning and running training and events, coaching or generally keeping things going. We are a small club and run on a very limited number of volunteers but we are active every week, come rain, shine, wind, snow, midges or anything else thrown at us. Many thanks to everyone who has made 2020 a "success" and let's look forward to a slightly more active 2021.

Plans for 2021

It's a little difficult to plan much for next year as there are so many unknowns. However, the committee have come up with the general plan of:

- * Continue Tuesday training as usual. When we start to get back into daylight we have the possibility of turning some of the training sessions into small events.
- * Three local daytime events to be held over the year, in addition to any Tuesday evenings we hijack.
- * The Scottish 6 Days is on our doorstep this year, in the case of some of our members literally. We will be helping at one of the days of Lochaber 2021, still to be confirmed but most likely to be Day 5: Creag Dhubh, which is one of our areas. Entries open on 1st January.
- * As with our previous plans, we will not be applying for a SOL this year even if the series goes ahead. We decided in 2018 that we would try to put on a SOL every other year, in non-6 day years, to keep the workload for our members to a manageable level. This makes 2022 the next year we will apply for a SOL.