

Bonington Trophy

I have been interested in maps from a young age, my father brought a large world map back from the war that I often spread out on the floor at home and studied. I bought my first Ordnance Survey map when I was twelve, 1" of Nottingham, and, by chance, I ended up being trained in cartography in Whitehall in 1966, World Cup and Carnaby Street. In November 1965 I had been to the inaugural meeting of the North Midlands Orienteering Association at Nottingham University (a police initiative) and in March 1966 I got lost and retired at the first O event at Sherwood Forest held on an outline (black & white) OS 1:25,000.

After a 15-year gap filled with hill walking I was drawn back into the sport by other cartographic friends from Leeds who had been at a weekend held to introduce professional cartographers to the sport at the Hermitage, Berkshire by Robin Harvey. My first events were at Ecclesall Woods in March and Sherwood Forest (again) in May 1981, I was hooked. With my experience of the now defunct art of scribing it was not long before I was involved in O mapping for NOC.

Producing an O map is a team effort as in most cases you are building on someone else's previous efforts. It became specialised quite early, moving away from OS copies. The club has a black and white, line drawn 1:25,000 map of Blidworth Forest dated 1969 annotated with "map redrawn and partially corrected" and colour was being used the following year. So mention here of some of the early NOC pioneer mappers, Bert Bradshaw, Stuart Collins, the Heydons, Mark Thompson, Kevin Lomas, Alan Gould, Mick Lucking and Peter Hubberstey, all active by 1980 and several still involved.

Since then, there have been many others including the Bournes, John Orton, Alan Beardsley, Keith Streb, Simon Elliott, Andrew Ridgway and Dave Cooke.

NOC have also had maps produced by professional mappers. Robin Harvey produced the first Permanent Orienteering Course map of Sherwood Forest, Steve and Pat of Stirling Surveys, probably the best O mappers in the 1990s, improved Clumber Park for a JK, and Rod Postlethwaite did the first maps of the many old pit areas we now rely on. These stayed briefly at the Olivant household thanks to Pauline's support. Peel Land Surveys and Roberts Mapping also produced NOC maps.

Worth a mention is that Robin and Sue Harvey along with Gordon Petrie at Glasgow University developed the O mapping specification that was used for the successful 1976 World Championships in Scotland. With some revision, this is the specification we use for forest maps today. I was lucky enough to meet Gordon Petrie at the British Cartographic Society's 25th conference at Nottingham University and exchanged emails with Robin last year.

It remains the case that O mapping is a team effort. I rely on planners' input, Richard and Ant are excellent at pointing out where effort is required and have younger legs than me, and no event would happen without the printed map, these days often Simon Elliott but Mick and Hassall & Lucking require a special mention for their outstanding work over all this time.

Last but not least as he was first as far as I am concerned a special mention to Alan Gould who was good enough to show me the ropes (I wasn't a surveyor) in Sherwood Forest (again) all those years ago and updated the majority of the Clumber Park map for this January's event, thanks Alan!

David Olivant