

## GMOA Chairman's report for 2021/22

I guess it is no surprise that map sales (and presumably POC usage) have reverted to their pre-covid levels. How I wish we had some way of monitoring usage. This has been a problem ever since GMOA was set up and there must surely be a way to use current technology to produce some figures. Ideas please!

Meanwhile we continue to maintain our 56 POCs and you will see from John's report that the work never stops – inspection visits, reports, Phil making new hardware, John and others installing it, editing the maps and websites – and then maybe just a very few map sales and users in the year in some parks. But if there isn't a POC in a park then there is no possibility of someone discovering the pleasure of our sport. All ideas on this subject would be welcome.

The major item of news this year is that John Britton was awarded a new British Orienteering Award at JK2022. A submission was put in for the "Continued Contribution to Orienteering" category, mentioning his contributions over almost every aspect of our sport, but with a heavy emphasis on his work for the Permanent Courses in Manchester. You can read the submission on the BOF website. Everyone involved in GMOA is thrilled that John's dedication and hard work have been nationally recognised.

On a more mundane level.....the only POC that had a major change this year was Lyme. Courses and posts were moved so that they were all accessible even though the open area called Drinkwater Meadow is often closed to the public because of dog/sheep problems. There seems to be reduced usage of the Lyme POC compared with a few years ago, and MDOC are not putting on as many events there. I don't think we can still think of it as our "flagship" POC. Is this caused by parking charges, or restricted access during the covid years? Perhaps we should work with the National Trust to increase usage. Maybe free maps given out at the gate?

John mentions that I have done 58 site visits in the year – it's been an excellent excuse for lockdown walks, and regular gentle exercise in some lovely parks. It has been great to see how many of our POCs are in good order.

I hope that none of our regular postwatchers feel that I have usurped their role. It's a case of "the more visits the better", as problems are picked up quickly and can be dealt with quickly too. We ask for 3 visits per park per year, but a visit every month just improves the standard of the POC, especially during the summer when vegetation growth drowns lots of posts. So please don't be put off if you see that I went to your park very recently.

As always, I am asking for new postwatchers. It is not an onerous commitment, just 3 visits a year, involving an hour long run round the posts. We have quite a few gaps for new post checkers, and many parks would enjoy a second regular checker. Your first visit to a park tests your orienteering skills as many of the posts are discretely placed.

Offers to John to take over the maintenance of one or more POCs would be greatly appreciated.

We had two on-line Committee meetings during the year. The idea of giving free POC maps to MDOC and SELOC members was discussed but never fully implemented. We also agreed to investigate the possibility of following up map purchases with a request for feedback (but there is doubt about the legality of this). We agreed that more effort is required to distribute the 2021 POC leaflet, and to get advertising posters into all the parks with POCs. Help with both these projects would be welcome.

I thank our committee members and our postwatchers for their continuing work on behalf of GMOA. Special mention of Dave McCann's role as our Treasurer and map printer/distributor.

Looking forward to a year without health restrictions.

Sue Birkinshaw

