



 **ecotrails**

VICTORIA PARK

GUIDE TO ORIENTEERING



Orienteering was first established in Sweden in the early 1900s

Permanent orienteering courses, as established in Victoria Park, are a good way of introducing the sport. These courses will provide an enjoyable opportunity for those with limited map-reading skills to identify map features 'on the ground' and successfully navigate their way through the area on paths and tracks.

- 1 As an activity orienteering can be enjoyed by everyone. People of all abilities, age and gender can participate in this inexpensive leisure time activity. At an introductory level, orienteering requires no more than a pair of trainers and outdoor clothing. Add to this a spirit of adventure and an appreciation of the outdoors, and orienteering should provide you with many enjoyable opportunities for healthy activity.



Orienteering can be taught in the school/youth club environment leading to visits to the local parks and eventually to forest and hillsides. This booklet will concentrate on the local park environment and show how basic skills can be learned and put into practice with minimum preparation, travel or expense.



Ecotrails include environmental/ historical trails and orienteering courses, both requiring the use of a specially produced map which can be downloaded from the website www.ecotrailsni.com.

Orienteering maps differ from the more common Ordnance Survey maps because they are produced using orienteering symbols. These are described on a Key or 'Map legend' normally found on the bottom or edge of the map. These symbols lend themselves well to finding locations on the Ecotrails and navigating the orienteering courses.



2 So what is Orienteering?

On the map, various sites have been marked with red circles - these are known as 'control' sites. With the aid of the orienteering map, participants find their way to these locations by a route of their choice. On the ground at these control sites will be found posts marked with the distinct red and white square symbol. Note: the green and white posts are linked to the environmental/historical trail.

The recommended starting point to begin the orienteering course is identified by a red triangle on the map. Participants will need to bring a pencil and a control card. The control card is used to check that the participants have found the posts and completed the set course.

On arrival at a control site, the participants must find the post.

It will have a number which corresponds to the number on the map and it will also have two 'code' letters. These letters are copied into the corresponding numbered box on the control card.

Name _____					
Finish _____					
Start _____					
Time _____					
17	18	19	20	21	22
18	19	20	21	22	23
19	20	21	22	23	24
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87	88	89	90	91	92
88	89	90	91	92	93
89	90	91	92	93	94
90	91	92	93	94	95
91	92	93	94	95	96
92	93	94	95	96	97
93	94	95	96	97	98
94	95	96	97	98	99
95	96	97	98	99	100

CONTROL CARD
(a copy can be downloaded from the website www.ecotrailsni.com)



The first steps

Map reading skills are the first challenge to participants. This map is drawn to a scale of 1:3000. This means that 1cm on the map represents 3000cm (30m) on the ground. Other scales are also used and 1:10,000 is the most common of these.



Map symbols are grouped by colour as follows:

Black for rock and man-made features.

White for woodland which is mature and has good visibility.

Green for dense vegetation - the darker the green the denser.

Yellow for open land and fields.

Blue for water features.

Brown for earth features.

Note: Orienteering maps differ from Ordnance Survey maps because they emphasise the landscape, small detail and vegetation cover. This is important for on-foot travellers trying to move across the terrain.

It is advisable to ensure that participants have an understanding of what a map is and are familiar with the symbols used before taking the next step. This can be undertaken before visiting Victoria Park.

There are a wide variety of exercises and resources that can assist understanding. These are described at the back of this booklet and can be purchased from the suppliers listed.



Getting out on a 'map walk' in the park is a good practical step to enable beginners to relate the map symbols to the ground features.



3 An important skill that needs to be introduced at this stage is 'setting' the map. When the map is 'set', the various symbols drawn on the map align with the features which they represent on the ground. Another way of setting the map is to rotate it so that the (magnetic) north arrow on the map points in the same direction as the magnetic north on a compass needle. The north arrows on orienteering maps are aligned to magnetic north not grid north.

Judging the scale of the map to distance on the ground is another useful skill. This can be developed by clearly identifying two points on the map then walking between the two points on the ground.

Measuring a distance on the map and then converting to distance on the ground can also be used when appropriate, depending on the ability of the participants. When the participants are reasonably familiar with the symbols and the scale of the map, it is time to try orienteering.

1. Select the easiest course from the information supplied and define the course by drawing a red straight line from the start triangle to the first control circle, then to the second etc and finally back to the triangle. This highlights and gives shape to the course. Have a clear plastic bag/cover for the map, in the event of rain.
2. Each participant/group will also need a control card, a pencil and a list of the appropriate control descriptions which describe the feature the post is beside (see page 9).
3. It is best to have a time interval between each group to encourage them to find their own way and not simply follow.
4. On completing the selected course, the control cards are checked against a master control card for correct letters.

You do not need to introduce timing so everyone who completes the course is a winner.

This type of orienteering is known as 'cross-country'.



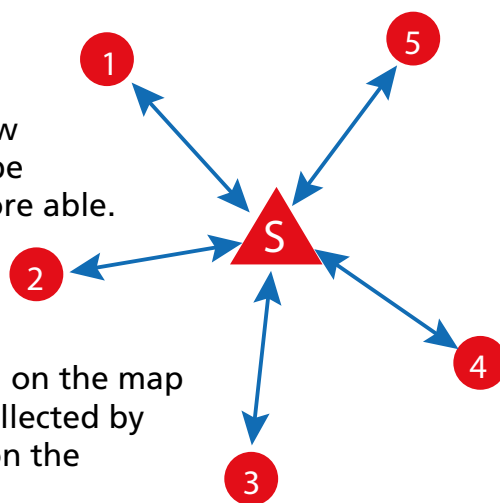
Developing skills

Once orienteering is understood and basic map reading skills developed, there are many ways and means to improve skills.

4

Star Exercise

From a position central to the controls, individuals or pairs are asked to locate a particular control site and return. If successful, they are then allocated another control site. The time taken in returning indicates how well the task is being managed. Additional sites can be created with increasing difficulty to challenge the more able.



Control Placing

Working individually, or in pairs, participants are asked to set out a control marker at a point indicated on the map and then return to the assembly point. This is then collected by another individual, or pair. Discussion often follows on the correct siting of the markers.

5 Developing the activity

Once the participants have experienced cross-country orienteering and are familiar with a park or forest you may wish to introduce them to other types of orienteering.

Score

This involves a scattering of controls which can have different points allocated, e.g. the further from the start the greater the points. The whole group can start at the same time and a time limit is set to return. The winner is the person/group who gains the most points. Points can be deducted for returning after the time.

Note : Participants need a watch to be able to judge the time left.

Permanent posts can be used.

Relay

This usually consists of teams of three with each member running individually on a different course.

Three courses are planned and can vary in length to allow for mixed ability teams, e.g. short, medium and long courses. It has good spectator value and all first leg runners can start at the same time.

Permanent posts can be used.



Master Maps

This is a copying exercise requiring a set of maps with control circles marked on them (master maps) and a set of unmarked maps.

The participants are placed in teams of approximately five and each team is given an unmarked map plus a pen. A master map for each team is placed approximately 20 metres away.

The first member of each team starts at the same time and runs to their master map to memorise the first circle. They then run back and draw the circle on their map. This is repeated for each member of the team until all the control circles are copied. The fastest team wins, provided that all the circles are correctly copied.

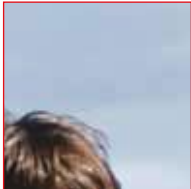










The above suggestions are only part of a recognised training/teaching programme designed to improve technique, fitness, ability and confidence.

The established scheme for technique development is the Step Scheme



6 The Step Scheme

Note : The Step Scheme extends to Step 'O'

				STEP D	Skill Reading objects beside line features	Technique Catching features, simple distance measurement
			STEP C	Skill Linking line features	Technique Check points	
	STEP B	Skill Following line features	Technique Thumbing, handrails			
	STEP A	Skill Orientating the map	Technique Understanding map symbols			
GROUND	Skill Understanding maps	Technique Understanding the concept of a map				



7 Definitions

LINE FEATURES	fences, streams, paths etc.
THUMBING	moving your thumb along the map to reflect your route on the ground.
HANDRAILS	when line features are used for navigation.
CHECK POINTS	easily defined locations like junctions of a path and fence, etc.
CATCHING FEATURES	used as an indicator to the orienteer that they have gone beyond the point they are looking for.

As experience and knowledge of technique improves, the orienteer will gain confidence and skills enabling him/her to orienteer off paths and tracks.



8 Taking the next step

Having mastered the courses in Victoria Park there is a world of opportunities for participants, as individuals or in a group, at other permanent orienteering courses e.g. Ecotrail sites and with local orienteering clubs.

All orienteering events are open to everyone (junior participants do not need to be members of a club) and are mainly organised to a Coloured Coded Scheme.



The Coloured Coded Scheme relates to ability and allows participants to progress at a rate that suits them, starting from white (1.5km in length and technically very easy), to brown (7.5+ km in length and very hard), in eight coloured steps.



Control Descriptions

The following lists the control sites and details of the permanent orienteering courses.

Descriptions of control sites

1. Path junction
2. Bridge, east side
3. Building, north side
4. Path bend
5. Vegetation boundary
6. Building, north side
7. Fence, corner
8. Vegetation boundary
9. Path bend
10. Vegetation boundary
11. Bridge, south side
12. Path bend
13. Fence, south side
14. Vegetation boundary
15. Buidling, east side



Course 1 is a White standard course 1.8km in length, starting and finishing at the red triangle and visiting controls 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Course 2 is a Yellow standard course of 1.6km in length starting and finishing at the red triangle and visiting controls 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15

Note: Each participant should have a copy of the control descriptions before starting an orienteering course. These can be written on to the back of the control card.

SAFETY

It is good practice for leaders to visit the location before the activity takes place as this will help familiarise them with the site and to identify any potential problems.

Leaders should be aware of the light traffic between the entrance and the car park.

Please contact the Connswater Community Greenway on 028 9046 7925 to arrange a suitable visiting date.



Need some help?

NI Orienteering is the governing body for the sport in NI.

www.niorienteering.org.uk

Email: publicity@niorienteering.org.uk

Resources Provider

Harvey Map Services

12-16 Main Street, Doune, Perthshire, FK16 6BJ

Tel: 0786 841 202.

www.harveymaps.co.uk

Books

Start Orienteering - a series for Primary Schools
c/o Harvey Map Services.

Orienteering : Skills, Techniques, Training- published by Crowood Sports Guides

Video

'The First Step' . From school to orienteering courses

c/o Compass Sport

Tel: 01506 632728.

www.compassport.co.uk

Explorer Challenge

An award scheme to encourage young people to venture into the outdoor world by using maps.

www.explorerchallenge.com

Training

A one day course for leaders/teachers to enable them to introduce orienteering to beginners can be arranged through the NI Orienteering leading to the British Orienteering Federation Teaching Orienteering Level 1 award.

Free Resources

www.britishorienteering.org.uk/page/school_games

Connswater Community Greenway

The Connswater Community Greenway is a 9km linear park with 16km of foot and cycle paths which follow the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers. The Greenway connects green and open spaces including parks and playing fields and provides access to local amenities. It also incorporated elements of the East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Developed by East Belfast Partnership and funded by Big Lottery Fund, Belfast City Council and the Department for Social Development, the Greenway is a living landmark for everyone to enjoy .

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Rivers Agency funded the East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme elements of the project.

The Connswater Community Greenway is committed to developing a number of heritage and tourism trails which will encourage visitors and locals to learn about the vast history of the area, to visit the Greenway and to visit east Belfast.

The trails can be downloaded or viewed online www.communitygreenway.co.uk/trails

