

## **BOC 2023 Report**

**David Jukes**

*If I had still been editing a club newsletter, almost certainly I would have written an editorial or provided an article reflecting on the staging of the British Championships at Cold Ash on Saturday. In the absence of a newsletter, I felt I wanted to provide something similar. So this is what I would have said:*

I am not certain when I first heard that the club was to host the British Orienteering Championships (BOC) this year but I can recall feeling anxious. The BOC is a prestigious event with many requirements additional to those of the events the club usually stages. As far as I am aware, the club membership has been in gentle decline for a few years and I wasn't certain that we had the manpower or expertise. Although there would be regional support, as an event on our home terrain, the majority of tasks (and hence responsibility) would fall on club members.

I am no longer a Committee member and attend very few events now so it was only when the final details appeared that I could see who had taken on the major tasks: **Jane Courtier** as Organiser, supported by **Fiona Clough** as Assistant, **Mark Foxwell** and **Simon Moore** as joint Planners, **Sue Parker** as the day Volunteer Coordinator, **Derick Mercer** as Safety Officer and **Steve Waite** as Arena Manager. Would the team be up to the task? It only needs one weakness or failure and the day can quickly be remembered as a disaster.

My experience of the event was based on my work as a member of the Planners' team putting out and collecting in controls. On Friday it was apparent that Mark and Simon had done a huge amount of preparation – not just in devising the courses but in collecting the kit and preparing packs for each individual putting out controls. Simon (and probably Mark) was back out at first light (about 5.30) on Saturday putting out more controls and, at 7.00, sending the team out again with SI boxes. It all went remarkably smoothly with minor issues sorted quickly. When the Controller asked the WhatsApp group if he could 'let them start on time', the answer from Simon was a simple 'Yes' – I felt he could have added 'Of course.'

And so the event happened. As I was not competing, I had a chance to wander around the area watching it happen. I went to the Arena – a remarkable sight with a large car park, marquee, club tents, traders and commentary! I went to the starts – efficiently sending competitors on their way! I went to the manned road crossing – competitors safely being seen across! I was back at the Arena at 3.30 just as the crowd was assembling for the prize giving - right on schedule! I then headed off to collect in 'my' controls before returning to the Arena at 5.30 – and it was almost empty, an amazing transformation! Back home, the results were on the web and Routegadget was available.

There may have been problems and panics but none that I was aware of. What a great team effort, not just from the individuals named above but by all club members who were helping. Of course there were supporters from other clubs who contributed but the responsibility for delivering the event was down to BKO. And as one of the volunteers, who took on no responsibility, I think it only right to congratulate those who spent many days, weeks or months in preparing everything so that competitors from across the UK could be challenged and for the 2023 British Champions to be identified. I need not have worried – we did it!