

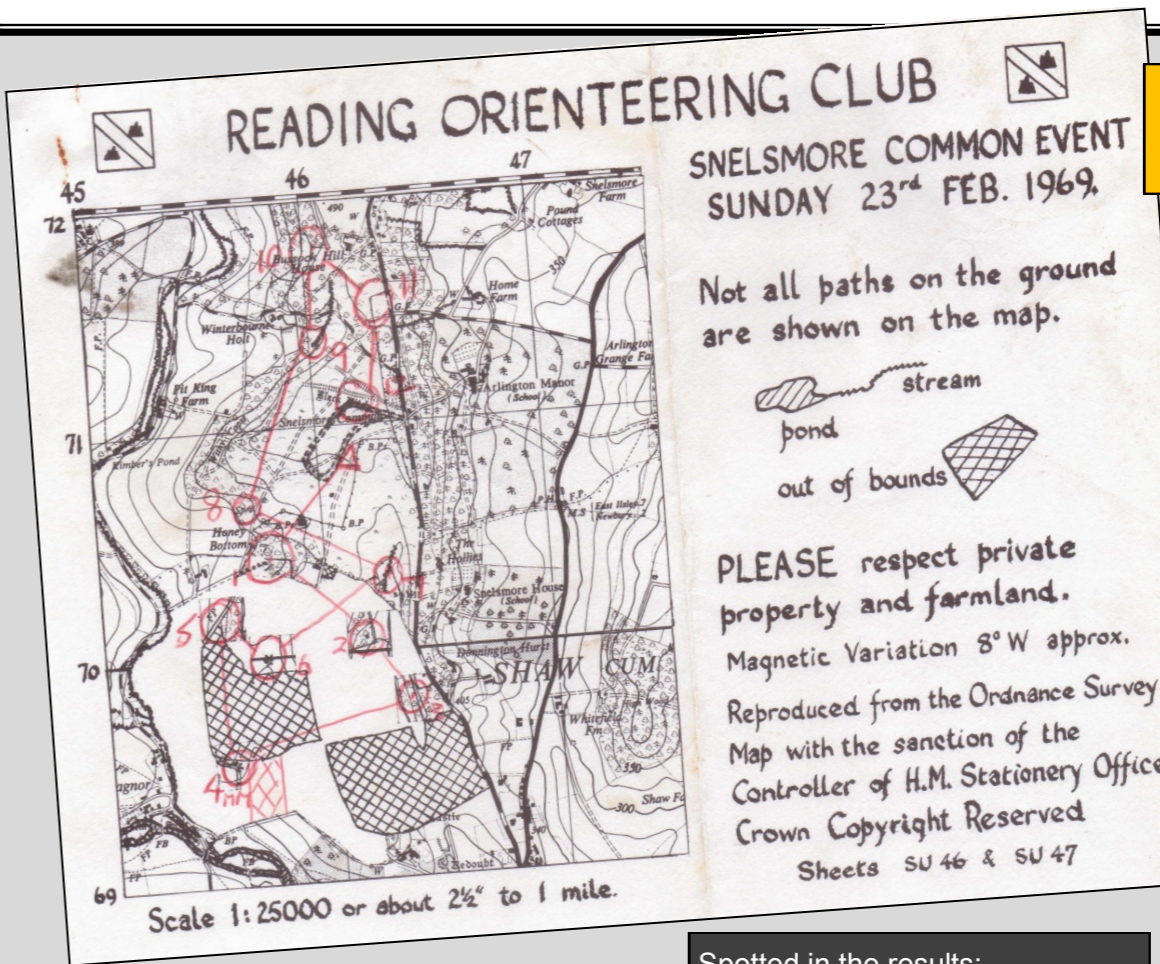
Know your sport: The early days of orienteering

Here we take a look at one of the first events staged by the original **Reading Orienteering Club** in its early days. The club archives contain some interesting documents relating to an event at Snelsmore Common on the 23rd February 1969.

All competitors had to copy their course off the 'Master Maps' showing the controls after the start line. Notice that it was common to use '2nd Master Maps' when the course looped back as before electronic systems came in it would have been possible to take the controls in the wrong order.

What was more unusual was this attempt to make the courses "more interesting" by only showing bits of the map around the controls. Competitors had to guess what might be in between!

See the map to see what this meant!



Full Event Map (reduced in size)

This map, photocopied from the OS 1:25000 map of the area, has been made "more interesting" by blanking out much of the southern half and only leaving small sections around the controls.

This map will have been used by the organiser as it shows the full set of controls for Course I. Competitors will have copied controls 1-4 initially and then got the remainder at the 2nd Master Maps at Control 4.

Also note the early attempt to update the map by adding the 'out of bounds, a stream and pond.

READING ORIENTEERING CLUB CROSS COUNTRY EVENT SUNDAY, 23rd FEBRUARY 1969

FINAL DETAILS

VENUE

- Snelsmore Common - 2 1/2 miles north of Newbury. Map reference 464710 O.S. sheet 158 Turn in opposite the entrance to the Mary Hare Grammar School. Plenty of parking space available.

DIRECTIONS

- From NEWBURY take the A34 north. After 1 mile bear left on the B4494 to Wantage for 1 1/2 miles.

From OXFORD and ABINGDON take the A34 south. 6 1/2 miles south of East Ilsley turn right along a minor road (signposted) to T-junction. Turn left on to the B4494 for 1/4 mile.

COURSES

- Course I - blue control cards } PLEASE FILL
Course II - yellow control cards } THESE IN
Course III - orange control cards } CAREFULLY

As the courses are set over rather a small land area, Course I includes a second set of master maps and to make courses I and II "more interesting" (!) the maps will not show complete details of all the terrain. (The maps will be to the usual scale)

N.B.

- (1) Report to PRESTART 3 minutes before your start time. (you will be given description sheets and maps here)
- (2) The area can be very wet after rain and is brambly in parts.

YOUR START TIME IS 11.13 hrs

Event Details

Pre-entries were sent to the organisers and, just before the event, you would be sent the final details and information on your allocated start time.

Snelsmore is now an area used by Basingstoke and Andover Orienteers (BADO). Note also that the Newbury bypass now cuts through the SE section of the area.

Control Descriptions

READING ORIENTEERING CLUB SNELSMORE COMMON EVENT - SUNDAY 23rd FEB 1969	
COURSE 1 (approx 7.5 Km.)	
	Code No.
1. A stream in the re-entrant	1
2. The depression	2
3. The boundary (Dyke)	3
4. The Depression - MASTER MAPS	4
5. The boundary junction (Dyke)	5
6. The hollow (East side)	6
7. The junction of the stream and the boundary (fence)	7
8. The re-entrant	8
9. On the stream	9
10. The boundary junction (fence)	10
11. The boundary corner (ditch)	11
12. On "Black Ditch"	12
Follow tape to finish - (100m)	
Controls must be visited in the prescribed order and you must <u>REPORT BACK</u> whether you complete the course or not, by 1530 hrs.	

Results

Spotted in the results:

Course I:

D. Cruickshank (SM) 112.33

Course II:

J. Cruickshank (IM) 83.25

SNELSMORE COMMON EVENT - READING ORIENTEERING CLUB Sunday 23 Feb 1969

With fears of disruption caused by ice and snow being finally dissolved by the rapid thaw over the last twenty-four hours before the event we only had to contend in keeping perhaps with Snelsmore Common's associations with gypsies and witchcraft. And so a high proportion of the 240 pre-entries actually turned up making it difficult to fit in casual entries on the day, but we hope everyone was satisfied even though not all could get a start time exactly when they wanted.

The innovations of Course I, made necessary to provide a course for Senior Men of reasonable length and orienteering difficulty, provided mixed reaction both in the form of immediate exclamation at the 2nd Master Map area and after brief reflection at the end of the course. But most agreed that it was difficult to correlate out of bounds areas from map to ground. We are sorry that the very recent ploughing of a field in the extreme south of the area made it necessary to add an extra shaded area and an unforeseen navigational hazard. Another hazard not envisaged by the setters was the snow drift between controls 4 & 5 but most found this interesting rather than annoying. Congratulations to E. Schaffner, G. Wheeler, and B. Bullen on times of under an hour.

Course II being more conventional provoked little comment but it was surprising to see so many Junior Men, particularly from Rydens School, amongst the leaders. Course III was attempted successfully by large numbers but special mention must be made of...