

Mapping Officer's report to the 2009 IOA AGM

Tawnawully, Donegal, May 3rd 2009

*Irish Orienteers owe a huge debt of gratitude to those unsung heroes who have put time and energy into producing new and updated maps.
Without them our sport dies.*

The 2008/2009 season has been a steady year for the completion of Irish Orienteering maps – a number of new league maps have been produced, new championship maps for IOC2009 have been introduced, and one championship area has been revived.

Trinity College Map Archive: by far the most significant mapping event of this season is the completion of Brian Hollinshead's (3ROC) project to collect, collate and donate 1,060 orienteering maps to the Trinity College Map Archive. A handover ceremony was held on March 25th - for a full report see the TIO blogsite: tio.orienteering.ie

OCAD Courses: Pat Healy was engaged to run two OCAD courses for the IOA, training a total of 26 new mappers:
Munster: 7th March 2009, Rochestown Park, Cork, 15 attendees from CorkO, KerryO, BOC, Boru, WATO, UCCO
Leinster: March 28th, Dunboyne Castle, Co. Meath, 11 attendees from CorkO, 3Roc, GEN, AJAX, SET, FIN, CNOC,
There is no report from the Munster course; a report on the Leinster course is available on the TIO blogsite tio.orienteering.ie.
A third OCAD course is planned for September 2009 in Leinster.

Mapping Grants: the 2008/2009 mapping grant budget was initially €8,000, but this was increased to €13,100 in order to include the two OCAD courses and to reflect the high level of mapping activity planned between 2008 and 2010. €10,500 of mapping grants was given to the affiliated Orienteering clubs - see mapping.orienteering.ie for full details. There were 44 applications from 12 clubs which is a far greater level of mapping activity than in recent years. Unfortunately this means that the €10,500 budget had to be spread so thinly that the individual grants cover only a tiny percentage of the cost of producing a modern orienteering map. However on the positive side this amount of mapping, in conjunction with the fact that approximately 40 people have expressed an interest in the three OCAD courses being run by Pat Healy, is a very healthy thing for the sport and means that we can all look forward to running on many new and revised maps in the next few years. The 2009/2010 mapping budget has been agreed at €10,000 – the use of this budget is up to the incoming mapping officer.

Website: The mapping section of orienteering.ie has been continuously updated during the past year. The most significant addition is the inclusion of all map registrations received in the last few years in PDF format.

Waterproof maps: a couple of years ago I published the results of some basic research into the options for waterproof map printing. A number of clubs built on this and during 2008/2009 waterproof maps became commonplace at championship and league events.

IOA Map Survey: the IOA map survey on mapping.orienteering.ie, based on original work by Gerry Brady in the 1990s, has been significantly updated as a result of Brian Hollinshead's map archive project. Please notify the Mapping Officer of any errors. This survey is the closest that the IOA has to a map register. Since taking on the job of IOA mapping officer in 2003 I have been unable to locate any official IOA map register – it seems to have disappeared sometime during the 1990s.

Map Archive: it is an Irish legal requirement that copies of every map, and every map revision, be given to Trinity College. In order to keep up the momentum from the map archive project a document has been placed in mapping.orienteering.ie that details how this can be done. All clubs are strongly encouraged to follow this process and not to let the Trinity map archive become out-of-date.

Map Data: at the previous two AGMs I highlighted how often our “partial” maps omit vital information such as scale, north arrow, contour interval, map name, names of the survey team, OSI license information and usually they do not assert copyright. This is bad practice; competitors are not given vital information, the mappers are not given credit for their work and legal ownership is not clear. This lack of map metadata caused severe problems during the map archive project as a number of the maps were no more than bits of paper with nothing to identify them. Clubs are strongly encouraged to layout their maps such that an information box containing the map's data can be easily included in a partial map print, and also to adopt strict version control procedures.

Next Year:

1. I recommend that the incoming IOA Mapping Officer tries to identify if enough orienteering areas are covered by Ordnance Survey LIDAR datasets and if appropriate €5,250 of the mapping budget be used to purchase those datasets (€5,250 is the minimum OSI LIDAR purchase price). LIDAR datasets can be used to produce highly accurate contours.
2. With a number of very notable exceptions the days of club-produced championship maps are dying – mapping is now a commercial activity. Irish Orienteering needs to find ways to pay appropriate rates for professional mapping services if we are to continue to compete on the high-quality maps that we have come to expect.

After seven years as IOA Mapping Officer I am stepping down this year. In order to assist in finding a successor I have placed an IOA Mapping Officer job specification on mapping.orienteering.ie.

I would like to thank all of the people that I worked with on IOA Mapping over the years and I am especially grateful for the help that I have received from Pat Healy of CNOC.

Marcus Geoghegan, Outgoing IOA Mapping Officer