Ecko AGM, 1 March 2020, Chairman’s Report

I estimate this to be Ecko’s 35th AGM. The club formed in 1984 around the shores of Loch Eck in South Argyll and, 20 years later, started to expand into North Argyll where it now draws most of its membership.

Looking back on 2019 the club was as active as it has ever been. In addition to the now annual spring, autumn and early winter series, where most of the membership do their orienteering, club members were also instrumental in putting on the Scottish Champs in May, hosted by SOLWAY club.

Then Carol and Jan put a huge amount of work into organising Day 2 of the Scottish Six Day’s Orienteering festival in Strathearn in late July. 30 Club members helped on the day and also took part in at least one of the 6 days. A few went on to achieve some fantastic results. Louis winning M18 class overall, and Iris coming 2nd overall in W14 class were two of the most notable ones.

Carol, Alan and the Macmillans also attended the British Champs and Carol took part in the Scottish Sprint Champs too.

Whilst on the performance theme the club continues to be represented on the international scene by Louis and Iris. Louis was selected for the British Squad Stockholm training camp and Iris represented her school at the World Schools Orienteering championships in Estonia. Roanne and Jura were also selected to run for Scotland in the Senior Home Internationals and Gill was selected to run in the Veteran Home Internationals in the autumn.

We managed to increase the availability of coaching and training during the year. The SWAT (Scottish West Area Team) was formed , through which some Ecko juniors have benefited from joint training with other west clubs including Forth Valley, Clyde, Ayroc, and Solway as well as at Ecko’s local events. Latterly, in her training for her Level 2 coaching award, Jan has been working with over 10 adult members to develop their O skills. This has all helped to grow Ecko’s membership to over 80 members which is a healthy trend we wish to continue under a new initiative called Direct Club Investment run by Sportscotland. As I write we are awaiting with bated breath for news of our funding application to run a club development programme over the next 4 years that will allow us to employ a 2 day/week development officer to help deliver. Jan Kersal has been instrumental in getting this project up and running on top of her Level 2 coaching development and acting as club secretary over the past year. A huge amount of effort which is yielding great rewards and for which we are very grateful.

Other members have been beavering away behind the scenes to continue to expand the club offerings in the form of new mapping. John extended the Tralee map into a lovely bit of woodland, Andy has almost completed the Glencoe woodland park map despite Forest and Land Scotland chopping it down as fast as Andy can map it. Finally, we had Coille Nathais re-mapped by Deeside Orienteering and Leisure maps in time for Ross and Dave to plan the courses for Eck0’s Scottish Orienteering League Event on the 29th March 2020.

Looking forward, we hope to get our exciting new club development initiative formally off the ground which will see support for schools to introduce orienteering into their daily curricula, an after school club and, all-being-well, culminating in the resurrection of the inter-schools competition.

We are also contributing to the Scottish Orienteering Association’s competition review and look forward to helping more members attend events out with the Ecko area and expand their orienteering experience.

Thank you to the Ecko committee (Jan, Alan, Andy, John, Dave, Andrea, Susannah, Diane, Logan) for all their hard work in ensuring the smooth running of the club.

Ross