

Lagganlia Report

By James Nisbet

From July 27th to the 2nd August I took part in Lagganlia 2013. To be eligible to be selected for Lagganlia 2013 I had to obtain a Championship time at one of the major National events across Britain. A Championship time is a time within 25% of the winner's time. I obtained my Championship time at Day 2 of the JK, in which I took 50mins 3secs placing me well in the 25% of the winners time.

Because I had got a Championship standard time I was put forward by my region (East Anglia) to be selected for Lagganlia. Every region in Britain put forward some orienteers my age for Lagganlia, it was then up to the selectors to choose the best 24 M/W14 orienteers in Britain. A couple of weeks later we heard back from the selectors, and I had been chosen to go to Lagganlia along with two others from East Anglia.

Lagganlia is located in the Highlands of Scotland, near some of the best orienteering spots in the world. It also happened to be near where the Scottish 6 Day event was taking place in Moray.

To get to Lagganlia I had to take a train from Peterborough up to Edinburgh then take another train up to Aviemore. This was the first time I had done a journey of this scale by myself, and the journey up the East coast was very scenic. I saw The Angel of the North, St James' Park (Newcastle United's football ground) and the train also went over the Forth Bridge which had a great view looking down out towards the sea.

I eventually reached Lagganlia at roughly 6:30pm having set off at 9:00am. When we arrived we were shown to our rooms and met who we would be sharing a room with for the next week. I was sharing mine with the British Champion Finlay Todd who is part of INVOC from Scotland, and I got to know him and my other room mates really well. The next day we got up early and got driven by a mini-bus to the remote area that we would be orienteering in. On the first day we did a "Teddy-Bear relay" which is where there were teams consisting of 3 people. And the first person had to go out with a teddy-bear and a map and place a teddy-bear at the first control. The first person then came back and gave the map to the next person. The next person had to take the teddy from the first control to the second control and then the third person took it from the second control to the third, and so on. All of the teams of three people did the course in a different order, so you could not tell if you were winning or losing. In the end my team came 3rd overall which we were all quite pleased about.

We would then stop for a packed lunch in the middle of the forest, and had to avoid being bitten by the millions of bugs surrounding us on the forest floor. We would then go out on another activity in a different part of the same area. This was the theme for the whole week, and during the course of that week I learnt lots of new, different orienteering techniques, and I made lots of new friends who would



All photos by Wendy Carlyle

also be my competitors for years to come, and at the Scottish 6 Day the next week. On Wednesday we had a morning of orienteering and ate our lunch in the forest as usual, but instead of going out again to do some more orienteering in the afternoon we instead went into Aviemore to go shopping for half-an-hour. We then got taken in the mini-bus to go swimming in an ice-cold, Scottish loch. Most of us spent around 15 minutes in the loch before we decided it was too cold, then we played volleyball on the beach. After a game or two we went back to the Lagganlia campsite where we would play a game of football. The teams were usually England vs Scotland and it was always close between who won the match. After this we would all go into our dorms and go to sleep.

On our final day at Lagganlia we did my favourite activity which was a balloon relay around the campsite. We were put into teams of three and each team was given a balloon, each team had six maps and each person had to do two of the maps. The first person would open the map when told to then run around their course with the balloon. They would then give the balloon to the next person and the next person would go off around their course. If however the balloon was popped the team would have a 30 second penalty, allowing other teams to catch up if they were behind. All of the teams did the course in a different order. My team came back in 2nd by a matter of seconds, my team also managed not to pop our balloon during the duration of the whole race.

My week at Lagganlia went really quickly, but I learnt lots of new things and made lots of new friends, and I got to orienteer at some of the best areas in the world which also had some of the best views in the world. I learnt a lot about my fitness, and how I should be training leading into major orienteering events. Lagganlia also enabled me to get to know who I would be competing with in later events, so at the end of the Scottish 6 Day I was able to look at the results and see who of my friends I had beaten (or had beaten me) and for the first time I could put a name to a face. I really look forward to meeting all of my friends at JIRC this year.

I would like to thank SMOC and EAOA for allowing me to have this experience by help-

ing pay some of the money needed for me to be able to take part.

