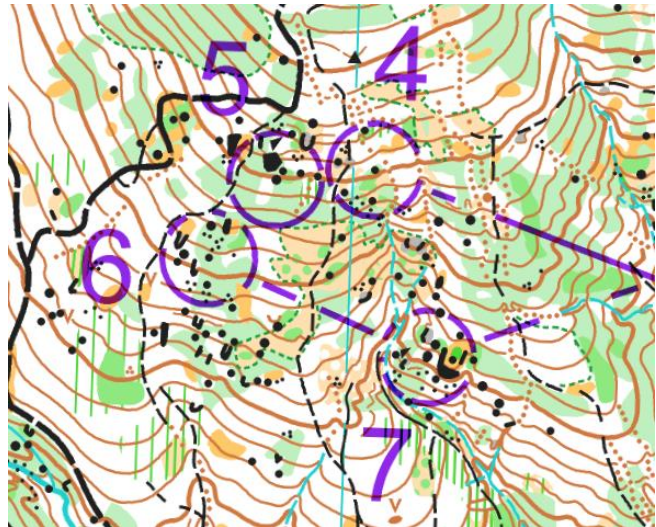


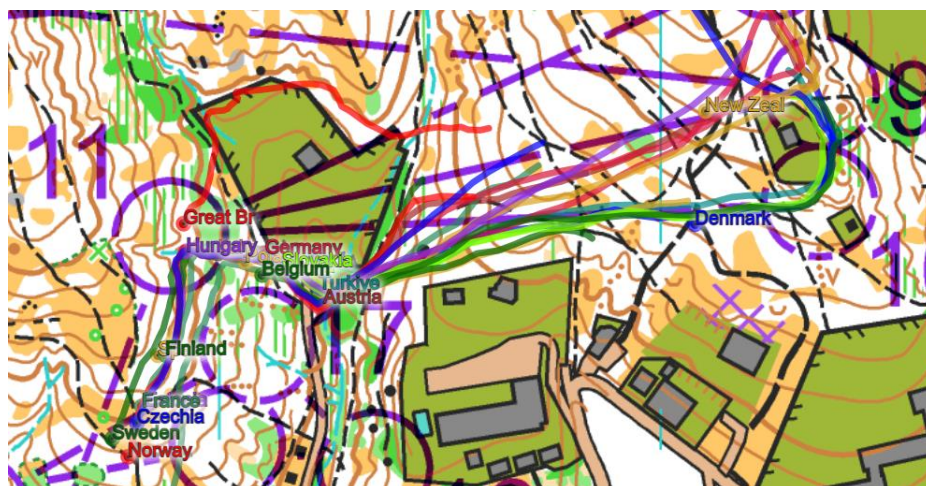
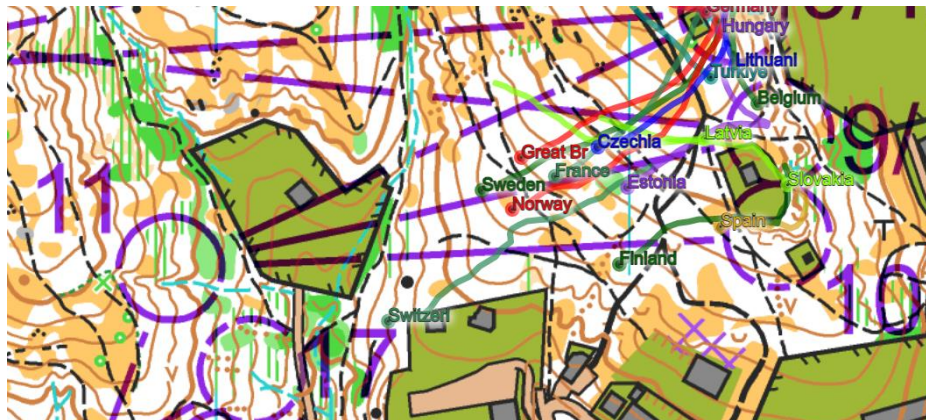
Adam Methven reporting on EYOC and JWOC

I was fairly confident heading into EYOC (in Velingrad, Bulgaria) because I knew I was one of the oldest there and I had just had a decent block of training leading up to the competition. On the first race day, the sprint, this confidence worked well for me and I was able to push hard and make mostly good route-choices. This performance, despite losing 30-40s from mistakes, managed to get me 16th place (out of about 100 on M18)! Needless to say, I was very happy to bag a top 20 result.



Going into the long distance I knew there would be a lot of climb, which isn't really one of my strong points, so I decided to focus on having a clean race. Unfortunately, this didn't go to plan when I made a 3-minute mistake on control #7 positioned on a large boulder – I searched slightly too high up the slope then kept on climbing before eventually realising and climbing back down to find the control.

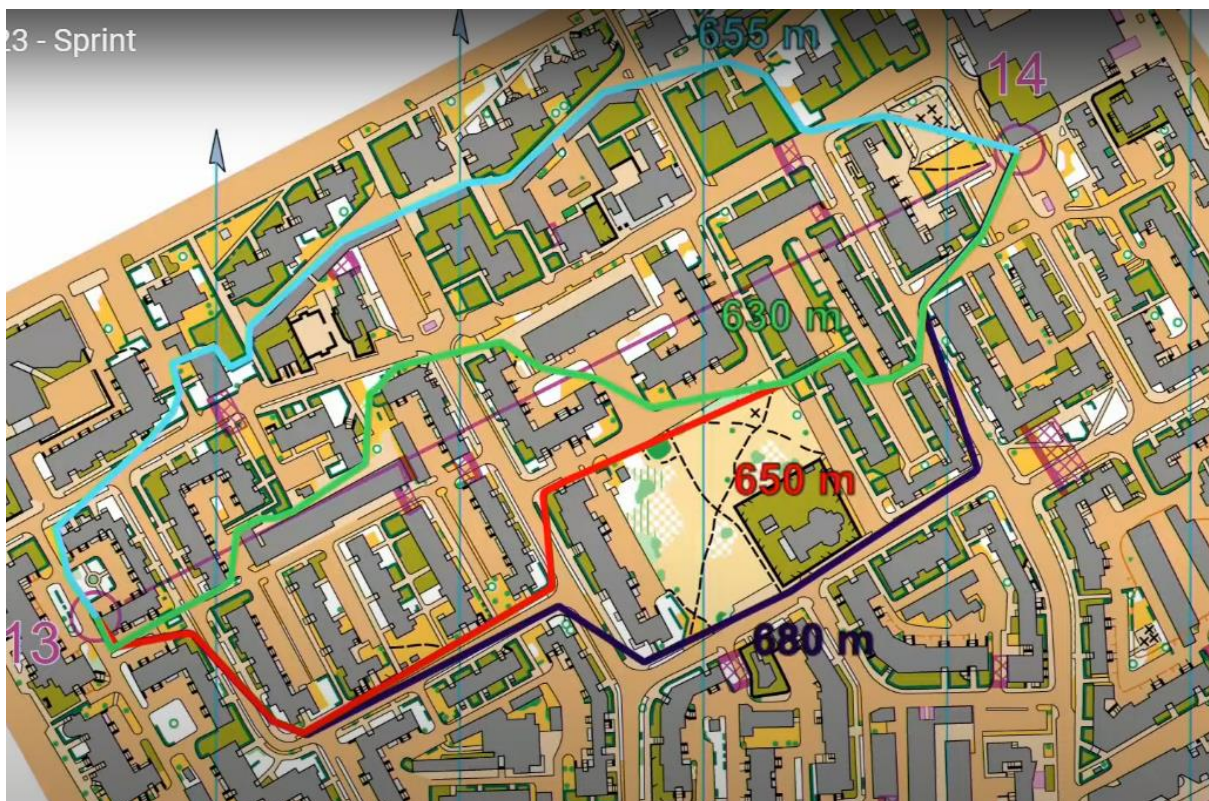
I chose to run first leg on the relay because I enjoy head to head racing, and it was no exception here. I left everything out there and kept with the lead pack for the first half of the leg. I tried to trust my own navigation instead of following other runners, but this didn't pay off at #11 where I made a bit of a rogue route-choice and lost the leading pack.



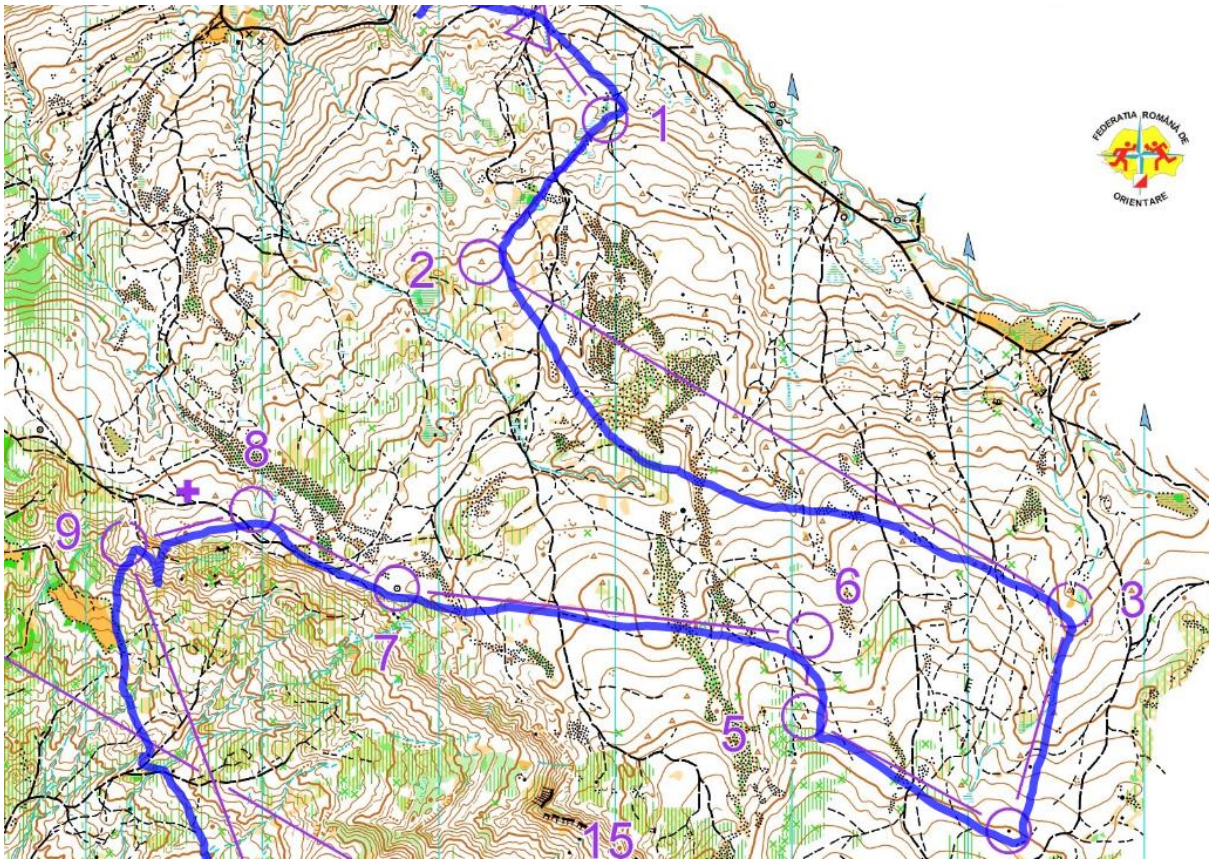
After this I didn't quite keep the same pace as before and lost time to the leaders, but I was still happy with my run. I changed over to Adam Barrie in 9th place and as a team we finished 13th in M18.

Back at the start of the year I hadn't even considered getting selected for JWOC, it was only after my run at the JK Long that somebody told me I was likely to be selected. So come JWOC itself I tried to just take it as experience for future JWOCs, but in the back of my mind I was still very conscious that I was racing against many people two years older than me, and I think this got to my head and I fixated on the running and the position, rather than just trying to have a clean run. This resulted in me going hard out the start on the sprint and middle races and making mistakes early on in the course, which set me up for more mistakes in the rest of the course when trying to make up lost time.

In the sprint course (in Baia Mare, Romania), the organisers set up many artificial barriers to make route-choice more difficult, meaning you had to stop to compare routes in places. I've shown the long leg #13-14 where I took a fairly short (although not shortest) route (similar to light blue on the image), but my route had too many corners and small passages where I had to slow down.



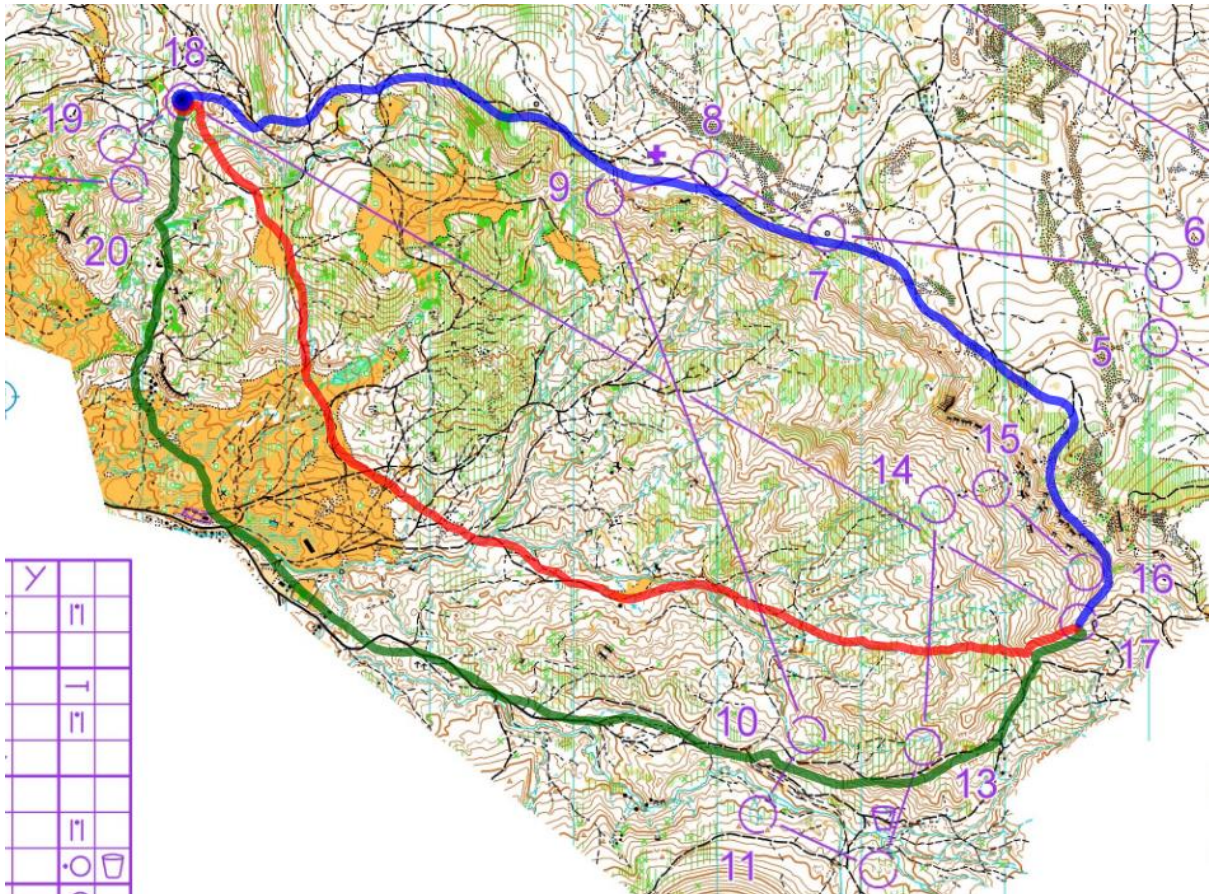
After the slight disaster that was the middle distance, I decided to focus entirely on the navigation for the long distance and ignore running speed. This worked for the first few controls where I was just really careful with my compass and managed to hit every control well.



I did make a couple of mistakes though, one at #9 where I didn't check my compass and ran down the wrong spur, losing about 2 minutes, and one at #16 where I misjudged my height on a slope and overshot the control below it, losing about 3 minutes.

Towards the end of the course came the long leg, where there were 3 main options: left round the tracks (green), right along the tracks along the top of the ridge (blue), and variations on straight (red). I chose left as the long track run suited me, but I didn't notice the narrow line of runnability just above the slope on the right-hand route, which makes that one over a minute faster. My route is shown in green, the other colours are other routes you could chose, with blue being the route of the fastest person on that split.

I came 87th in the sprint, 130th in the middle and 69th on the long distance. There were around 170 runners in each race.



In the relay I was in the second team on leg 2, taking over from Ben Squire on first and handing on to Charlie Rennie on third. Ben made a mistake in the tricky last loop coming into the changeover, so I had some catching up to do. I tried to keep the navigation clean and keep running the whole time up the long climb in the first half of the course. Despite this I did make a couple of mistakes, adding up to around 2 minutes, but still managed to catch 6 other teams. On third leg, Charlie had a great run and caught another 6 teams putting us in 27th place, which I think we can be fairly happy with. It was great to spectate our first teams in the men's and women's relay though, who both had outstanding performances and both finished in 7th place.

Hats off though to the best performance over the whole week for GB, coming from Jim Bailey with an 8th place in the sprint, top 20 in the middle distance and top 30 in the long distance.

This year has been a great experience for me to take into my training for the next two potential JWOCs I have left to compete in, which I am already looking forward to.