

Bluesky Aerial Photomaps Help Keep Runners on Track



High-resolution aerial images and laser-mapped height data are helping members at one of the UK's largest orienteering clubs navigate their way around complex landscapes. The Bluesky data is used to create comprehensive orienteering maps depicting small depressions and pits, changes in vegetation and otherwise unmapped paths and trails. More detailed and intricate than traditional map products, the maps produced by Nottinghamshire Orienteering Club (NOC) are used to help participants decipher the landscape and select the fastest route between a set of control points.

Orienteering maps show far more detail than other tourist or leisure maps, commented David Olivant, a trained cartographer and member of the Nottinghamshire Orienteering Club. Produced using specialist software by experienced cartographers, the maps

combine the best available base data – in this case the Bluesky aerial images, together with ground survey data collected using GPS and other techniques.

Control points

A popular competitive sport, the aim of orienteering is to navigate between control points marked on a specially produced map, in the quickest time, by selecting the optimal route. One of the first adventure sports, becoming popular in the UK from the 1960's, the sport has diversified from a purely walking or running experience, with options now including mountain biking and skiing. The best time to produce orienteering maps is during the winter months, when vegetation is low and does not obscure ground detail that may provide vital clues and evidence for navigating a complex course.

The availability of high resolution, up-to-date georeferenced imagery saves valuable time for the mapper on the ground, and the resulting maps will be far more accurate than relying on a compass and pacing, continued Olivant. The experience at Bluesky's online Mapshop was also very good. They were able to identify the data existed and was suitable for the requirements in terms of age and resolution, order, download and load into their orienteering software in less than two hours on a Sunday evening – allowing the mapper to start work early the next day.

The imagery used by the Nottinghamshire Orienteering Club to produce its latest maps forms part of Bluesky's nationwide coverage of high resolution, map accurate aerial photographs. Updated on a three year rolling cycle, Bluesky images are available to view and purchase online at www.blueskymapshop.com. The Lidar data used by the club is also available from Bluesky online.