

BTOC 2010 Planner/ Mapper's report.

I would first of all wish to thank my friend & ex OS colleague Rod Postlethwaite for his assistance in producing a base map & then not only drawing up the maps, courses, time controls & solutions for Saturdays British Trail O Championships but he then did the same for the demonstration event we held on Sunday.

Then my thanks to Marlene Palmer, whose idea it was to hold the event as part of The British Foot O Championships & then to promote what was a well received demonstration event on Sunday. (We had over one hundred participants, which was probably the largest Trail O event in GB to date).

Then I thank Anne Braggins, who despite having a hip operation only 11 weeks ago walked the full course prior to all the competitors, to check all was in place. Only 7 weeks after her op she had spent hours checking & advising on my suggested courses.

Re the area, as we now all appreciate it was not on the most technical of terrain & I had to work hard to find suitable control sites.

In order to make sure you had as accurate a map as possible with correct magnetic setting, Rod produced a 1/2500 base map which we eventually reduced to a final scale of 1/4000, unlike accepting old foot O maps & enlarging the scale which just magnifies the errors inherent in such maps.

With many thousands of trees on The Chase, I chose only to show those that were likely to be used as control sites, e.g. control "9" where only the trees that had flags between them were mapped, (incidentally the first 7 competitors gave the correct answer & 16 out of 21 did likewise) & those trees that were likely to be used to fix control sites (control "18" Elite, control 8 Standard course, unfortunately rapid leaf growth in the last two weeks obscured the far tree. For some control 4 proved difficult. However the top 8 gave the correct answer & 14 out of 21 were also correct. All measurements for between features were by tape to 1 decimetre, & checked by OCAD.

Re planning, I think it is essential that there is an assistant planner. I made copious notes re control positions, DP's & even where the punches were to be placed. If due to illness or an accident I was incapacitated then the event could still have continued. (At each control site a hole had to be drilled & a small plastic tube inserted to hold the pea cane, as most of this area is on top of a former military base)

Saturday 0800 commenced putting out 90 controls assisted by Mike Callow. 3 volunteers acted as patrols (including my long suffering wife Sandra). First competitor away on early start (flight back to Ireland mid afternoon) followed by urgent phone call, control "3" vandalised. Reinstated by bike within minutes. Over the next hour, 5 more decision points & punches were removed, all but one retrieved.

The course re established as the competition got under way. It was then patrolled by 5 persons, on bike (smashed front mud guard) by foot & by

car. Whilst collecting the flags one complaint was received over the phone, the offer to reinstate the control was not accepted.

By 5.30 pm with all controls were in there followed a short prize giving ceremony for the junior class.

Set off home, heavy rain on A5 arrived home at 7pm, 12 hours after leaving.
Sorted out kit for Sunday's event. A quick drink, dinner & a hot bath, BED!!!

Sunday up at 6am, load car, make breakfast for Sandra. Arrive at Wolseley & put out 55 controls & DP's.

I for one have just completed my LAST major "O" mapping & Planning with not fond memories due to one persons inconsiderate behaviour.

When I finally got time to examine the results from Saturday, mid morning Sunday I was very pleased with the high scores & the eventual dead heat between Ian Ditchfield & John Kewley. Even having 4 time controls could not separate them. Dick Keighley with the same points,22, was paralympic champion.

Some valid points to consider for future organisers. Should maps be laminated, bagged or on waterproof paper?

Distance of Elite course. For some this was far too long , for two reasons. it was used as a test for those that may be selected for this years World Trail O Championships, where one of the courses is publicised as being 3Kms. Secondly, due to the position of the assembly area, it was at least 1km to where most of the suitable control sites were (If we had moved our assembly we would not have had the benefit of free toilets & cafe facilities).

Trail O necessitates a high number of volunteers, unfortunately both Marlene & I had great difficulty in recruiting enough helpers & we are extremely grateful to those that turned out to assist.

Regarding Sunday's event, I was extremely pleased with the high turn out & I hope some of those that have sampled a simple form of Trail O will come to future events.

Dave Gittus.