

## **Planners Comments**

I had felt for a couple years that it was time that I planned my first Forest League event, but had always found that the dates never coincided with my availability for the complete weekend. The only weekend available for this year was the Galoppen one, so it was suggested by senior members of the club that I plan this event with Bill Vigar acting as my mentor until a controller was appointed, at this stage I must thank them for placing their confidence in me. I first visited the area at this time last year to gain an appreciation of the undergrowth plus the general layout and came to the conclusion that though Staple Common was never going to be a cross country runner's paradise it offered plenty of opportunities to make it interesting from the navigational angle.

From a family point of view I have always found having 2 starts a bit of a nuisance so in order to only have one competitor road crossing opted for two finishes and one common start, hence the Junior & Senior finishes. The courses lengths were based on previous events with the exception of the Brown which ended up 700m longer in order to fit in the second loop. As there were only a few paths on the Staple Common side the aim was to give participants plenty of route choice on the longer legs, plus the challenge of using careful navigation to find some of the controls.

On the day itself the weather was very kind to us, but the recent wind and rain had taken its toll resulting in fallen trees, heavy going conditions under foot plus a landslide, it was certainly no joke putting out the controls during the previous two days. Times varied considerably as quite understandably many people found either the conditions under foot or technical content more challenging than others. Comments varied from enthusiasm for the technical content to complaints about the lengths of the courses, I take my hat off to those who clearly found it hard going but cheerfully persisted in completing their course for however long it took. The problem we faced was that if the courses had been shortened and the conditions underfoot drier we may have ended up with winning times that were too short.

Even though we had more people turning up than expected, keeping people waiting on the start line because we had run out of maps was totally unacceptable and I apologise for that, I never got to the bottom of why we ran out of Light Green maps a lot earlier than expected.

I must first thank Bill Vigar for his good humoured advice whilst mentoring me in the early days and for the considerable amount of time spent updating the map due to changes in undergrowth and the extensive forestry works throughout the summer. Many thanks also go to Steve Robertson for meticulously checking my courses and for his support on the day itself. Finally many thanks again to Roger Craddock for dealing with the change to the car parking arrangements along with mobilising considerably more than half the club's membership to carry out the usual duties plus man two road crossings and an extra finish, and at the end of the day the control collectors who went out yet again.

Robert Green