

### Planner's notes and observations

Firstly many thanks to all of you for venturing out onto the very cold and fog bound Northern Quantocks today. It's always a concern when we, the organising team, watch you all disappearing into the gloom and worry when (or if) we will see you again. However, as both planner and download manager today I got the rare pleasure of getting to hear almost everyone's comments on your day, your course and your performance under the pretty testing conditions you all enjoyed today. It's obviously extremely rewarding therefore as planner to receive almost universal praise for the event overall. The courses I planned were at the limit of physicality for their various colour standards to offset the fairly modest technical nature of most of the terrain used. Courses were deliberately long with inevitably much elevation change- this is the nature of the Quantock Hills- you are normally rewarded for that by the stunning views over the Bristol Channel across to South Wales- today.... not so. The thick lingering fog and cold played a major role in extending result times to slightly excessive values than I would have hoped for- who says the Quantocks are easy for navigation?

I wanted to get as many courses that I could over and into the beautiful ancient oak woodlands in Hodder's Combe. However constraints dictated by the white and yellow courses requirements meant the start couldn't be stretched any further East than where we located it today- it was a fair climb for all as it was. Ultimately only brown and blue courses got into Hodder's but It seems from the comments I received and resulting times that the remaining courses that stayed on the open ground still provided suitably testing challenges to their entrants.

As well as the planning and SI function for this event, the map is also one under my control. Today's map was cropped out of the Quantock master which covers many square kilometres and takes a lot of updating. I made the mistake for this event of concentrating on trying to get the undergrowth something close to what you all enjoyed on the day. This it seems was at the expense of some of the marked paths which many found difficult to find, read or follow- I have made a note to look at getting these up to date as soon as I can- I hope this didn't spoil the event for those affected.

One slightly amusing and unexpected small issue we experienced relates to control #138 early on on short green, blue and brown courses- this was at the tip of a vegetation boundary in a small combe on the side of Bicknoller combe. When we arrived at the parking to set out controls yesterday we met several rangers who advised they were there to carry out swailing (controlled burning) of rampant gorse in Bicknoller Combe. On consulting our map they assured us that their swailing operations were restricted to the lower slopes of the combe and in no way would affect the three controls we had located in there so of course we put them out ready..... Today on checking the controls before the event we inevitably found the sorry remains of #138- nothing left of the kite and plastic parts, just the charred cane- thank goodness we had made the decision not to put boxes out until this morning!

Thanks again for coming out today and making all the effort worthwhile

Andy