



Blood, Sweat and Gears

Newsletter of the National Governing Body for Mountain Bike Orienteering.

May 2009

TCA fixtures - June and July 2009, 23 events in 2 months

Sun 31 May NEMBOS 4hr Trailquest Wark Forest, Northumberland. round 3 of 6:

http://www.trailquest.co.uk/plugins/tcaresults_menu/events.php

Tues 2 June Mintcake MTB 2hr Lakeland Lanequest round 1 of 6:

<http://www.mintcakemt看b.co.uk>

Thurs 4 June D+W Summer League 2hr Trailquest Peak Dist. round 3 of 6:

<http://www.darkandwhite.co.uk>

Sun 7 June XCC 5hr Trailquest Mungrisedale, Cumbria round 3 of 6:

<http://xcc.byethost7.com/events.html>

Sun 7 June Northern Ireland Trailblazers 2 or 4hr Trailquest Belcoo, Co Fermanagh round 4 of 6:

<http://trailblazersmtbo.wordpress.com/>

Tues 9 June Mintcake MTB 2hr Lakeland Lanequest round 2 of 6:

<http://www.mintcakemt看b.co.uk/>

Sat13/Sun14 June **MTBO Championship Weekend:**

Long distance race at Wareham Forest and Gore Heath on Saturday

<http://www.wimborne-orienteers.org.uk/>

Middle distance race at Hamptworth Estate on Sunday

<http://www.sarumo.org.uk/>

Tues 16 June D+W Summer League 2hr Trailquest Peak Dist. round 4 of 6:

<http://www.darkandwhite.co.uk>

Tues 16 June Mintcake MTB 2hr Lakeland Lanequest round 3 of 6:

<http://www.mintcakemt看b.co.uk/>

Sat 20 June NYMBO 5hr Trailquest Fremington, Yorkshire Dales. round 5 of 11

National TQ league event 7

<http://www.nymbo.org.uk/>

Tues 23 June Mintcake MTB 2hr Lakeland Lanequest round 4 of 6:

<http://www.mintcakemt看b.co.uk/>

Wed 24 June Leicestershire 1or 2hr Trailquest

<http://www.leioc.org.uk/>

Sun 28 June Isle of Man 3 or 5 hr Trailquest

National TQ league event 8

<http://www.trailquest.manxtiming.com/>

Tues 30 June Mintcake MTB 2hr Lakeland Lanequest round 5 of 6:

<http://www.mintcakemt看b.co.uk/>

Wed 1 July D+W Summer League 2hr Trailquest Peak Dist. round 5 of 6:

<http://www.darkandwhite.co.uk>

Tues 7 July Mintcake MTB 2hr Lakeland Lanequest round 6 of 6:

<http://www.mintcakemt看b.co.uk/>

Sat 11 July The Bike Place Marathon Series The Hot Trod, Keilder Forest round 3 of 4

http://www.thebikeplace.co.uk/index.php?option=static&page_id=2501&pname=Events

Sat 11 July NYMBO 2hr Trailquest Cropton, N.Yorks round 6 of 11

<http://www.nymbo.org.uk/>

Sun 12 July NYMBO 2hr Trailquest Newtondale Forest , Pickering, N.Yorks. round 7 of 11

<http://www.nymbo.org.uk/>

Wed 15 July D+W Summer League 2hr Trailquest Peak Dist. round 6 of 6:

<http://www.darkandwhite.co.uk>

Sun 19 July XCC 5hr Trailquest Heversham/Atheneum

National TQ league event 9

<http://xcc.byethost7.com/events.html>

Sun 26 July NEMBOS 4 hr Trailquest Allendale, North Pennines. round 4 of 6

What do the abbreviations mean?

NEMBOS North East Mountain Bike Orienteering Series North east England

NYMBO North Yorkshire Mountain Bike Orienteers Yorkshire

XCC Cross Cumbria Cyclists Cumbria

D+W Dark and White Challenge Events Peak District

Mintcake MTB Mintcake Mountain Bikers Kendal and around

Website News page.

Many of you have been having problems finding or opening links from the News Page. We have found a work round for the problem and will be using this in future. A new website is in development and should mean an end to such problems. In the meantime if you have trouble please contact 'news@trailquest.co.uk'.

John Tiffany. TCA Webnews.

European MTBO Championships 2009 Team Announced

European Championships and Junior World Championships GB Teams

Denmark 22nd - 28th June <http://www.eocmtbo2009.dk/eocmtbo2009/>

Men

Killian Lomas

James Taylor

Mark Stodgell

Women

Sarah Bayliss

Charlotte Somers-Cocks

Junior Men

Chris Brand-Barker

Junior Women

Emily Benham

Please confirm your availability to mtboselectors@trailquest.co.uk

The TCA and British Orienteering wish the team "Good Luck" although luck has little to do with a good result!

National Championship Weekend North Yorkshire Moors reports by Steve Willis

The National Championship Weekend got access to the Dunscombe estate and Gilling woods all nestled in the North Yorkshire Moors.

The weekend combined a pure MTBO point to point race with a score event . Each event also counted for the respective National MTBO League and National Trailquest League (TQ).

Results: **Overall Weekend Champion Bryan Singleton**

M21 Mark Stodgell W21 Emily Brooks

M40 Brian Singleton

W40 Charlotte Somers-Cocks

X40 Sheila Pearce & Dennis Jacques

M50 Tony Brand-Barker

W50 Karen Clark

M60 John Tiffany

W60 Karen Blackburn

M18 Christopher Brand-Barker

GEN Richard & James Martin

Youth Sam Wilson

results and splits can be found here:

<http://www.nymbo.org.uk/nationalchampions.htm>

Report Gilling Woods MTBO Saturday, 16th May

Ampleforth College were very generous in allowing us to ride through these private woods and Redcar House made an excellent event centre. Andrew Windrum had put a lot of thought and effort into planning a challenging course and he succeeded because it was certainly challenging!!

Andrew accepts that it was too long and apologises for causing so many riders (23 out of 78) to retire. The courses lengths were measured by the direct line between controls and Andrew estimated that the actual distance travelled would be about 50% longer but, with hindsight, all of the courses should have been 5 controls shorter.

Having said that there was plenty of route choice - although I saw too much of one certain track - and the fittest, most determined map readers lead in each class which is what it's all about. Dennis Hooton had amended the orienteering map provided by Eborienteers to produce an excellent mountain biking map.

There were still a few riders who mispunched. Most of them are regular MBO riders who are used to scoring at every control they find. Unfortunately they didn't check the codes as most of them had found a later control by mistake.

The woods are beautiful at this time of year and the tracks were varied and not too muddy. The M40's showed the way with the 4 fastest times on the 27.3k A course and Brian Singleton clearly in the lead. Bryan commented " The course was long with plenty of climbs which suited me, I had a very clean ride." Chris Brand Barker recorded the fastest time on Course B beating his Dad (Tony) by 20 minutes. John Tiffany (M60) was fastest on Course C as were the Martin's on Course D.

Ryedale MBO Sunday, 17th May

The start moved to Duncombe Park as the estate had given us permission to ride all of the private tracks in Lower Ryedale. Dave Goodwin was able to link these to the existing bridleways and minor

roads to make an interesting course in beautiful scenery - and we didn't get too wet! I know we are concentrating on our map reading and riding but I am sure that everyone appreciated the bluebells in Riccaldale, the views across the moors from Cowhouse Bank and the stunning scenery near Reivaulx Abbey and in Duncombe Park.

A number of riders won their classes for the second successive day. Tim Martin did well to match Chris Brand-Barker. The mens competition was stiff with three riders close to each other. John Houlihan won overall on Sunday but not by quite enough points to catch Bryan Singleton for the overall title.

Jens Strain had drawn another excellent map although there were a couple of minor errors which caused problems for a few riders. There was an extra track in Riccaldale south of #43. It is just visible on the OS map but hadn't been highlighted. However the control was in the right place at the junction on the bend, sorry if you didn't locate it - no extra points have been awarded. A short section of bridlway between #41 and #45 was green rather than black so it wasn't as obvious as it should have been. We will make sure that the map is even more accurate next year - because we have been invited back by the estate manager!!

John Houlihan commented how accurate and fast the navigation was for OS mapping. "The event was just like a long MTBO, just how it should be, the course was committing early on if you wanted to leave options for the end, Dave Goodwin did a great job and Jens mapping really does bring out the best of OS"

Thanks as usual to all the North Yorkshire Mountain Bike Orienteers (NYMBO) helpers who make these events possible - especially the control collectors who go back out after their rides so that the planners don't have to get them all in by themselves!

Prizes donated by the TCA were awarded to the National Champions by the TCA Chairman.

Steve Willis

National Trailquest League Update.

With 5 events gone, the league is shaping up a bit:

Bryan Singleton M40, with 3 wins from 4 events has the top score so far – 396.5%, while Steve Heading is second in M40 with two wins and 200%. In M50 Tony Brand Barker 264.2% just leads John Rawdon 256.3%. They have each done 4 events including one they would rather forget! M21 Liam Corner, with one win and 198.2% leads Alan Hartley and Mark Stogell. The M60s need to get out more, only Roger de Faye 149.5% and John Tiffany 86.9% have done more than one event.

Angela Brand Barker is the only W40 to have completed more than one event and 218% puts her at the top of the women's scores. Results are mostly based on just one event so far in W21, with Ali Northcott 89.5% leading Ruth Hollinger and Emily Brooks. Similar state of affairs in W50, but Annette Milburn survived Glentress, so deserves to be leading. Only one rider so far in W60, but Karen Blackburn's 3 events bring home 168%.

The mixed X50 team of Geoff Moorhouse and Andrea Foster have 109.2% from 2 events, while X40s Dennis Jaques and Shiela Pearce have 79.1% and X21s Robert Weetman and Rosemary Bye have 65.8% so far.

The Generation class is lead by Alan and Georgina Milburn with 65.55, and the sole tandem pair of Clive and Sarah George have 45.8%

There are three national TQ league events coming up in the next few weeks:

**Wark Forest in Northumberland,
Swaledale in the Yorkshire Dales,
and Laxey on the Isle of Man.**

More Trailquests for Scotland ?

It struck me that Glentress is the only TQ event in Scotland on the 2009 calendar (*more events have since been added but more MTBO style than TQ – ed*) Yet there are plenty of TCA members in Scotland and lots of MTB riders to be converted. Surely between us we can put on more events and be reasonably confident that there will be enough competitors turning up. Any volunteers or clubs willing to put on races in 2010?.

I'm toying with the idea of an enlarged event next year in the Tweed Valley, and would appreciate feedback and suggestions, plus declarations of interest – is there a demand for this kind of thing? There exists a Jens Strain map of the area that was used very successfully for the Polaris and ACE Race events last year. This has the potential of being used again for a long (6-8 hour?) TQ on Day 1, with either a shorter TQ at Glentress on Day 2, or alternatively MTBO at Glentress or Bowhill. I'd appreciate your thoughts.

Paul McGreal Peebles CC info@durtytriathlon.com

Planning my first MTBO event, Andrew Windrum gives an insight to the creativity.

Last year, in a moment of weakness, I volunteered to organise an MTBO event. Several are held each year throughout the country and rely on the usual suspects to plan and organise so I thought I'd give it a go, can't be that difficult can it.....?

Unlike trailquest, MTBO uses orienteering maps. For the initiated, these maps contain infinite detail on the subtleties of the terrain; a sort of secret language that can take years to fathom. For the uninitiated, and I count myself in this group, the maps contain blobs of a variety of colours that look quite pretty and wouldn't look out of place on a Tangerine Dream LP cover. Participants are required to ride from control to control (note to reader - don't call them checkpoints – foot orienteers go purple when you do) in number order and the winner is the person who is the quickest. (*MTBO could also be score events using MTBO maps, ED*) Foot orienteering is like this, only they have a number of different coloured courses. I'm imagining footpaths bathed in blue or yellow or green but I'm reliably told it's a grading system for length of course.

I attend the Trail Cyclists' Association Annual General meeting in December in Dalesbridge, near Ingleborough, as they would have a session on planning MTBO courses and I thought I might learn something which I certainly did. I thought it was just a matter of bunging a few checkpoints round a forest and hoping for the best. No, I had to think about making sure there was plenty of route choice, that all the footpaths and tracks were graded according to rideability and that the coloured blobs on the map were accurate. Several people kept mentioning OCad and I wasn't sure what to say until someone explained that it was a mapping system to move the blobs, tracks and checkpoints round the map. Nobody told me I'd have to use OCad. Don't worry they said, you'll be fine, just choose a place that's been mapped for foot orienteering already that is preferably quite big. So I did, sort of....

Gilling Woods is a steep wooded forestry plantation in the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty not 20 minutes from where I live. It's a cosy sort of forest compared with the larger venues used for MTBO racing such as Cannock Chase, but it makes up with having a network of tracks with lots of uppy and downy bits and you're constantly seeing lots of riders so it's a lot of fun. First thing first was to have a think about where to put the checkpoints out. General plan was to get lots of route choice between each, I didn't want it to be obvious. So, Steve Willis, the local North Yorkshire NYMBO organiser and legend, sent me a copy of the orienteering map. I marked on some possible checkpoints and, armed with several copies of the map, various pens, pencils, rubber,

pencil case, off I set to ground truth it all.

It took a couple of visits, each of about 3 hours to fully plan the route. 30 controls in all, criss crossing the valleys, this wasn't going to be an easy stroll in the park, even the lycra clad stick insect might find the climbing strenuous. I placed some controls by dark green blobs (dense forest) so that people had to nav' (orienteer's shorthand I'm told for navigation) by veg' (vegetation not vegetable) boundaries. I was getting the hang of the blobs, easier when you're not racing and have all the time in the world, in fact, I was quite enjoying not having to race at all, there were views and everything!

Back home, I had two or three maps covered in scribbles and notes that somehow had to be transferred onto a map. This is where OCad comes in. Apparently you can download a free version OCad 6, which I duly did and duly didn't understand. Or you can find the local orienteering club Oh Cad (As I called it until corrected) guru master who might be able to do all this for you. Not surprisingly I chose this option. Emily Benham, our national girl world class superhero champion, disguised by day as a student, e-mailed me a map key of MTBO footpaths and tracks which I duly didn't understand so just forwarded to the OCad guru master, and two days later the maps were finished. Was it really that easy? Surely I've missed something?

Fast forward a couple of months and I'm writing this on the eve of the race. It's a Friday morning and it's pouring with rain outside when I'm supposed to be putting the checkpoints out. I collected them last night from Ebor (that's roman for York!), the local orienteering club, but I've little enthusiasm right this minute to get wet and muddy (am I going soft in my dotage?). No idea how tomorrow is going to go, there's always the worry that the checkpoints will get nicked (they're mounted on a stake with one of those orangy/whity flaggy things hanging off them).

The day of the race!

Well, the day started well, it was a lot drier than the previous day, I got soaking wet but thoroughly enjoyed myself in a bizarre kind of way. Lots of pre-entries, over 90 I think. I got the last 10 controls out whilst registration was going on and then they were off!

It took an hour and a half to get everyone through the start line. There was a transition point halfway, close to the start, for a map swap, but still no one had come through....I was starting to realise that something might have gone wrong....a dawning realisation that the route length calculated on Oh Cad might not be the optimum route distance, as I had assumed, but rather a kind of distance as the bird flies kind of thing. The 90 minute estimated winning time was going to be a little out and so it proved to be.....by 43minutes, won by Bryan Singleton in a faultless ride of 2 hours 13mins!. One poor competitor took almost 5 hours and I think I might owe him a pint or two or three.

I was relieved that there were no mistakes in positioning the controls and people commented that route choice wasn't obvious with a network of tracks making the navigation challenging for all concerned. The course was far too long and I would have preferred to have more time to have designed several courses to cater for all classes. If sports such as MTBO are to grow in popularity, then younger, less experienced riders need to be able to be able to have a go without being put off.

So, it was fun. My advice to any prospective planners is don't be put off by the perceived complexity, there are plenty of people willing to lend advice and help with the mapping. I learnt a lot from planning the event and perhaps next time, if there is one, I might even find time to ride the course as well.

Andrew Windrum

Not riding the course explains the riding times! Still it was VFM (Value For Money), ed.

National Weekend MTBO winner gives his thoughts on the ride and course.

As I prepared to leave the start I overheard Andy W saying that the first riders were still on the first loop and had set off over an hour ago, so I knew it was going to be a long course. Once underway to Control 1 I realised how hilly the terrain was but figured that this would suit me. I am always a little nervous until I get the first few Controls and settle into the scale of the map and Control 3 caught me out a bit as I struggled to spot a little track in the bushes. A couple of minutes lost...not a good start!

CP3-4 was one of the longer legs and threw up plenty of options to get into the valley bottom, but working the route backwards I decided to go via the two ponds in the middle. So contoured out and onto the big forest track then down and across the dam. A steady climb up past the buildings and then into 4 on what was one of the best tracks I rode, fantastic. On CPs 5-8 I focused on keeping my height and used the main southern track. CP8-9 was another tricky route choice. Once again I worked back from where I was going to the two ponds and so headed straight down to the main track heading West. CPs 9-12 flowed easily, doing 12 as an in and out from the main track. Then 13-15 seemed fairly straight forward. Luckily I did not have a watch to see how long I had been (just over an hour) so just kept my head down. The second map had some huge legs, CP17-18 had multiple options, I dropped to the road, crossed the valley between the ponds and then up the climb. For CPs 19-26 I kept as much height as possible and stayed on the better tracks. CP27 was the one route I was unsure about. In the end I went to high and used the big forest track, on reflection contouring then climbing might have been better - the splits will tell! The final three involved staying on the main southern track before dropping to the finish via CP6, the ponds and CP11, then directly to the finish. Thanks to the NYMBO team for a great weekend and to the planners for two good courses.

Bryan Singleton

Tony Brand-Barker wins bronze at Inaugural Masters World Cup MTBO

With the announcement of Team GB for the European Championships 2009 Angela Brand-Barker gives us a taste of Tony BB fine efforts in Europe last year, ed.

The 8th World Championship MTBO event was held in Poland during August 2008. Running parallel to this event was the first Masters World Cup event which had six days of racing with distances ranging from the 2.5km sprint to the 26.7kms “ultra-long” event.

The first event was the sprint held on a university campus. The start and finish area was in a stadium complete with stands and running track. Tony Brand-Barker opened his World Cup account by finishing 6th against tough competition.

The “classic” distance event was held the next day and Tony’s M50 course had a quoted straight line distance of 10.6kms (optimum route approx 15.4kms). Height gain was fairly small when compared to British MTBO events – only 180m . Tony had a clean ride navigation wise and returned to the finish arena in high spirits knowing he’d had one of those rides where everything flowed. Once the results were collated, the whole GB team were excited to realise that Britain had won a medal – Tony was in 3rd place, just over 2 minutes behind gold.

The third competition for the masters was the “middle” distance – 9.3kms straight line. Fresh from his success yesterday, Tony went out all guns blazing. He was riding hard when a small log kicked up between the rear stay and his derailleur. Pedalling momentum unfortunately worked against him as the log managed to bend his rear gear changer. Stopping to try and sort this out meant he lost

time and ended up in 6th position.

Next was a mass start “ultra-long”, gaffled two lap course that seemed to suit Tony as he again finished on the podium in 4th place. He lost some time as the rear derailleur wasn’t working smoothly. This was one of the few spare items that we hadn’t taken out with us and the nearby bike shops didn’t stock anything suitable so he’d had to “improvise”.

Day 5 dawned windy and wet (just like Cumbria). The strength and depth of the male Masters Cup was again evident today. In the “free order” event, Tony’s less than perfectly functioning bike and his tiring legs saw him finish nearly 14 minutes down on the leader and off the podium for the first time in 8th position.

Angela BB

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Paul McGreal Peebles CC info@durtytriathlon.com

GLENTRESS TRAILQUEST 9 May 2009 Round 5 National TQ Organisers report

Well, my first attempt at putting a TQ event together is pretty much over. Thanks to those who entered, turned up, and were patient and complimentary about what Peebles CC put in front of you. The event itself seemed relatively pain free. My biggest fear, misplaced checkpoints, didn’t materialise and the SI learning curve wasn’t quite as steep as I was anticipating. Thanks to Peter Strong before the event, and Alan Hartley on the day, for your help. Apologies for the rain – hey, it’s Scotland. At least it was dry for the prizegiving.

Glentress is a unique location. The massive network of Forestry Commission roads, man-made singletrack, and ‘secret trails’ proves a challenge for both planner and competitors – there’s always a relatively direct route between any two points, and it’s just up to you to choose which will be fastest. Cliff White’s specially drawn map is helpful – it represents what you need to see, and is a significant improvement on the OS maps of the area. Glentress also requires more bike-handling skills than some other events and you will all have noticed that hills feature very strongly in the area!

When planning, I deliberately set out to force riders to make choices about which controls they left out – you’ll be the judge of how successful that was. Despite the relatively small area to be covered in 3 hours, I was pleased to see that no-one (not even the mighty Bryan Singleton!) came close to clearing the course, and therefore everyone had to make decisions. I was also keen to open up the previously unused North Western corner of the map, so we drew a couple of ‘not-really-there-but-easily-navigable’ paths on the map, including the scary steep descent through the field end edge of the forest. I hope this helped enhance the experience.

We combined the Saturday TQ event with a ‘corporate’ event the following day, using the same

map and controls. Each team of 6 were split into three pairs and the team had to visit as many controls as they could within 2 hours. So effectively we got two events for the same labour as one, and the Tweed Valley Mountain Bike Patrol (who staffed the Sunday event and were responsible for our 'tea-tent' on the Saturday), raised a few quid as well. It may be worth copying this model elsewhere?. It certainly brings potential new recruits into contact with our sport.



Glentress TQ 9 May 2009 - a competitors report

What follows is the thought processes of a female on two wheels (actually I spent a lot of time off them, but that's another story!).

I usually try to prepare for an event a few days before; any excuse for not going out training while increasing the carbo-loading you understand! I also check my bike and have to promise to cook the old man's dinner in exchange for any more complex mechanicals that need doing. I also find an old map of the area to remind myself of the delights or horrors in store. I've ridden a lot of the trails at Glentress with the family in the past, and also competed in the TQ in 2008, so it was not virgin territory for me.

I arrived at the Buzzards Nest car park in good time & got ready. Checked where North was to know how I would orientate the map & double checked the map spec. Yep, it was the 1:15k orienteering map again without any walkers only routes. I know that using footpaths is against the rules (even against the law in England & Wales) so I don't quite follow the logic in this. I have competed in many other MTBO events where certain tracks on the map are marked as out of bounds and when you're trying to navigate at speed, map memory says turn third left, so you count off two tracks and take the third. If you have to slow down to work out whether there is a post at the path junction and whether it's got a small "no cycling" logo on it, it just interrupts the flow. Next, I found out what the controls were going to look like – this time it's SI boxes plus tape at some. Thankfully we were allowed to have our SI dibber on our person – not secured onto the bike so no lifting bikes up to gain access to SI boxes 6 feet off the ground.

Final check – helmet, food, bike kit, first aid, water, mobile phone, cagoule and I'm ready. Get the map, start my stopwatch after first checking real time in case I accidentally stop the stopwatch mid route (ask John Rawden!). I've already decided to follow a basic clockwise route as that is the general flow of the one-way cycle trails. I spot a group of 20 and 30 pointers up North and East so off I head for those, taking in a trio off to the NW en route. Struggle to see the SI box on top of a knoll without tape but am very grateful that I'm on foot as I clamber over the rocks near the summit.

Onward & upward to the summit crag of Shieldgreen Kipps. I walk up through the heather & see Mike Billo racing down on foot. (hey Mike, you missed the "Britney Spears" trail by running that bit!) The forest tracks in the NE seem very slow. They have that horrible soft surface that seems to grip your tyres & convince you that you've got a flat as you struggle to pedal freely; that's why it's 30 points I guess. The track out in the open for control 27 is superb going – firm under wheel and down hill. Only problem is it's back uphill after that, the rain starts and 2 hours have elapsed. There's a possible four 20 pointers on the way back, so off I go towards them – realise just in time that number 29 is up a big hill with a long one way trail so choose to miss that one out. Off round the hill to 30; they've just re-surfaced the forest track with great big cobbly rocks so a very bouncy ride to a stone / earth bank part way along the track. Ahhhhh! Just spot a way round the end of this onto the old track & over 2 fallen trees and then it all fits into place.

I try to persuade rapidly tiring legs onwards & upwards to control 7 & then the arms decide they've had enough of controlling the handlebars so it's mostly walking and rolling down to control 6.

Twenty minutes left and the raindrops on the map-board make it even harder to spot a route back to

the finish with all the one-way trails present. Through 8 (no magic mushroom descent today) with a push up onto the uphill tracks towards 9. A short whiz through 9 and then it's another uphill trail with a zig-zag or two. Decide to run to/from checkpoint 10 for another 5 points to try & offset the time penalties I know I'll incur. Thankfully I spot the trampled grassy path entry this year (couldn't find it in 2008), jump back on the bike, grit my teeth and just pedal to the finish.

We met up with a few other riders in the café – it was the best place to be as the rain set in. A voucher for the Hub café with every entry is a great idea – their hot chocolate with marshmallows really is the best thing after a hard ride! We discovered that no-one visited all of the checkpoints so the planner was obviously quite canny in his selection of control placements.

This event certainly gets you to places in Glentress that you don't see if you just follow the trails. The riding is anything from easy on the downhill forest tracks to ***** impossible on some of the narrow uphill trods. It's also great fun on the singletrack if you can plan your route to follow it in a down hill direction. The path through control 22 probably ranked as the hardest to ride & follow. I followed it years ago on foot but it seems as though discerning walkers now avoid Glentress as it is predominantly a cyclists forest so some old paths are becoming vague (John Tiffany was a victim of this path as it "absorbed" him and his bike and only released them one hour later!). The orienteering map takes a bit of getting used to if you usually read OS maps; white = trees and yellow = pasture /field but the contour detail is very readable.

All in all, lots of variety, NO tarmac or hawthorn hedges and you're guaranteed a weary body that can be refreshed in a cyclists cafe – what more could you want from a TQ?

Angela BB

FURNESS TRAILQUEST 26 April 2009 National TQ League Event 4 Competitors report

It was a dry warm morning, so when I saw that the planner had obtained access for the event to go to Kirkby Moor and it's wind farm, that was definitely where I wanted to go. I decided navigation up there would be easier going clockwise as even I can head uphill to a whacking great wind turbine without getting lost!

After an initial setback when I realised I was not heading for control 10 worth 30 points, but towards control 30 worth 10 points, I got going through a series of controls mostly on minor roads. Determined not to fall off the western edge of the moor, I next went up a good bridleway to control 19 on a nice big wall corner near Out Park for 40 points. *Walking* down to Gill House Beck, which did have a big exclamation mark on the map, my bike and I parted company, with the bike landing at the bottom on it's rear derailleur. Happily no damage, but soon I met Tony BB who had wrecked his rear derailleur and had a long walk home, so I was lucky. Next should have been the wind farm, but there was this 20 pointer, only halfway down the hill, so telling myself not to be a wimp, I tackled the steep walk down to 16 and back.

Now straight up the permissive path to the turbines. They are huge, and with the old quarry workings, it's a surreal place to bike around. And the views in all directions are stunning. Only one control up there but it was worth 40 points. Nearly 2 hours gone, so it was time to turn for home. A very fast run off Kirkby Moor to 18, then a nice flowing route using minor roads and good bridleways back to Pennington. Just time for the two 10 pointers near the finish, and only 10 seconds late (I blame the milk tanker).

I understand that the controls north of the A5092 were more challenging, but one of the advantages of being a W60 is that I don't have to worry about trying to visit all the controls, I can just pick out the nice bits! And on this event there were plenty of nice bits to keep me happy for three hours.

Thanks to Henry and all the helpers.
Karen Blackburn

Next Newsletter...

Northern Ireland league up and running, the MTBO championship weekend and more... send your articles, event reviews, anything you want to write that will be of interest to others.

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