

Planner's Post-event Musings

What a day! Having only ever planned, mapped and controlled in Plumpton on beautiful days we are so glad you got the same experience.

Nothing about planning this event was easy – the date was re-arranged many times (burst dam, area closed, lockdowns) – considerable degradation and destruction (massive diggers churning the far side to reach the dam, vegetation gone crazy with no public in, lockdown revellers)... I took the decision three months ago that we could make it work, with considerable trepidation. Some good areas were completely unreachable so one day I went armed with choppers, big gloves, litter pickers... only to find the elves had been in, paths cleared and litter removed (apparently The Witcher was being filmed – my daughter tells me there really are elves in it). An almost surreal experience.

Quentin had the idea to use the old road for parking however it took Mike Cope's determined diplomacy to get access. While this gave new shape to the course planning it also posed challenges in terms of siting the start and finish and how to run you between the main area and new bit to the north. I am grateful to Quentin for having the vision to believe I could bash a way through to the eventual start site and therefore tip you straight into the wonderful rocks.

The course planning was time-consuming. I had 78 controls sprinkled on PurplePen for a while before reducing it to the final 62. I believe I succeeded in creating courses that would be pleasing to each cohort, with your varied and quite specific requirements. I am glad to see an excellent success rate on the Yellow, Orange and Light Green courses following comments from a number of you that your course was fun. I am also chuffed that no-one ran off a cliff, into the lake or knocked themselves out in a cave.

Had I been planning for the Elite race specifically I would have slightly altered the Brown courses (no controls on top of each other, a route choice across the lake for the women) . However they were a fairly late addition to the entire day so it seemed right they use the courses as planned and not start again. Quentin and I worked hard to make your map clear, accurate, legible and pretty, to ensure that nothing you needed to see was obliterated by purple lines, circles or numbers (not easy on such control-dense courses) and that the descriptions were precise (well, Quentin did that, I simply nodded my agreement). BML took care with the printing.

So on the day the dam was mended, the vegetation greatly died down or tamed, the litter collected, the sun shone and you came in droves to enjoy yourselves. Thank you. I've rarely seen so many orienteers grinning, while orienteering... We appreciate that you spread yourselves through the start blocks as requested (and masterfully handled by Claro's entries guru, Linda). I think everyone had enough space out there to have fun.

"Once I thought to read the map **and** the descriptions, I got on great..." "That was.... almost perfect." "I loved it. Amazing. It's my favourite area ever!" "Fantastic event." "I live in Norfolk. There was a local event on but I thought I'd come here instead. What a great decision!"

Huge thanks to Mike for elegant organising, Quentin for meticulous, tireless controlling and mapping and the entire Claro team who volunteer event after event with grace and goodwill. We're a small club making good things happen. We are immensely grateful to the landowner Robert de Plumpton Hunter for being so welcoming. Also to Taylor's for donating teabags and Photobox for a superb last minute deal on the lovely coasters (I'm glad you liked them too). Congratulations to the YHOA Champions for coping brilliantly with such a unique orienteering experience.

Look out for a Plumpton page in the next edition of CompassSport magazine along with photos by Wendy Carlyle and routes and comments from some of the top Brown Women.

Ruth Ker, Planner (looking forward to a rest and coming to some of your events for a while)