

Thank you all for coming and making the time spent planning this event feel all worthwhile. I hope you enjoyed yourselves - people I spoke to seemed to, and I hope you weren't just being polite! A huge thank you also to Kerensa, my assistant planner, whose help was invaluable and provided the added security that if anything went wrong, there was someone who could easily pick up the pieces if anything happened, and to David, our controller, calmness and thoughtful oversight personified. I was also grateful to be working alongside such an experienced organiser as Richard and the fabulous team to be part of that is Claro.

Wetherby is a classic market town with a small intricate centre, and a variety of outlying estates. The railway triangle adds its unique touch. I wanted to include a sample of all these on each course, and to exploit the variety which is town's strength as an orienteering area. From the outset, I felt that the best way to tackle this was to major on route choice challenges at the start, and then move into the more in-your-face navigation of the town centre when brains and bodies were a bit more tired. For those of you who had control 209 (courses 2,4,5) by the Georgian bath house, it wasn't just the scenic and mental interest I was going for, but to provide a small kicker of a climb just before you hit the town centre, to make brains work harder! I hope all this worked for you. I certainly found my half hour standing by the map boxes at the start especially interesting, with plenty of pondering going on and some interesting choices being made!

On route choice: I generally tried to ensure there was always an optimum route which made picking the right route worthwhile even if not always hugely advantageous - mostly around 5% difference on the longer legs - with only the occasional 50-50 thrown in. To my mind, beyond that they can become too obvious (assuming one spots them, and the red herrings!).

Some individual choices that seemed to provoke post-race discussion:

Courses 1/3, control #2: most took the E route, but the W route (doubling back and through woods) was 75m shorter, and without the little kicker of a climb over the railway bridge. W route via cul-de-sacs rather than woods was marginally longer than the other W route.

C1/3 #4, C2 #3: key was to spot the small path through the patch of wood up to the railway line. The next quickest (50m longer) was to double back to the road, through the open with dark green bushes, and cross the railway line up and down the steps further south east (only marginally quicker than approaching that park and steps via the open to the west of the control).

C1 #9, C2 #7: W route approaching through the alleyway to the north of the control was 60m shorter than the E route via the path through central wooded/open area.

C1 #13, C2 #11: S route via Station Gardens car park was about 5% (60m) shorter, and without the scramble down (which cost a few seconds even for the fastest when watching during the event).

C1 #14, C2 #12: Test running suggested that quickest route was the big zig-zag: SW then NE along railway lines all way to road, then S to control. 20 secs slower was N over bridge, then S over bridge by corner of bike park, round S end of hedge to path E wards coming out on road N of control.

C1 #22, C3 #19: shortest was doubling back to main road, then approaching control along road between garages.

C2 #21, C4 #17, C5 #16: W route along alleyway was shortest.

C3 #7, C4 #5, C5 #4: different starting controls, but same end: all shortest routes via park, down steep path and round railway line. For C3/4, the route over the northern bridge and then down to and under the southern bridge was about 5% further (40m).

C3 #8, C4 #6, C5 #5, C7 #6: 2 different end controls, but in all cases shortest and quickest was to loop over rlwy bridge to NE of starting control and into open (Raby Park) from the N.

C4/7 #1: quickest and shortest S over rlwy bridge then N along alleyway.

C4 #2: The closest to a 50-50 (split between 3 routes!) of the longer legs, and quickest probably depends on a runner's strengths. On flat distance, the southern route (past #4) is very marginally the longest; next the middle route (through streets, approaching control from S), the shortest, by only a few metres being the railway route. However, for me, the quickest route (after several test runs) was the southern route, mainly because it was the flattest, avoiding the descent of the other two - the 400m drag of near 5% climb on the middle route and the steps plus climb of the northern route were definitely slower for me, and I consistently ran the southern route 15-20secs faster than the other two.

C5/6 #1: very marginally shortest via N route, accessing estate down steps. However, S route over railway bridge then N along path into estate had no steps and no climb: I test ran that about 20 secs quicker than N route.