

The Todmorden Harriers Mini Moorland Marathon 2009.

It was at a Committee Meeting a few months ago when our honourable Chairperson asked; “ Do we have a volunteer to organise the MMM next year? “ I had recently worked out that I could take early retirement, so thinking that I would have plenty of time on my hands....after all it's only a matter of banging a few stakes in the ground and marking up a map?

That was October. Plenty of time. Then November. We decided to enter Bill Johnson's Score Event to pick up some tips. What a slick event. Maps produced with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright. Oh heck!! Delicious food provided after. Oh heck again. And making sure that all those ultra competitive keen Orienteers have a course to run. Bloody heck. Me thinks I'd best pull my finger out.

The New Delight seemed an obvious venue. On our doorstep with plenty of scope for those adventurous runners who were happy to brave the wild horizons of Hoofstones Height and also the more civilised among us who prefer the intricate paths of the valleys. I rang and booked the pub and arranged for the catering. Then things seemed to come to a standstill.....there were a lot of loose ends to tie up before finishing work, then there was Christmas and it wasn't until we were on Skye and Chrispy asked me if I had plotted the course.....Help!!!

So cut out an A3 sized piece of OS Map centred on the Newdi and away you go. Now where to put those stakes? I'd been thinking that there must be some science to course planning, to make it hard but not too hard, to create a course but not an obvious one that all would automatically choose (as in the 1st Rab MM Colin). So how did I design the course? A mixture of favourite places plus close your eyes and stab the map with a pin.

Then the enjoyable if time consuming bit, putting the controls out. The Gorple controls may have been a little more adventurous if visibility had been better than 40 to 50 metres and it wasn't until I plotted the map I saw how close together they were. Hey ho. Thanks to John Crummett and Jane for putting some controls out.

Then the day of the race. Talk about busy. Over 70 competitors all clammering to register, pay, leave their keys, start, have you got a pen? Do you know what you are looking for?(Richard and Myra). Have you got a watch?(Dave Collins). Thank goodness I've got Jane and Chrispy to assist.

I hope the controls are still in place, I hope it's not too difficult, or too easy, I hope everyone returns to the start, I hope there isn't too much controversy....."Number 9 wasn't there" says one of our more experienced orienteers. "Definitely not there" says another, even more experienced member (no names to protect the embarrassed). Clare D returns with soon to be 4 year old Alex..."Sorry but Alex could only find one....no.9".

Thanks to Trevor for the IT advice and equipment, the Newdi for the venue and food, Jane and Chris on the day, and John C for plotting some controls (including no.9). My apologies to Her Majesty for breaching Copyright but who cares.....I've retired!!

Richard Leonard

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