

Chiltern Challenge 2007 - Wendover Woods

Organiser's Comments

We hope you all enjoyed the Chiltern Challenge and the excellent sunny day.

Two weeks before the event the planned parking field outside the woods was waterlogged after significant rainfall over several months. When this was followed the next week by snow, we took the decision to move the parking into the woods. This posed some risk as we knew that the significantly increased visitor activity (The Café in the Woods opened in spring last year) meant that spaces would be at a premium. On the day the car parking team did great work to fit in all the orienteers and leave space for the visitors.

We opted for plasticised maps from Print5 saving hours of map bagging. This allowed us to finalise the map numbers less than a week before the event. A few courses were close to the limit at close of entries, but we were able to print off a few paper maps and a few of you may have had one – the (Laserjet) quality was almost indistinguishable from the plastic version.

On the day nearly 600 runners ran the course of their choice in the warm and sunny weather. Everyone appeared to have enjoyed the terrain and Gary Walford's courses – even if the finish was up a very steep path!

The string course and information areas proved popular with non-orienteers, and we hope we might pick up a few new recruits.

There were a few minor problems on the day:

- The finish ran out of water and cups despite catering for over 800 entrants – there are some thirsty people on a sunny day!
- Someone believed their time in the start list was wrong, insisting their memory was correct; a later check showed the computer to be right!
- One inexperienced competitor had not arrived back at course closing time; but fortunately he was found after a low key search.

The controller Russ Fauset from HOC kept us in line, but allowed us to use our local knowledge and experience of the area to best effect. It was good to work with him.

Thanks to the British Red Cross team who had very few customers, but did have to deal with a sprained ankle.

Thanks again to all the TVOC teams and the EMIT team for their usual sterling work, especially those who were there at the end collecting controls and tidying up. I'm sure we left the area tidier than the other visitors did.

Bob Beresford

Controller's Comments



The Sad World of Russ Festival

No one, except me, knew that I had decided that this would be event 3 of the 'Sad World of Russ' festival. I did not want a party to celebrate my 60th birthday but, instead, include the activities that I enjoy into a festival. Naturally, orienteering had to be part of it. It happened by chance that it was the Chiltern Challenge because no controller within the region seemed available.

I thought the day, from the competitors' point of view, could hardly have been bettered; wonderful weather, good wood, smooth organisation, challenging but fair courses. This is all due to the hard work of the members of TVOC, especially Gary and Bob.

Gary is one of the best planners I have worked with. I was a little concerned living so far from the wood but Gary made it easy for me with his knowledge of the area and his thoughtfulness. His courses were very good; keeping you to the best areas of the wood, at the correct technical standard and close to the specification for course lengths. We apologise for getting the control description for distinctive tree incorrect (old symbol instead of new one).

Orienteers who were familiar with Wendover Woods were surprised that the courses were not dominated by the straight or round route choice problem. Well I am glad that Gary surprised you and kept you in the terrain and concentrating rather than running long lengths of paths.

Bob was wonderfully unflappable. I was concerned about moving the car park but he assured me that there would be enough room for us and the public which proved right. The car park team deserve thanks for coping so well with the situation and everyone, I think, found the start OK because it was well signposted.

All I can say really is **WELL DONE, TVOC.**

Russ Fauset (HOC)

Planner's Comments

I think everyone sampled Wendover Woods at its best for orienteering, helped by the lovely weather for the time of year.

From comments received during and after the event I think most people enjoyed their course even allowing for a few hills. I did try and use areas untouched in recent years which have now become accessible as the vegetation has changed.

It was a pleasure working with the Controller Russ Fauset, who allowed me to use my knowledge of the area to produce courses that I hope were interesting and challenging, but fair. Russ's advice showed his experience and he was flexible, often allowing me to use my judgment to decide planning issues.

Thanks to Bob for not only organising the event but also printing some a few extra maps just before the event.

Thanks also to Merlyn Vyner for helping me place and check controls, and the ready band of TVOC volunteers who gave their time after the event to collect the controls.

Gary Walford