

## Planner's report

I must say that I was a somewhat reluctant planner but succumbed to the persuasion of many people including my wife Judith.

Once committed I considered various options including going exclusively north or south of the road before deciding to use both flanks of the valley thereby giving a mix of faster smoother running to the north and more rugged terrain to the south.

In conversation Gavin Bland remarked that “ You could put out a Mountain Trial from Gatesgarth without ever losing sight of the farmhouse”. I wish it were so.

As ever the main thrust of the planning was to give as much route choice as I could find so Checkpoint 1 on the Classic allowed routes to the east and west of Robinson and also over the top and down the stream (having tried that one it is possible but a bit slow). Both east and west routes were used.

Checkpoint 2 I expected almost everyone to go above Littledale reservoir then up onto the ridge to go over/round Dalehead but I also hoped that some would venture under May Crag and up Castle Bottom. On the day several competitors climbed up over the summit of Robinson which I had not foreseen.

Checkpoint 3 was originally going to be on a sheepfold further down the valley but that was rejected because of fences in the way. Having seen the junction of Piers Ghyll and Spouthead Ghyll I couldn't resist using it simply because it is so beautiful ( although described by one competitor as looking like a massive jacuzzi on the day). In the event there were more routes employed than I had expected. I never did decide which would be quickest Gillercombe and Mitchell Cove or the other side of Brandreth and through the head of Gillercomb or Moses Trod and Aaron Slack/Beck Head – all were used on the day.

Checkpoint 4 again was originally going to be elsewhere – on a crag nearer to Ruddy Ghyll but that was too exposed to vandalism. Then it might have been on the Charnley Cairn (in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the formation of SROC) but that would have added too much length. I eventually settled on the little rocky knoll to offer a choice of either over via the col between Great End and Ill Crag or round via Styhead. In the event most went via Styhead (a good choice with the wind?).

For Checkpoint 5 I wanted a choice of going east or west of Allen Crag or over the top. The tiny tarn gave almost equal weight to east or west but too many competitors knew the Borrowdale Fell Race route so went west whilst a good number used the path over the summit presumably for the navigational security. Another reason for using the little tarn was that I do believe that at least one control on the Classic should involve some precise, fine navigation.

Checkpoint 6 was a simple choice between the Climbers Traverse or Aaron Slack (or, I suppose, over Gable...).

Checkpoint 7 was just a choice between descending to somewhere near Black Sail and then climbing to the tarn or going round the head of the valley on Moses Trod.

The final route choice was how to get round/over Haystacks. Adding a crossing point adjacent to the Out of Bounds allowed a route round by Green Crag and down the valley. Otherwise to Scarth Gap via a reverse Ennerdale Fell Race route or over the top on the path. For the brave (or foolhardy) there was also the option of following the outflow from the tarn down the gully which is steep and rough but passable.

The Medium Trial used the same first two controls as the Classic but the 3rd Checkpoint was in Gillercomb on a stream junction which only gave a limited route choice about where exactly to cross the ridge of Seatoller Fell with some going direct and taking the hit of more climb whilst others went round by the top of Honister pass.

Checkpoint 4 was there to give some choice about how to tackle the final approach to the tarn (assuming that everyone would go via Mitchell Cove). in practice some went straight up the fell, some went round by Sprinkling Tarn and some went somewhere in between.

Checkpoint 5 was effectively the same choice as checkpoint 6 on the Classic. Both routes were used by the ten competitors who made it through Checkpoint 4 before the race was cancelled with at least one competitor going for the traverse and then retreating in the face of the wind.

Checkpoint 6 was the same as for checkpoint 7 on the Classic and again both routes were used.

The final checkpoint again used the same as the Classic and again all the potential routes were used including the one down the gully.

The Short Trial is intended for novices and those of us (including me) who no longer have the physical prowess to handle anything longer. This creates a dilemma. The golden oldies want some navigational challenge whilst the novices need a more straightforward event. I decided to go with novices and make the navigation to all the checkpoints fairly easy whilst allowing some route choice.

Checkpoint 1 was a case in point with some choice about the route to the crossing point but then a straightforward "follow the stream" into the control.

Checkpoint 2 gave the route choice of the Dalehead ridge or over the end of Hindscarth and up by the old copper mines. Most went via the ridge but a few chose the more sheltered route. Navigationally this was probably the hardest leg but the adjacent Fence corner was a good guide.

Checkpoint 3, again on a stream, was shared with the Medium Trial and the outcome was pretty much the same with competitors choosing a range of lines over Seatoller Fell.

Checkpoint 4 was on "The Drumhouse" where the drum at the top of a cable-hauled tramway from Honister quarry once stood (the full wagons going down pulled up the empties). The idea was to either retrace steps over Seatoller Fell or climb up to the tarns next to Grey Knotts then use the path to the checkpoint. I believe the latter is quicker but only one competitor used it on the day.

Checkpoint 5 did provide more choices than I had envisaged. I expected most folk to follow the path to the north end of the tarn and then to the checkpoint but some opted to go round the head of the valley and drop down from there. Another option was to simply take a straight line across the valley which some did and it proved to be as fast as any.

From the tarn the Short Trial was with the Classic and Medium so the same comments apply.

I would like to thank David and Miriam for giving me the chance to plan, Malcolm for sorting out the maps, everyone who helped out on the day especially the marshals and Raynet - out in inclement weather for some time and especially my controller David Fenwick for a huge amount of constructive advice and wisdom.

Mike Hind

## Controller's Report.

A short report as I am sure that the on the day problems will be talked about at committee meeting and the AGM. Working with Mike with his knowledge of the area and having completed 21 events turned out to be simple. First he dived off Robinson, smashed his shoulder and got a free lift in air ambulance to hospital. Good Start!!! he then checked out the control sites and routes with one arm in a sling. First time we met to talk through the courses we added the drum house to the short course and the rest stayed as they were till you picked up the map for the race.

Mike met the farmer who had only one worry that being the fence along Robinson so the crossing points were added to the map this kept the route choice. I believe everybody crossed at the stiles but some didn't punch, I felt that we didn't explain on the map or in the details clearly so reinstated them. On 2 to 3 on classic course we had considered putting the road down to Seatoller out of bounds but it was another option which some took to keep out of the weather The only other problem was the tarn (5) on the classic, starting planning on the OS Explorer Map it shows up clearly and on the draft Harveys it was there but when the race maps arrived on the Wed before the event it had gone.

Routegadget says a lot about Mikes courses with some routes we hadn't thought of, also he kept you kept out of the bracken and you had the option of round rather than dropping into the valleys.

Those that finished the short course and the 10 on the medium well done! Those that didn't there is always next year.

The weather had a big say on the day and the action taken may have been right or wrong, but everything that was done worked. The venue with the barn and hot food proved a winner, results and download worked perfect but we needed an extra loo. Tim Goffe organised the car transport back at very short notice using volunteers with Ann Salisbury running the safety checks etc, it would have made a good "How to do it " video for mountain rescue.

Having done about 18 years as a control marshal I hope to see you out on the fell next year, I'll be sitting in sunshine with the ever dependable Raynet operator and the dog So smile!!!!

Dave Fenwick