

Planner's comments

Although I don't like hills, I liked the idea of planning on Eastnor Park and Midsummer Hill. Since I hardly know the area at all, I could probably bring a fresh perspective. And it looked nice on the (old) map. Of course, when I arrived last summer, my heart sank. Most of the woods were covered in brambles and most of the open areas were covered in bracken. And there were some particularly evil areas that were covered in both.

Still, Alison Sloman got on brilliantly with the onerous job of remapping and I gave up on the planning until some features came back into view. Unfortunately we had a very mild winter so although the bracken died, the area remained virtually unrunnable. Still, I did manage to thread courses between the worst of it. Hopefully after a few controls runners would realise that going straight through those vertical green lines was not a good idea...

Mark was a great controller and made very sure that your reward for slogging across a brambly hillside would not be a misplaced control! The existence of control 85 was my fault, not his; he suggested that I leave it out, but I felt some courses needed it to break up long path runs. I also shortened (yes, really!) the longer courses at his suggestion.

The courses were always going to be physically demanding, but in hindsight I wish I'd left a few controls out of courses, e.g. 2 and 9 on Short Green, and 15 and 18 on Blue Women. But I hope that now (most of) you have recovered, you enjoyed your challenging and varied run in the Malvern Hills!