

Thanks to all those who came to Shrawley on Jan 6th. I had been to the woods on 3 previous occasions (a dry day, a snow covered day and a wet day). The best control sites are somewhat dependent upon weather conditions. Crag foots become slippery on wet days, depressions/pits disappear on snow covered days and wet days can cause havoc to a parking area. Fortunately on the day the weather behaved itself but the crags were still very slippery.

The woods would make quite a good orienteering area if it was not for the brambles. The snow had helped to trample them down a little, but whereas with a conventional course a planner can develop a line that avoids the worst of the brambles, on a score event runners tend to go anywhere and some inevitably end up in the middle of a more severe bramble patch. I hope you weren't one of them!

Most runners tended to work round the map clockwise. John Embrey took the opposite approach and cleared the controls in this order:

51 49 53 57 65 44 66 50 58 56 45 63 64 55 54 62 43 61 60 52 47 48 59 46

In retrospect I should have made 65 and 66 worth 30 points each to try and entice more runners to the southern end of the map

My thanks to Brian Hughes for the map, Barry Houghton for providing all the equipment on the night and my wife for helping put out the controls (and for cooking the Welsh cakes). Particular thanks to John Embrey and Chris McSweeney, who managed to clear all the controls with over 6 minutes to spare, and who still had the strength to go back out and collect in the far controls.

Given that my previous experience of night orienteering is nil, I found it an interesting experience and am grateful that I didn't have to put together a search party (Derek Turner did retire injured, which explains his result)

I hope you enjoyed the event

Roger Keeling