

Late Autumn Trailquest
Ramsey and the North
Sunday 2nd November 2008

A beautiful day to be out on the hills. 26 teams (43 riders in all) turned out to tackle a challenging 3 hours of Mountain Bike Orienteering. Based at Ramsey Swimming Pool (thanks to them for making us welcome) the course included checkpoints scattered around Ballure, Glen Auldyn, Sky Hill, Narradale and across to Sulby Glen - including tracks around the Ballamanaugh Estate (thanks to them for permission to use these).

Unfortunately, the fun did not last long for Caroline Helks; who suffered one of those unlucky slow-speed crashes along a rutted section of the track at the top of Narradale. It took over an hour for the rescue services to reach her - as the accident happened in a remote and inaccessible location. In the meantime several teams stopped to assist (sacrificing their own scores) so special thanks are due to Nikki Lane, Jo Maylin, Lynne Skelly (Caroline's partner), Neil Helks & Martin Lane, Steve Smith (and for the use of his space blanket), Gina & Harry Grose, Susan & James Everitt. Plus the unknown group of motorcyclists who also offered assistance.

Caroline is now in Nobles hospital expecting an operation on this (Sunday) evening. According to Neil, she is apparently in good spirits - as ever - but suffering from a broken & dislocated ankle as well as a probable broken Tibia. We all wish you well, Caroline.

Meanwhile, out on the trail, the rest of the field enjoyed a tough but enjoyable day's Mountain Biking on trails that have thankfully dried out quite a bit in the past week.

In the Solo Men's category, Julian Corlett (the overall winner) was truly in a class of his own - clocking all but two of the 19 controls to rack up an amazing score of 537 points. Impressive enough on its own - but even more so when you consider that he was one of only 5 finishers of the tough road sportive ride just 24 hours before.

Rob Sorby notched up 461 points to finish 2nd overall, with local man John Barker an impressive 3rd with 445 points. Guy Whaley was 4th (10th overall) and a fatigued Chris Watson (who helped put out the course on Saturday) came in 30 minutes early yet claimed 5th (11th overall). Best of the rest were Ian Kermode, David Rielly (231), Peter Bradley with 227 left of his unadjusted score of 407 (current record holder for penalty points) and Steve Smith who, as mentioned, sacrificed his own chances to help Caroline.

In the Men's Team; Ramsey men Tim Pressley & Richard Watson were the best (3rd overall) with an excellent 447 points tied on points with Neil & Robbie Walker (the former team just clinching it by being just a minute ahead).

Ben Dunlop and Stuart Garry were 3rd with 426 (6th overall). The remaining teams were Mark Kelly & Richard Batey (381), Micky Grose & Rob Christian (379) and Aidan Mallinson & Colin Peters on 272. Carl Blades & Lee Tyrer did well with 245. Neil Helks & Martin Lane were also part of the rescue team and had scored 176 before having to abandon. Steve Honeybone & Peter Wilson went exploring and found some superb singletrack around the Sky Hill area. Sadly, this was not part of the course and they came back looking very happy after 2 hours 10 minutes but only visited 5 checkpoints.

Almost the entire women's team contingent were involved helping Caroline - so their scores really do not reflect anything other than their commitment to looking after their injured colleague. The only women's team to be unaffected were that of Emma Skuse and Jess Cross - first-timers to Trailquesting; who did well to clock up 259 points.

There were 2 mixed teams; Winners were Cat Price (good to see her back on the bike after her injury earlier this year) partnered with David Gooberman. They notched up an impressive 410 points (7th overall) so obviously chose a good route and kept up a fine pace. Craig Hindle & Claire Cavanagh (first-timer I think) scored 169 points.

We had two Generation Teams in this event (Generation means Adult + Junior) and both were instrumental in Caroline's rescue. Susan & James Everitt + Harry & Gina Grose had each visited 5 checkpoints to gain 109 points before disaster struck.

A final thank-you to the competitors who found some extra reserves after the event was over to help with collecting in the controls. This was much appreciated. I got out for a couple of hours to collect in the remainder and enjoyed the circuit around Narradale, Ohio & Ballamanaugh. By 4:30 all the controls, gate notices, etc were all safely collected.

Hope to see you all next time. The next Trailquest will be a special night event based around the South Barrule area. It will be on Saturday 24th January 2009 - registration & start in the South Barrule Plantation car park at 5pm. It will be a 2-hour course over a relatively small event area - with controls sited at track junctions or other easily identifiable locations & marked with fluorescent tape. All controls will be worth 10 points. Apres-ride social at the Baltic Inn, Foxdale. More details to follow on www.trailquest.manxtimingsolutions.com

Graham