

Trailquest - Braaid & Central IoM - Sunday 29th March

A record turnout of 58 riders for the Spring Trailquest was probably helped by the fine, dry and sunny conditions - how could a Mountain Biker resist the challenge?

Twenty four Men's Solos/Teams, 4 mixed teams, 4 generation teams and the sole women's team of Nikki Lane & Jo Maylin took to the trails and headed off from the HQ at Braaid Hall in a variety of different directions.

Controls were scattered around Chibbanagh, Ballacotch, Archallagan, Stoney Mountain and South Barrule plantations as well as a challenging cluster around Eary Cushlin, Doarlish Cashen, Glen Rushen and Arrasey.

The latter loop were the high-scoring points and most aimed to target some or all of these - but Glen Rushen is deep and long and required strong legs to capitalise on the controls - which were intentionally sited to make it difficult to combine them in a single loop. At the top of the men's field, Kale Hawkins (overall winner with 489 points out of a possible maximum of 535) did well to collect 17 out of the 20 available controls. He would (possibly) have been beaten by Julian Corlett had not the latter been so heads-down that he flew past the Rushen mines - omitting to stop at the relatively easy checkpoint there – and sacrificed 43 points in the process. Kale made no such mistakes and thus triumphed by just 2 points!

Andy Brookes put in an impressive 15 checkpoints to score 423 (marred by losing 30 in time penalties) tightly followed by David Glover & Rob Quirk just one point behind as 5th Men.

In the mixed category, Chris Watson and Marika Bailey teamed up and came first with 413 points with Cat Price & David Gooberman in second place with 364. Julie Lyness found a new partner in Paul Woodham to clinch 3rd with 181 points. Caroline Helks is recovering well from her injury and sought safety in numbers – making up a team of 3 with Neil Clague & Carolyn White. They picked up 4 controls for 143 points.

Nikki Lane & Jo Maylin were the only all-women team and put in a strong ride to finish 16th overall with 287 points.

Trailquest attracts young and old alike – and we had 4 generation teams. Nick & Alicia Corlett teamed up with Joseph Haddock to win the class with 174 points with Gina & Harry Grose second, Susan & James Everitt 3rd and Darren & Callum Coulthard 4th – well done all.

Andy Cook (who won the 25 mile Time Trial on the same morning) came along, started late and still put in an impressive performance to clinch 12th place – although he did admit that his legs were tired!

Disappointing (for them) David Griffin & Rob Sorby put in an impressive route but misjudged the return loop and came in 37 minutes late – losing ALL their points. Clearly they were just enjoying the ride too much to worry about the time!

Ralph Jackson was visiting the Island, saw the event advertised in the local paper and decided to give it a go. Despite no local knowledge, he still had a good ride and seemed to have enjoyed himself.

I wish I could mention everyone but already I have to start preparing for the next event... Everyone seemed to have had a great time and consumed large quantities of Tea & cake afterwards. Trailquest is all about the fun of taking part – no matter how competitive or laid back you want to be.

The next event is the big summer Trailquest – on Sunday June 28th – and will be a full 5-hour event (but with a 3-hour option built in) so put a note in your diaries and we hope to see you there. Venue to be announced shortly.