

Winter Nights Trailquest – Saturday 30th January 2010

It was a fine night for some winter riding in the Manx forests. Not far off freezing but clear and dry with a full moon – that bit was planned by the way! Just a few icy patches around to be careful of - but nothing too serious.

We were amazed (and very pleased) to see how many turned up for this the second night-time event and it was hard work keeping up at registration.

In the end, 43 teams (87 people) set off to locate the 24 checkpoints that were spread around South Barrule, Corlea, Stoney Mountain & Archallagan plantations. Most were sited on main tracks but a few were secreted up little-used dead-ends and spurs off the main tracks to provide some added interest. Obviously it is a huge advantage for those who know their way around the plantations and this was enhanced further by having to navigate in the dark. It was impressive that some of those giving it a go were riders who had never done Trailquest before – hats (or helmets) off to them!

There was a slightly longer time limit of 2 hours as opposed to the 90 minutes at last year's event. This gave a little more scope for planning a decent route yet still meant that we were all able to adjourn to the Baltic Inn in Foxdale by 8:30 where Jo and his wife made us very welcome with a supper of sausages and chip butty's. This was especially welcome alongside a pint of beer whilst teams swapped scores and routes and relived the event in comfort.

There were 24 checkpoints in all and two teams (Ronan O'Toole and Andy Brookes plus Paul Kneen & David Glover) managed to get to 21 of them in the time available – or almost in the case of Paul & David. Whilst both teams scored 290 points, the latter were 5 minutes over the time limit and the resulting penalty proved to be crucial and gave Ronan & Andy the slight advantage to take top honours.

The Laxey team of Dave Reilly & Steve Partington put in a characteristically strong effort to clinch 3rd place just 5 points behind.

Mark Eastham (who did his first Trailquest just this time last year) teamed up with legendary dark horse Gary Quilliam. They were the surprise act who took 4th overall [240 pts] with a highly impressive 5th coming from husband & wife team David & Rebecca Griffin.

Moving on to the category results: With such a strong entry we took the decision to represent these in the full TCA (now BMBO – British Mountain Bike Orienteering) categories. Whilst everybody deserves a mention and there were some sterling efforts from some of the relative unknowns, listed here are the category winners. Full results can be found on the ManxTimingSolutions web site and these can be easily downloaded. As we all know, Trailquest is not just about winning but about the fun of taking part!

Top Senior Men were Ronan O'Toole and Andy Brooks with 290 points.

Top Senior Women were Kate Evans & Nikki Lane with 160 points.

Top Veteran Men were Paul Kneen & David Glover with 285 points.

Top Veteran Women were Caroline Helks & Jo Maylin with 140 points.

Top Senior Mixed team were Rob & Claire Sorby with 150 points.

Top Veteran Mixed team were David & Rebecca Griffin with 235 points.

Top Generation team were Simon & Joseph Haddock.

We also had one Youth Team (both aged 16) in the form of John & Warwick Sanderson who scored 131 points – so well done to them.

We hope that you all enjoyed the event – that was certainly our impression afterwards. An observer who walked up to the South Barrule trailhead reported that lights could be seen weaving all around the valley and around Stoney Mountain – quite an eerie sight in the moonlight. Special thanks to the weather for giving us such a superb night to be out and a very special mention to Paula Gelling who volunteered to come and help us at registration and marshalling.

We do have a few items of lost property: A rear light, torch and a Nike top. If anyone recognises these, please would they contact me to claim them.

The next event is scheduled for 25th April and will be a 3-hour day-time event. News to follow on this once I have decided on the event area!

Graham Hughes

2nd February 2010

Footnote:

We do our best to make the registration as quick and easy as possible, even though there is a lot to do – signing on forms, meal tickets, maps, dibbers – it all takes time.

One thing that really slows us down, though, is having to deal with BMBO day-memberships (which also cause additional admin after the event) so please can everyone try to sort out their (FREE) BMBO associate memberships before the event. This also saves you £2 so is well worth the effort.

I know that some have reported problems with the online process and I do pass this feedback on to the guys at BMBO - so hopefully you will all have your MTB numbers to hand at the next event. I will endeavour to put together some "help text" for you and put this on the MTS web site to help guide you through the process. We also offered online entry for the first time and a few managed to make use of this. What seems to cause the confusion is with all the different numbers that seem to be floating

around – Si Number / BMBO number and now an Si-Entries number – so I will do what I can to explain it all!