

## MANX SPRING TRAILQUEST – SUNDAY APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> 2010

After several weeks of bone-dry weather, it was a tad disappointing that the Island received a heavy dose of overnight rain and awoke to a misty, dank and drizzly prospect on Sunday morning.

Thankfully, this was not enough to deter 73 riders from turning out to sample the eclectic mix of terrain afforded by the hills around Baldrine. 31 teams and 11 solo riders were treated to an orienteering challenge that included 24 controls as far afield as Lonan church, Clay Head, Ballaragh, Snaefell Mines, Bungalow & Windy Corner - plus a liberal scattering around Conrhenny, the Clype and Honey Hill areas.

There really was something for everyone: A real hard-man's route that included a circuit through Glen Roy, up to Windy Corner, along to the Bungalow and across country to the Agneash Valley. Only 5 teams attempted the full circuit - and strong legs were needed to complete this in time to pick up some of the lower value controls and get back home within the time limit. Many took on either the big climb up to Windy Corner or the endless drag up to the Snaefell mines – lured by the high-scoring checkpoints but opted not to attempt the full loop. Most who know the lay of the land in this area would have probably realized that the easier alternative was to ride the loop in a clockwise direction – which makes it all the more impressive that the winning team of Martin Bell & Ben McLean (752 points) chose to do it the harder way around! Looking at their route makes impressive reading and they cleaned up on all but 3 of the available checkpoints with just 34 seconds to spare within the 3-hour time limit.

Just one checkpoint down (but 70 points adrift and 7 minutes over the time limit) was Julian Corlett (682 points) – who did an equally tough route – proving that Trailquest is so much about doing the maths and picking the most effective route. The game isn't over until the last man comes home!

Laxey man Mark Eastham and partner Lee Clayton notched up an impressive 646 points to take third place (without doing the main loop). As relative newcomers this was a very impressive result which forced the other Laxey team of Steve Partington & Dave Rielly (631 points) into 4<sup>th</sup> place – a veritable head-to-head.

Lloyd Taggart and Jackie Lee are now making regular appearances on Mountain Bikes and put in a powerful performance (and immediately tackling the big loop anti-clockwise) to place them 5<sup>th</sup> overall (1<sup>st</sup> mixed team) with 604 points ahead of the regular mixed duo of Chris Watson & Nikki Lane (7<sup>th</sup> overall on 547 points).

Stuart Garry did extremely well to take 6<sup>th</sup> overall (1<sup>st</sup> Grand Vet) with a tough but effective route. Relative unknowns Paul Barnett & Simon Pontee were 8<sup>th</sup> overall (530) followed by Simon Trenholme & Gary Hinds (513) and Solo Craig Hindle (504) to round off the top 10 overall.

I really wish that I could mention everyone – for everybody took on their own challenges and did well to plan and navigate their own routes in what were pretty dreadful

conditions in places. The hill fog and rain on the hills reduced visibility to a few metres and it cannot have been easy wandering around in the murk.

There was disappointment for E2E-master Steve Honeybone - who was forced to drop out with a knee strain early in the event. Well done to Emma Skuse for being the top (only) solo lady to finish 20<sup>th</sup> overall on 438 points. And well done to Rob & Thomas Longden for being the top generation team on 278 points. Really – well done to everyone who took part and who were not deterred by the unpleasant conditions....

We had no complaints about checkpoint locations – all were carefully mapped and backed up by GPS so, if you were in the right place, you got the points... Special thanks to Chris & Nikki for helping to put out the course on Saturday. Big, big thanks to Sue for slaving over the tea urn and serving you all with food in the big barn after the event.

The event HQ was kindly hosted at Baldrine Farm by Adie Corlett and family - who all made us very welcome. This offered plenty of parking space and the large barn gave shelter from the drizzle to riders and bikes alike - although it was a tad cool in the inclement weather! Can you believe that, with the sunny build-up to the event, we were actually contemplating running a Barbecue? Maybe this will be on the cards for the summer event...

The next Trailquest on the Calendar is the Big Summer event on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July (Tynwald weekend). This will once again feature as a round in the UK National League – so local knowledge will be tested against the experience of regular orienteers. At time of writing, we are hoping that this will be based at Ballaugh – but are waiting on confirmation for the use of a suitable event centre. As soon as this is finalized, an announcement will be made on the MTS Trailquest page, MMBC site and in the Manx Independent.

Above all, though, we hope that you enjoyed this event – and hope to see you again at the next one. Please feel free to send us your feedback.

Graham Hughes. 27<sup>th</sup> April 2010