

Explanations of parts of the Route Instructions

Regularity One

Pre-plot issued an hour before your start time. A set of numbered north-up tulips with any repeated diagrams being amalgamated to save space and keep them a sensible size. It shouldn't have caused any problems as pre-plot, and generally didn't. However, eight of you missed the codeboard in the farmer's gravel layby. It was highlighted with a NAM note and an intentionally weird approach and depart, never mind plotting 50+ metres off the road. Couldn't help any more without putting orange arrows out!

Regularity Two

Plot and Bash (a few seconds). A string of spot heights, some with approach and/or depart directions – the first forcing you to use the one white allowed in the instructions, which only three of you missed. This section seemed to cause the least problems in finding the route with hardly any missed ITC's. It appears that some of you took time to plot the section before attempting to drive it. If you can't plot on the move, then you would be best advised to plot a bit, drive it, then plot some more, drive more etc. Spot heights has to be one of the easiest navigational sections to plot & bash.

Regularity Three

More spot heights, but written with +'s and -'s was supposed to make the grey cells work a little harder. However, you had been given this at the Holding Control because of lack of space at the RS position, and you had two minutes to get you started. I had reports of cars refusing to start on their minute and blocking others who wanted to – definitely NOT the done thing and against the spirit of any form of rallying. Again, if you can't plot and travel at the same time, you should have plotted a few miles and then driven some, and certainly parked up off the road if you do stop. The 'off road' bit through the ford was supposed to cause concern, not worry, to some, but in practice it was straightforward; although the steep climb to the ITC caused a few less powerful cars to lose a few seconds. When I first saw the ford in December, it was a raging torrent that I would have thought twice about in a jacked-up Range Rover, so I'm pleased that it was passable, though a little more water would have made it more interesting. A couple of you forgot to plot the avoid ¼GS and therefore missed an ITC. A number of very impressive totals of less than 30 seconds lost over the 8 controls – well done!

Regularity Four

The first few miles had been given at the start to get you into the route; I didn't want you lost among those lanes with the number of houses and horses around. But you had to plot the rest of the gridsquare exits on the move. The new roundabout on the A49 should have come as a bit of a surprise to most you – it has been in existence for 18 months or more but doesn't appear on any printed OS map yet – only on line. In case it caused confusion, I just had to put an ITC as soon after it as possible. The change of depiction of gridsquare exits (to bottom, top, left & right) was supposed to alleviate the boredom a bit – the novices were warned about it in their F.I. notes. A couple of you missed the longest route in GS5232 as instructed, but five of you relaxed after the last ITC and didn't follow the designated route to the tests. You should have turned left immediately after the railway bridge (still following the gridsquare exits) to approach Whitfield from the west – rather than the more dangerous action of turning right off the fast and busy A465.

Regularity Five

A timed to the minute section which was pre-plotted at the Start. Hopefully, not too difficult gridlines to cross. A fair number of you missed seeing the codeboard on the loop via Pontrilas Post Office. There was no ground/earth to hit a post into on that stretch of road other than at the very beginning, so that is why the board was positioned where it was. It is a moot point whether one should have been placed there at all and I accept (but don't necessarily agree with) the criticism/comments about that. Just one of you didn't take the narrow lane as the short way at the small marked triangle by the telephone box near Grieg Farm. Hopefully there was time for you to look at the views on the wide roads for the second half of this section.

Regularity Six

I thought this was going to be the most difficult section to start with, so I tried to give you some extra plotting time to get you started on the two straightline diagrams. Although this was a timed to the minute section, the speed changes were kept to a minimum. The near permanent traffic lights near the end hopefully did not confuse you too much.

I gather that there were a number of traffic problems on this route with a charity horse ride in Welsh Newton, a Farm Open day near Llangrove and some 50 ancient tractors clogging the route somewhere too. We actively search for clashing activities on the route, and avoid them where possible. The Grosmont Village Day, the Championship Moto-cross at Howton Court and the Llangrove open day were all known about and contacted to ensure no impingment. But if those who organised the charity horse ride, the ancient tractor show and others do not contact the police and don't advertise widely, then there is little we can do. Sorry, but it is out of our hands.

Many of you have got (or are getting) the hang of the timed to the minute sections now, but if you're not sure about how to 'work' them, please feel free to e-mail me for advice.

Regularity Seven

Back to timing to the second, but plot and bash with only two minutes to get you into ready-to-go mode. Just three map references to plot for a 15 mile section. Because of where you started, you could not head south from the wide yellow road from Coughton until after Parkfields or you would have been using the same road as you used for the first 200 yards at the start of the section. You should have come south through Hope Mansell and found the second ITC in the woods at Bailey Lane End. Most of you heard about the road blockage and me calling the Police. The cancellation of the subsequent section was an easy decision and the only fair thing to do. Apologies for that incident which was beyond our control. The 'gentleman' was given some 'words of advice' by the PC who was informed by us that the road had been PR'd on 13th June.

If anybody wants more clarification on any part of the event navigation, please contact me.

I make no excuse for some sections of the event being plot and bash, but I hope you do not think the navigation is too taxing – it should all be do-able for moderately competent navigators. I shall continue to keep the number of speed changes to a minimum, commensurate with the prevailing road widths and conditions. It's either that or you will be set speeds which are too fast or too slow for great swathes of the route. I know I can't win this one; but I'll continue to do my best.

Simon