

2014 Night Owl Mid Winter Trail Touring Assembly

This year's Night Owl only attracted 6 competitors & lived up to its reputation of catching competitors napping but all agreed to having an enjoyable event.

The event this year was based at the Gloucester Country Lodge on the south side of Gloucester, with the end of Division meal break at Bundook Rural Fire Station.

The crews travelled south from the start along Bucketts Way, Faulkland Rd & then Stanton Lane / Bucketts Road on a route chart with a Passage Control manned by Paul O'Neill about 300 metres before Thunderbolts Way. The route chart was to shortly have a bearing on the Masters competitors, given that there were 2 separate hints to my intentions at the bottom of Division 1 Route Instructions

Crews then had to proceed to a 'Via' at the intersection of Barrington Rd & Faulkland Rds, the Masters by the triangulation of 3 points(@ 8.5 ,8.4 &7.0 Km from point) & Novices by Grid Reference. The next 'Via' was to be entered to the 'North' & was located on Thunderbolts Way & Bowman River Rd. Novice crews were given an additional 'Via' which took them toward Rawdon Vale whereas the 3 Masters crews all made the mistake of turning left into Faulkland Rd & then travelling along Bucketts Rd & Thunderbolts Way through Barrington to the 'Via'. This was incorrect as they passed through previous 'Via', unintentionally putting them in front of the Setup, missing about 70 Km of the intended route. Meanwhile the Novice crews encountered a Redirection which changed their direction of entry into the 'Via' from 'to the North' to 'to the East' along the recently graded Mud Hut & Bowman River Rds.

From this point crews travelled along Bowman Farm Rd to the Shell Service Station in Gloucester, (although this location was specifically given along with a Grid Reference it seems most crews did not enter) then along Bucketts Way to Bakers Creek Rd where another Redirection was found but this was only for a route chart to the meal break on unmapped roads.

At this point crews in both classes could not be separated on points & I decided that because the Masters crews had leapfrogged the setup I would not count that division in the results. The Victorian crew of Parry /Knights were the first to arrive, by their admission along the wrong road because they could not find a mileage on the map & also decided that they would drop to the Novice category for the rest of event.

At the meal break pumpkin soup, hot beef rolls & homemade cakes & slices were supplied by the ladies at the RFS along with hot tea & coffee.

Division 2 got under way at 5 pm and took crews north out of Bundook to cross the Manning River at Tiri the south towards Mt George then east across Black Flat Lane with the route instructions indicating that you would then head south to Wingham then west to Gloucester. But a Redirection was encountered along Black Flat Lane along with a new map & an instruction that when you plotted your new via you were to follow the directions in another envelope. This redirection took you to Wherrol Flat, from where the Masters had a map trace of a 25000 map & Novices had a route chart. Now with all Route Charts they start with 0.00 SO, which is what the crews did although they should not have gone more than 3 Km before deciding that they were heading in the wrong direction.

The route chart also gave crews a grid reference location at the intersection of Kerriki Forest & Cells Rd on the western boundary of Dingo SF. Bernard & Madelon Corbett spent more time than the other 2 novice crews on the wrong road, that Paul O'Neill doubling up doing sweep duties, spotted them heading back as he arrived & although he waited for them they did not return but went straight back to Gloucester. The route chart took crews up Big Run Rd to Dingo Tops where another Redirection was found this time taking crews down the fabulous Knoddingbul Rd only because the forestry had closed Kerriki Forest Rd for logging.

Another Redirection was found at the bottom of Knoddingbul Rd to advise that the next 'Via' (Wingham) was now Out of Bounds & permit them to traverse previously used roads back to Bundook & then to a 'Via' at Bucketts Way & Belbora Creek Rd then to the division finish at the Motel.

Liz & Peter Meddows were clear leaders in the Novice category followed by Paul Martin / David Chippindale (-3 VRCs) with Madelon & Bernard (-6 VRC's). The Masters crews of Steuart Snooks / Mike Batten & Winton Brocklebank were still tied and the data loggers that I was trialling did not help as I had them incorrectly configured. Lesson learnt data loggers ready for Sunday! Everyone retired to the Country Club back Bar around a nice fire for the usual discussion on the days proceedings, the Directors parentage & a few quiet drinks.

Sunday morning 9:30 away again this time crews only had 2 'Via's' to visit in 135 Km but had quite a few OOB's to plot & avoid. The route was north from the start then east to Wallanbah Rd to approach Krambach from the south, then via Dyers Crossing, roads around Firefly to Bunyah the up Manning Hill Rd (another road which has had a recent grade & now in the best condition for many a year) & north along Waukivory Rd. Knights / Parry were the only crew to lose

points for this division & picked up a WD here when they did not TL through a gate to travel westward across Glen Road to Craven for a 20 Km drive along Bucketts Way to the finish.

The results for the novice crews was decided on division 2 scores & the masters still could not be separated with both teams mileage within 1 Km of official distance. The data loggers told a different story & will be an asset in future events as they give a track viewable on Google Earth / maps, actual time & elapsed time at any point as well as distance, average speed & maximum speed.

A good time was had by all, we again had luck with the weather although Jim Pope I believe got a good soaking where he was filming along Barrington East Road. Just after I arrived at the meal break there was a sudden downpour for about 10 minutes which enlivened the drive along Bakers Creek Rd for the competitors & I believe that this storm was associated with the hail storm which passed through Forster later that day. There was also a lot of thunder about on the Sunday morning but nothing came of it.

Finally I would like to thank the crews for their support of the event, 3 crew members from Victoria 2 from ACT & 1 from southern highlands, whilst all 3 novice crews were locals. Paul O'Neill, Karen & Rod Piggott as well as Gwyn & Helen Mulholland (Stewards) & Jim Pope, Chris & Mark Robertson for their photography.

The following link is a competitors report on the event;

<http://www.bmsc.com.au/forums/event-reports/32137-nightowl-touring-assembly-2014-a.html>

Regards Arthur