

WIM event 28 November – Planner’s Comments

This event had more courses than are usually available at a local event, as we reused the courses from the previous evening’s Southern Nights Championship. The average runner takes 10-15% longer at night than in the daytime, so ideally day competitors should have “traded up” and entered a slightly different course than usual in order to get their desired length of course. I hope everyone was able to select a course that suited them.

Ashmore Wood and Washer’s Pit offers a generally runnable area, although there are fairly extensive areas of low brambles in some places. Courses were planned to avoid these as much as possible, particularly as their boundaries are not really definite enough to use for navigation purposes. I also felt that a lot of the mapped depressions in the western part of the map were not significant enough to use. Conversely, the larger depressions in the central area all tend to be adjacent to paths and therefore not very challenging for senior competitors. The wooden fodder racks, however, did seem to offer reasonable options, so I used quite a number of these. The rides in the central area are also rather overgrown at present, so are not always easy to identify. The yellow course was shorter than originally planned to avoid the worst of these.

I hoped that, particularly on the longer courses, there were direct options as well as the longer routes round by the paths and tracks, and this seems to have worked. Times seemed to match expectations, or were just a little faster in the firm conditions underfoot. They would have been noticeably slower in the wet, as might well have been the case at this time of year.

Thanks to all those competitors who braved the wintry conditions to attend. Thanks especially, too, to the Organiser, Chris Branford, and all the WIM team for their help and support (particularly those who helped collect controls after the event).

And for all of you who are wondering why the area is called Washer’s Pit: Washer’s Pit is the pond close by the road at the extreme NW of the map (hidden on some maps by the control descriptions – but look at the map on Route Gadget on this site). Luckily none of you got into the same sort of trouble as is recounted below in local legend:

It runs that a Squire Barber, or perhaps his daughter, for the tale is variously told, was warned in a dream on three successive nights, or else three times on the same night, that some one was in distress at Washer's Pit. The person warned woke the household, and asked for a volunteer to go down to the place. No one would venture, except the cook. Her master gave her his best hunter for the ride, and she went forth to find a lady in white hanging by her hair from an ash tree over the well, now closed, at Washer's Pit. She released the victim, and carried her back on the horse to Ashmore.

Martin Cross

