

Friday the 13th ... Unlucky or not?

It was decided at the November meeting that Col and I were to put on the Snowman this year. We already had a route on the backburner as I was playing about with a few routes last year so we already had a bit of a head start on it all. However, I must say now; for those of you that are seasoned organisers of 12 cars ... CONGRATULATIONS! There's a lot more work goes into these events than one first thinks!

About a week before the event, it was looking like we would have 3 or 4 entries, but luckily by the time it rolled around to Friday; we were up to 11 entries (best case scenario). Unfortunately on the night, Carl and Andy in the mini couldn't make it. So that meant 10 entries, which I was really happy with.

So the first section for the experts was a string of grid lines and spotheights to cross and a sneaky grid reference placed near the end. This section was also where the first NAM was (in a lay-by near Great Carlton). Followed by this was a grid of grid squares that were to be followed in alphabetical order. For the novices, it was a string of grid lines and underlined spotheights to cross all the way TC2. This took you from Woodthorpe (the start), up to Withern and through to Great Carlton, then along to the bottom of three bridges lane and Theddlethorpe, right on the A1031 and right again along Stain lane to TC2. We were already onto Wishbone territory!

After seeing Dave and Kim at TC2, experts were given a list of points of interest to pass through/by. And novices were given a grid with a code to figure out which order to go through the points of interest. This section was the one that I had to change originally, as I did have it going through asserby twists, but it is unfortunately a blackspot. So the new control was moved to just south west of Huttoft, before Thurlby. However, I made the error of not changing the grid reference for the control for the novices. This threw all three of them completely (and quite justifiably too!). So when they came into TC3 (where Col and I were), I did my best to apologise and hope that the next sections would be a bit better/easier. Unfortunately, up to this point a lot of people were losing quite a bit of time so I asked the other two marshalls to hang fire and don't worry about OTL times! From this point, I also decided not to penalise competitors for calling me. I think it was in this section that Dave and Herman broke down too.

I gather the next section was a bit difficult too ... for the experts, it was an all roads circular herringbone with no start or finish point. For the novices it was a standard herringbone with a few extra points of interests. The route

took the competitors up to Thurlby and left, over the bridge and traffic lights and right towards Cumberworth, up to Bonthorpe and into the back end of Alford, and out the other side to TC4. I think most people found this control even though it was a little bit late still. I also learned at the end that it was at this control that my Father (a marshal) gained a timecard! Apparently he went running after Rob and Graham to give them the timecard back, only to realise that it was Stuart's timecard and that he'd already gone! Oops! Even with this little hiccup, the complete novices still managed to make it to the finish, with some more codeboards!

After TC4 was the section with lots of "LWRGT"s and the secret check. For both classes of entrant, it was tulips. However, for novice there were heads and tails on each tulip and they were in alphabetical order. For the experts, some were missing a head, and some missing a tail and they were all out of order! There were 5 codeboards in this section and 4 of them were possibly a little bit hidden around a grass triangle. If you'd found the right route, you would have gone through Ailby, along to South Thoresby (to where Terry and Sue were for the secret check), along to the A16, up to Swaby and along past two LWRGT's to Muckton where Kim and Dave were waiting for you.

The last section was straight forward avoid grid references for experts and via grid references for the novices (I'm sure that roma that Jacquie borrowed from me definitely came in handy here!). Up to Little Cawthorpe and back on yourself towards Legbourne, down Furze Lane and along the B1200 into the Quiet at Manby and out towards Little Carlton. Out to the A157 and left, turning off towards the hedgehog care and along towards Tothill for the Finish. Along the A157, competitors were instructed to go round two lay-bys (one on each side of the road), and Col and I were thinking that quite a few people would go through the wrong lay-by ... what we didn't realise was that we would too! We were putting the codeboards out on Friday, and Col was just knocking the board into the second lay-by on the right, and I had an epiphany ... WE were in the wrong lay-by to the one that I'd put into the navigation!! Phew, that was a close one; he picked it out and we went along to the next lay-by to put it in the right place! Whilst sat at the finish control waiting for the cars to roll through, I had a call from George to say that he and Jason had had to go home early due to alternator problems. So that meant 8 finishers (including all three novices too!).

Congratulations to Steve J and Dave Dimble on winning the event and many thanks to the marshals coming out on a bit of a frosty night! All in all, I'd say Friday 13th for me this time round was not unlucky! (it might have been for a couple of competitors who struggled a bit), but I was happy with how the event turned out, and I'm looking forward to the next one I go on to organise.