

**ARMY & TA ORIENTEERING
TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS &
TA INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**



RESULTS

BUTTERWOOD & LONGMOOR

9/10 MAY 1998

COMMENTS BY THE CHAMPIONSHIP CO-ORDINATOR

As the Co-ordinator for this year's Army and TA Orienteering Championships, my task was to provide a successful and enjoyable competition for all competitors. I planned to meet the first requirement by gathering together a very strong team of event officials, consisting entirely of experienced orienteers, planners and organisers; a veritable who's who of Army orienteering. But, just to make sure, 2 controllers from local civilian clubs were asked to oversee the course planners! The second requirement was easy; just add good weather to the excellent courses.

Throughout the weekend, I received many favourable comments about the Butter Wood map and terrain, as well as the high standard of course planning and setting on all 3 days. Not a single complaint was raised by competitors on any technical aspects of the competition. To achieve this level of precision takes hard work and attention to detail. I am most grateful to Ken Williams, Charles Bromley Gardner, David Bonser and Peter Burt for their considerable efforts towards the success of these Championships.

The organisation for the events also went very well, largely thanks to the expertise and dedication of Hugh Drummond and Jack Young, both of whom put in many days of hard work in preparation for their respective events. On Day 1, Hugh had the dual problems of catering for a complex relay competition whilst simultaneously running an individual cross-country event for the TA. He did this all magnificently well, getting the Championships off to a good start. On Day 2, Jack had the unenviable task of co-ordinating 5 mass starts, each of two dozen or more teams, all to a precise time-table. This was achieved superbly, with the able assistance of "Lofty" Ballard, who also gave invaluable assistance as the Start and Finish Official for both days. Lofty also provided tremendous support to both organisers for many days prior to the competition. A big thank you also goes to Dave Omand of SEAE, who, as my 4 Div Secretary, took in all the entry funds (everyone paid!), maintained the budget, booked the accommodation and purchased all the prizes. Mainly through his efforts, this event did not go into the red.

An excellent level of administrative support to the events and the competitors was provided by men of the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, who worked tirelessly throughout the 5 days that encompassed the Championships. Once again they received the acclaim of the competitors, especially those based at Longmoor. They carried out every task with efficiency and good humour. At the end of each day they cleared up every sign of disturbance, which was much appreciated by the Camp Commandant at Longmoor and the Greywell Hill Estate Warden, who is now content for orienteering to return to this lovely little wood next year. My sincere thanks to CQMS Hoskins, Sgt Regan and the guardsmen for their considerable efforts. My thanks also go to the young trainee REME soldiers of SEME and SEAE, who did admirably well helping out at the Start and Finish for both days.

Last, but not least, my thanks to Nick Bateson and Andrew Hensman, who worked tirelessly day and night prior to and throughout the Championships. They took in all the entries, placed the details on the computer, made countless changes (I wish Army orienteers would get their act together!) and produced all the results. The prize-giving ceremony, set for the very early time of 2 o'clock, started just 5 minutes late, which must be a record for Army orienteering competitions! The only short-coming from my perspective was the failure to produce a display of team places during either of the events. This was my over-sight in that I concentrated too much effort on producing over-all results, at the expense of "real-time" race positions. I know this detracted from the excitement of the competition and for this I apologise to all the competitors.

I hope to see you all again next year at the LAND/TA Championships in Scotland and the Army Championships in Germany, but as a fellow competitor!

Good "O"
Bob Mount

Day 1 Planners Comments - Mr Ken Williams.

The weather ! It's astonishing how a bit of sunshine improves the courses in a way that is beyond the planners creativity.

As Butterwood is a new area for orienteering , the task I had for calculating course lengths was either to compare it with another similar area or by scaling up/down from the results of my own times running some of the courses. Using both methods I believe I achieved a good estimate. I also had to take into consideration the considerably wide range of orienteering abilities within the Army . A good look at the results will see that I achieved my aim with the winning times broadly in line with the AOA recommendations. These were for times of 50 minutes on the long courses, 40 minutes on the medium courses and 30 minutes for the short courses. I am still trying to establish what went wrong on the 2 short courses ? Did all the weak runners run on short B ?

In general the TA competitors were happy with their courses . It was however unfortunate that I was asked to provide them with a separate finish. Next year the AOA has agreed to have a common finish for both competitions.

I would like to thank all the competitors who made complimentary remarks about their respective courses. It made the days spent in the forest and the armchair worth the time and effort.

My thanks go to all the people who helped me with my task . To David Bonser the Controller , Hugh Drummond the Organiser, and to David Smale and the others who helped place and collect the controls.

Enjoy your Orienteering.

Day 2 Planner's Comments – Maj Bromley Gardner QRH

The aim of the Harris Format could be described as combining orienteering with military decision-making. As a result there is no prescribed layout of controls and nor should there be, as it should not be a test of SOPs. It was my intention to force an allocation of controls amongst each team member between each core control, by having few core controls and a wide spread of secondary controls between them. As it was, some teams still got away from the start in double-quick time, relying on SOPs, whilst others took up to 10 minutes to make their decisions.

Longmoor was a good area to plan the Harris Format, as it allowed a wide spread of controls around a circular core. There is also a wide range of easier and technical terrain. With over 500 orienteers starting over 40 minutes, 2 completely different courses were set (with the exception of one common control – 235) in order to minimise following. There were however a number of competitors who punched incorrectly or missed controls, although the majority of the latter were probably due to tiredness and lethargy rather than error. The 3 competitors to mis-punch did so at Control 6 on the long courses – 246: top of the re-entrant and 206: shallow gully i.e. a trench. Although these were within 20m of each other, they were on significantly different sites and the codes were in sequence with other controls on each course i.e. 205 – 206 – 207 and 245 – 246 – 247, the sites were as close as possible to the centre of overprinted circle. Those who mis-punched must learn to double-check control codes. There was also a little adverse comment about Control 5 on the long courses – deep gully end and deep gully bend – which were within 50m of each other. The rules do not allow controls on similar features within 50m, so the legality of this depends on your definition of "similar". The controller was content with the use of both sites and, especially as no one mis-punched, the Jury did not have to consider a complaint.

Use of the slowest two runners' times to calculate the team result was based on the results of last year's championships. This year's results will be subject to the same statistical analysis before deciding the way forward, but it is easy to see that this year's Harris Format had only half the effect on the overall result as Day 1. Apart from one mis-punch, only one unit leading after Day 1 was overtaken and there was only one other change in the top 3 units.

Next year we will have to plan more courses – it may not be politic to point it out, but over 70% of Regular Army units finished within 3 hours (give or take a minute or two), whilst, with the notable exception of the UOTC Ladies, 70% of TA units finished outside 3 hours. Team times on the long, and all, courses ranged from 94:50 up to 360:16 – a range of abilities that is extremely hard to cater for. I will be recommending that shorter courses will be planned for the TA next year. I would welcome any other comment on the courses in order to develop our corporate understanding of the Harris Format. I shall certainly be passing on my lessons to next year's planners.

I am very grateful to Pert Burt of Mole Valley for his careful controlling, which kept me on the straight and narrow and ensured that there were no technical errors. He had no responsibility for the below-standard plastic bags; although the Longmoor map is a difficult shape and size, I would hope that other championships would use at least 250-gauge plastic. It would have been better if we hadn't sealed both ends of the bags – an error that I realised at 2230 hrs on Saturday: I hope that you appreciated the effort that went into opening them from then!

Thank you for the most welcome assistance collecting in the controls – all finished by 1730 hrs except for one of the final controls (248), which disappeared before we got there: if any-one knows where it went please let us know. Maj (Retd) Hugh Drummond spent many days putting together a fine set of controls and punches for use ONLY at Army Championships, so we need to look after them. Thank you Hugh for saving this year's and future planners such time-consuming effort.

Charles Bromley Gardner