

Controller SN Trophy 2023 Charles Bromley Gardner

Congratulations to Southern Navigators, and Steve McKinley in particular, for providing a strenuous challenge for nearly 700 people on a sadly dull Sunday. It was a supreme busy effort, overcoming the usual hurdles and those less normal – occupation of the camping ground event centre by Travellers and the ensuing essential clear-up leading to a few anxious alternative plans.

Paul Fox produced excellent courses, exploiting the varied terrain to test different techniques. I was particularly impressed that he avoided the easy temptation of over-using the more complicated sections: occasional use had more effect. Mytchett has a number of intricate areas, especially south-east of the railway, which test the mapper's ability to depict the ground features with consistency, well achieved by Steve McKinley (more plaudits). These areas, some barely larger than a control circle, are well up to TD5 standard, enhanced by reduced visibility of the ground level by undergrowth. Competitors had to adjust their technique on these occasions: it was rarely beneficial to change in using the TD4 techniques acceptable for the rest of the course, and then try again using the same strategy. Steep, bracken-covered slopes are by definition generalised by 5m contours, but there were always good attack points to identify. The surroundings of a couple of controls (#106 & #114) were questioned: on re-checking the map was confirmed to be a good depiction of the ground from all directions, with the control sites as shown.