

Planner's Notes – Vicky Bailey

Planning on Kilnsey was a challenge, for all the practical reasons Mike has mentioned but also because as planners we had two hard acts to follow in the shape of 2016's epic acts-of-God JK and AIRE's sunny summer special in 2018. It seemed appropriate then that our event served up something in between; on the day, a moderately grim start melting into a modestly mild finish; in the lead up, a catalogue of every other available weather, never friendly enough for shorts but nothing so hostile that it saw us off the hill. No sun, no hail strikes, but come the day: a sunburst of primroses.

With the assembly area already fixed we were limited with how much we could vary from AIRE's event, which had used the same quarry for car parking. Early efforts to find a novel start location were quickly abandoned – you didn't want a longer walk to the start, did you? But for the finish we gambled on a short walk back to assembly for the fun of a combined finish with the White and Yellow courses in the caravan park. This also left us with a little more length in the courses, which meant a better share of Kilnsey proper for the shortest senior courses before the inevitable march off the hill. For the longer courses, Mike and Chris's efforts with permissions and crossing points opened up access to additional areas not used since the JK – a big help for keeping things fresh. Planning tactics evolved over the thrashing-out process. Our early strategy of avoiding long legs crossing the walls resulted in somewhat bland Middle-style courses that lacked "story". In the end, using the walls to set up macro route choices provided better structure, and made for some entertaining post-race analysis on Routegadget. Every crossing point was worth it, Mike, honest!

The most memorable part of planning at Kilnsey has been the efforts undertaken by so many volunteers to overcome its challenges. Fathomless feats of endurance and ingenuity! An alphabetised schedule of animal-dependent crossing point logistics. A 60kg sheep-proof control marking solution! Dauntless control collectors taking on longer loops than their original courses and a map layout for every permutation of scale and paper size. The amount of time and care that goes into these events is equal parts scary and inspiring. My tip for anyone considering taking on something similar is to get yourself a co-planner. Find one who always finds time to be slightly less busy when you are super busy; who has a seemingly exhaustible supply of patience, and a very good recipe for flapjack – then no amount of trans-Pennine weather tantrums and late-night PDF checking can get you down for long!