

Sedgley Hall Farm SEE 10th July 2008

BLUE	1.8k	1.8k	2.1k	Total
1 David Williams	15	15	19	49.43
2 Chris Embrey	17	15	19	51.17
3 John Embrey	15	13	25	53.05
4 Andy Hemsted	16	16	25	57.26
5 Ian Hopkins	21	19	27	67.49
6 Colin Spears	18	23	32	73.36
7 Peter Langmaid	21	22	31	74.27
8 Barry Houghton	28	24	30	82.46

GREEN			
1 Adrian Bailey	20	23	43.09
2 Russ Fauset	19	24	43.11
3 Kirstin Mitchell	32	32	64.41
4 Stephen Nightingale	45	28	72.37
5 Penny Hemsted	43	35	78.06
6 John Bennison	75	27	102.22

I visited Sedgley Hall in February when I realised I had not been there for 20 years, not since I put on a SEE, the first and only use of the map. I had a feeling a permanent course had been installed.

The vegetation wasn't then too bad and as I spend a couple of hours wandering round I was able to locate 9 controls, which were in surprisingly good condition and easily seen, despite being very vulnerable to the local populace.

Subsequently, through Forum, Steve Nightingale was able to give me a copy of the permanent course map which his son had used probably 20 years earlier. I was able to find another control and determine that 6 were no longer there.

I thought it would be fun for others to do as I had and have an event using the original un-updated map where competitors would find as many permanent controls as they could just by searching.

Re-visiting in June, however, showed this was not on. The vegetation was now quite thick in places and 3 controls I could not find even though I knew where they were! I returned a few days later with heavy duty secateurs and clippers and cleared access to the controls. In one case I had to battle in 4 feet and in another I had to approach it from the light green behind the control and then cut my way 10 feet out to the open area. I also checked out other potential sites and particularly the runnability of the eastern rough open and wooded areas. Many of the boundaries and fences had changed or were more vague, so I was a bit restricted to keep it fair.

I felt the best idea was 3 loops visiting all permanent controls plus a further 10 SEE controls. I think it worked well, and competitors learnt on the first loop to think carefully about going through certain areas and that a small diversion through a housing estate was the optimum route. The streams often ran in deep gullies which were not so indicated on the original map...

...ldly google-mapping the area I realised there was another rather interesting wood, roughly the same size again, almost adjacent. With a spare hour after putting the controls out on the day I visited this wood and promptly got a bit lost, carrying neither map nor compass. I thought it would look good if the competitors arrived and I was lost half a mile away. I was able to determine with the green spaces manager, who is based on the Sedgley map, that Dudley own the area, and a partly linking green ridge. He wasn't keen on having Orienteering there as they were trying to keep it a wild area, but hopefully we could agree date restraints.

It made me think that this could be my project for the winter, updating Sedgley Farm and enlarging to include Alder Coppice to make a decent C5 and possibly a C4 area.

As I drove to the event I realised that I had forgotten my car first aid kit, particularly as I had signed a rather onerous risk assessment liability form for the council. As it happened, we did have an injury, that of Robert Vickers, who cut his head on some barbed wire. He staggered back in, covered in blood, just as Andy Hemsted had turned up and he was able to produce an extensive kit from his car. The car park was adjacent to a medical centre which was able to give advice. Jackie Embrey gave up her run to drive him the 2 miles to the local mega-hospital to have his wound stitched or glued together. He came back an hour or so later, quite perky. So it all turned out OK, but really a limited first aid kit needs to form part of the SEE kit.

Barry McGowan