

Pitcheroak Woods WEE 8th December 2022

A total of 18 Harlequins and guests braved one of the coldest nights of the year to return to Pitcheroak Woods in Redditch after an absence of over three years. In the interim, I have re-mapped the area using Lidar data and have extended the urban area. The golf course area has not been re-mapped but could be if we were ever allowed to run on it.

Out of the 21 controls, 15 were in Pitcheroak Woods and five were in the adjacent Foxlydiate Woods with a single control in the urban area. The majority of runners found that the complex path network in Pitcheroak Woods was enough to contend with on an icy night with clear moonlit skies and there was a cluster of scores in the 12-14 range. Some intrepid souls ventured over the road into Foxlydiate Wood, where there were route choice options into the urban area. Jason Howell was the only runner to clear all of the controls but he went 92 seconds over time and incurred a time penalty.

Hard on his heels. David Williams, James Thomas and Ifor Powell of BOK all cleared 18 controls, with Ifor finishing just 11 seconds of James, who went round in 58:44 whilst David went slightly overtime at 60:21.

In the ladies' race Mandy Mack and Kerstin Mitchell both cleared 11 controls, with Mandy finishing 101 seconds ahead of Kerstin. Alison Sloman and Sammy Pritchard found six and seven controls respectively, but Alison's better timekeeping put her in third place.

Juniors Arthur Mitchell and Kieran Rose both took part and collected 12 and 13 controls respectively. Arthur had been going well but fell foul of Control 10, a depression in an area with several parallel paths. He was in good company as Andy Hemsted also struggled to locate this control.

Two new club members took part, Dan Muir on his second event and Kuzie Chen on his first event with us. Both have orienteered in the past but after long gaps have returned to the sport. In Dan's case he cleared 13 controls in just under 59 minutes whilst Kuzie (who last orienteered in China as a schoolboy) took some time to get used to night orienteering in England (with brambles!) but stuck to the task and also found 13 controls in just under two hours (albeit that the last one was in Jason's arms as they came across each other while Jason was collecting controls).

A small army of control collectors (Jason, James, Andy, Karl, Mandy, Kerstin, Arthur and Sammy) helped wrap up the evening to enable about 10 of us to get to the Rose and Crown for some warm food.