

Lakes Weekend – Tarn Hows Middle Distance Event, 2nd April

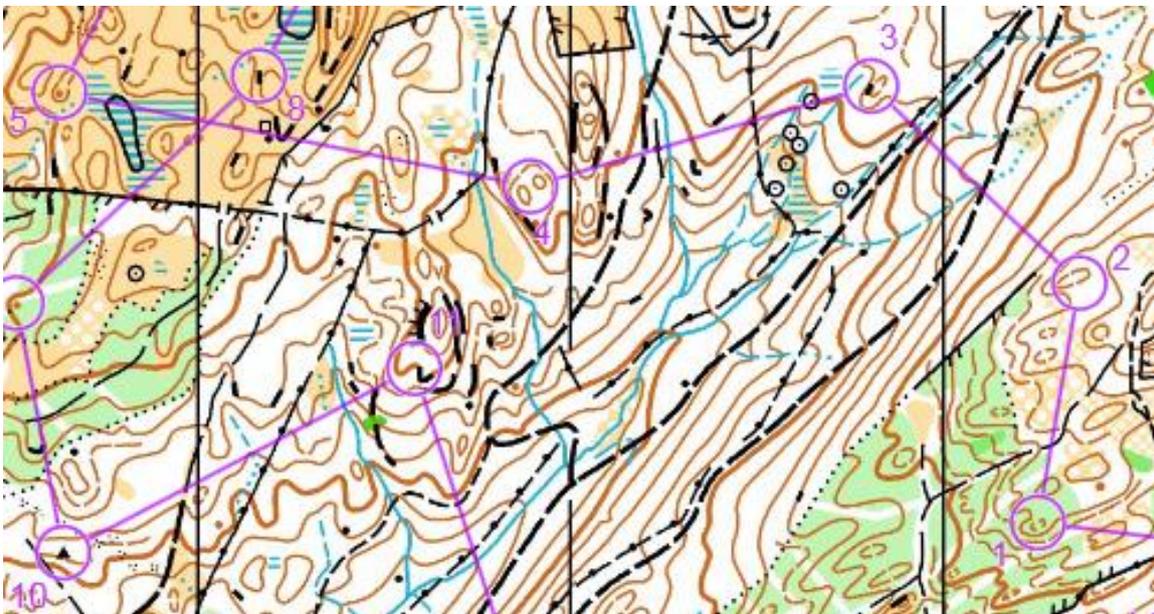
By Will Harrison

Following the JK, the Clarke & Harrison families dragged their weary limbs across the Pennines to attend the Lakeland Weekend.

Saturday's middle distance event took place around Tarn Hows, a beautiful area, partially created by an industrialist in the 1860s, who dammed the lower of three small tarns to form the single tarn (*mountain lake*) of today. He also undertook the planting of spruce, larch and pine trees, producing an environment unique to the Lake District. Beatrix Potter bought the estate in the 1930s, and bequeathed it to the National Trust on her death. The rare Herdwick sheep and Belted Galloway cattle supported by Beatrix Potter, watched bemused as orienteers struggled in their terrain.

The course included areas of mixed woodland and open fell with lots of detail, some steep slopes, rock features and wall networks. After 24 hours of non-stop rain, streams were in full flow and marshes very soft.

I have learnt to be very cautious with early controls on these very technical Lakeland courses as it is easy to lose contact with the map. So after a steady, but accurate start I became a bit too enthusiastic en route to control 3 when I followed the wrong stream down the steep valley. Fortunately, I realised my mistake quite quickly when the wall pattern failed to match my expectation....although the correction required another climb.



The open fell controls went smoothly – crags, marshes and steep contours aiding navigation. I lost further time back in the woodland after control 10 where the complicated contouring led me too far south and downhill – the tiny area of

impassable forest helped me relocate, but again the correction needed another uphill slog.

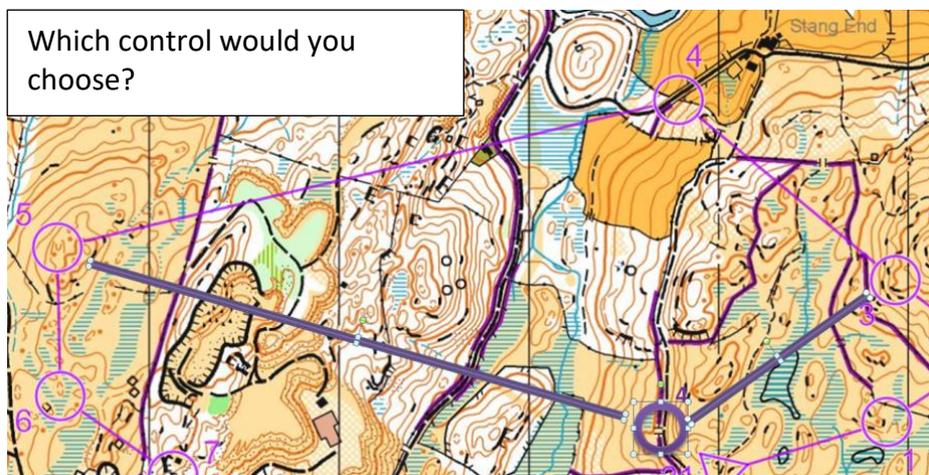
My navigation from then on was good, but making up time across demanding terrain was difficult, resulting in a mediocre position in the field (43/100). Although accompanied by the usual Lakes' steady rain, it was a great course in lovely surroundings.

Lakes Weekend Day 2 – Holme Fell

By Tim Harrison

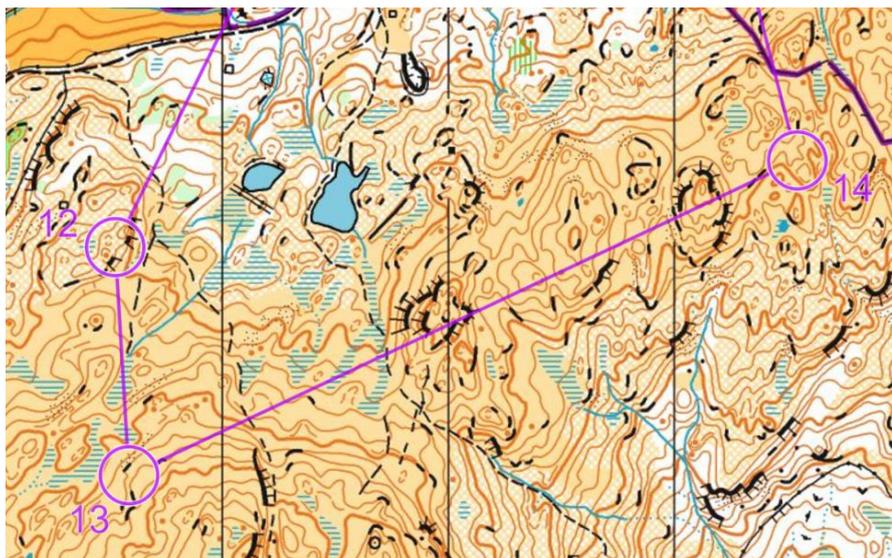
As is the case with the Lakes weekend every year, the first day was a middle and the second day a long distant event. This caused me to go into the second day with some apprehension given my difficulty coping with the long distance day at the JK. However, my mind was soon put at least partially to ease when I realised, upon arrival that I had in fact trained on the area 18 months previously, which I had enjoyed immensely.

The course started out on a small area of open fell with three tightly packed controls before moving on to a split long leg, with two choices for control 4, representing contrasting route options to control 5. Due to the way I folded the map, I failed to identify the choice I had, so I went straight to the northern control, however, upon later analysis I realised that this was in my opinion the better route choice.



After this alternatively styled long leg which involved some steep climbing no matter what, it was out on to a second area of open moorland for a couple of controls before diving into steep woodland and slate piles, with a few caves thrown in, divided by walls and meadows. This section of the course involved some horrible climbs up loose slate but also one lovely path following a ridge surrounded by marshes and loose rock, and in my case scaring away cattle that a farmer was trying to herd through a gate.

However, all too soon I was out of this part of the area and onto more of the open fell, which again involved a steep climb. This did allow me to accurately navigate to control 12 but I was not so fortunate on controls 13 or 14.



control 12 but I was not so fortunate on controls 13 or 14. Fortunately my mistake at control 13 was only minor, running up the side of the wrong crag but I cannot quite say the same of the long leg to 14.

This leg was along the top of the ridge with three distinct route choices: skirt the northern side of the hill, run along the top of the hill or

skirt the southern side of the ridge. I opted to go round the Northern edge of the hill but misread the map believing the re-entrant which I was looking for to be on the Northern not Southern slope. Fortunately I ran straight to the fence just beyond the control, causing me to realise my mistake. However rather than making the sensible decision of using this as my attack point I then ran to a crag 200m away to use which was actually no closer to the control.

Controls 15 to 19 seemed to have been planned like a middle, having short legs with changes of direction in a technical area of scattered trees. However, I had caught up with two other people on my course at this point and the idea that we were nearing the finish spurred me on, causing us to gradually increase the tempo through this area. This increase in speed continued into the fast running and relatively easy controls 20 and 21. Coming down the hill out of control 21 I saw that the next two controls were both in parts of the old quarry (which was the cause of all the caves and slate in the area) and realised that as both were very close to paths that this was an excellent chance to break away from the other two. This I was able to do by the penultimate control, allowing me to finish in second on the course overall.