

Best British Nights Escapes Disaster

Brian Parker Thanks His Lucky Star – Even Though He Couldn't See It

At around 9pm on Saturday 20th February, Mike Napier came in and demanded to speak to the Controller. "That was the best British Nights I have run in," he said, to a chorus of assent from other competitors. The officials in the Finish marquee looked out into the wind and rain swept night and marvelled. It was a compliment to the courses and the terrain. But the event was so nearly a last minute disaster.

It may be that the seeds were sown on the Westcountry TV Sports programme the previous evening, when an excellent report on the coming event with interviews and shots of orienteers sweeping the dunes with flowing athleticism was screened. During the day, most of the walkers in the area knew of the event and wished it well. Perhaps there were those who did not. Controller Brian Parker explains:

At around 5.30, an hour before the first start, I was re-checking my punch records and discovered that I had missed the wall control in the cluster near the Finish. I went to check it. It wasn't there. I went back to ask Dick to put it out but he said that he had put it out earlier. We had a problem.

Disaster

We looked at adjacent sites. At first glance they appeared normal, but closer inspection showed that controls had been interchanged. We no longer had a problem, we had a massive problem. With only 15 minutes to the first start, I placed a hold on the clocks to allow us time to assess the extent of the interference.

Fortunately, Roger (Hargreaves') efficient organisation had placed radios in the hands of the key officials and he was able to implement this decision with immediate and least disrupting effect. All controls around the problem area were checked and we were relieved to discover that the vandalism was confined to 8 controls. We were able to re-establish these within 10 minutes of the re-start.



Gerry Ashton

I seem to remember some military person saying that the most valuable talent even the most able general can have is luck. Had I not initially overlooked this one control near the Finish, all of the Championships would have been voided.

During the JK at Penhale, our lucky star was the Hale-Bopp comet. I don't know what it was this year – in that weather it was impossible to see. But it was definitely shining for us.



Gerry Ashton

British Night Championships

Penhale Sands

20th February 1999

W6A 3.5 km and 155m climb11 controls	1 Emma Seward SBOC 47:27	2 Francesca Gould DEVON62:40	3 Nicola Robertson SOS 65:33
W6B 4.8km and 245 climb15 controls	1 Ruth Forrest BOK 67:56	2 Rachael Holmes QO 88:47	3 Charlotte Daniel BOK 108:57
W20L 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls	1 Lina Svensson BOK 86:57	W21L 6.4km and 245m climb19 controls	1 Michelle Spiller WIM 78:56
W21S 4.8km and 245 climb15 controls	1 Jackie Hallett BOK 85:54	W21S 4.8km and 245 climb15 controls	1 Heather Sears NOR 109:45
W35L 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls	1 Liz Phillips OD 91:04	2 Alice Bedwell BOK 96:28	3 Susan Skinner SN 113:28
W35S 4.8km and 245 climb15 controls	1 Jane Seward SBOC 113:44		

W40L 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls	1 Christine Robinson SLOW 101:59	2 Katy Stubbs BKO 116:00	3 Bridget Stein SBOC 119:25
W40S 3.5 km and 155m climb11 controls	1 Liz Lockton WSX 106:01	W45L 4.8 km and 245m climb15 controls	1 Sue Boyd DEVON104:48
W45S 3.5 km and 155m climb11 controls	1 Nicola Thornton SARUM 74:53	W50L 4.8 km and 245m climb15 controls	1 Sue Gard QO 97:57
W50S 3.5 km and 155m climb11 controls	1 Christine King BOK 72:08	W55L 4.8 km and 245m climb15 controls	1 Judith Powell SWOC 120:34
W60L 3.5 km and 155m climb11 controls	1 Jenny Thompson SOC 46:57	W65L 3.5 km and 155m climb11 controls	1 Anne Donnell BOK 72:51
W70L 3.5 km and 155m climb11 controls	1 Pat Greenfell BOK 88:42		

M16A 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls	1 James Furness OD 78:16	2 Mark Nixon SOC 82:17	3 Alex Rothman CHIG 84:00
M18A 6.4km and 245m climb19 controls	1 Chris Hoakinson N.O.C. 55:06	2 Edward Connor SLOW 62:06	3 Richard Robinson N.O.C. 62:38
M20L 9.1km and 265m climb25 controls	1 Alex Rothman CHIG 84:00	2 Simon Evans SLOW 157:38	M21L 10.2 km and 315m climb24 controls
M21S 10.2 km and 315m climb24 controls	1 Charlie Adams SYO 82:42	2 Martin Ward SPOOK 86:48	3 Clive Hallett BOK 99:08
M25S 6.4km and 245m climb19 controls	1 Peter Sleight DEE 62:21	M35L 9.1km and 265m climb25 controls	1 Charles Bromley-GadsdenBAC 74:27
M35S 9.1km and 265m climb25 controls	1 David Cheesewright TVOC 80:31	3 Dave Ryder TVOC 97:16	M35S 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls
M40L 7.4 km and 295m climb19 controls	1 Roger Mann BOK 89:10	1 Iain Rochford BOK 70:52	2 Paul Glasville DEVON76:18
	3 Keith Tonkin GO 77:21		

M40S 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls	1 Dave Stubbs BKO 78:15	M45L 6.4km and 245m climb19 controls	1 Vincent Joyce SO 60:05
M45S 4.8 km and 245m climb15 controls	2 Michael Napier N.O.C. 64:30	3 Neville Baker TVOC 76:55	1 Paul Furness OD 98:46
M50L 6.4km and 245m climb19 controls	1 Mike Wimpenny DEVON65:23	2 John Rex BOK 75:11	3 Paul Geatz POTOC88:00
M50S 4.8 km and 245m climb15 controls	1 Jock Turnham KERN0152:34	M55L 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls	1 Brian Shaw SYO 71:04
M55S 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls	1 Brian Shaw SYO 71:04	2 Mike Murray SLOW 75:25	3 Bernard Pullen SLOG 86:41
M60L 5.9km and 200m climb14 controls	1 Tony Noon BOK 92:30	2 Mike Crockett QO 102:58	3 Bill Vigor QO 109:56
M65L 4.8 km and 245m climb15 controls	1 Erik Peckett DEVON107:04	M70L 4.8 km and 245m climb15 controls	1 Frank Smith GD 95:56
	2 Geoffrey Geore TVOC115:44	3 Peter King DEVON150:00	