

Sunday 9th April - NOY 1

Directions: Follow the new Hunter Expressway towards Branxton, a trip of about 45 kms and 30 minutes from the Ibis Budget Motel at Wallsend. About 1 km past the end of the new road works, turn right at a sign marked "Lower Belford 3". The assembly area is at the right hand bend about 500m along this road. This narrow road is well used, so for safety reasons (and to avoid upsetting the local residents), please **only park on the southern / western** side of the road and try and get your vehicle off the tar and onto the grassy verge. Please be careful exiting vehicles and escort children along the road.

Map: Belford National Park (1:10,000 5m contours). This map was updated by Ian Dempsey in 2015 so is pretty good, except mountain bikes have started creating new tracks everywhere. It won't be long before these tracks will need to be mapped, but at present they are still fairly indistinct. With the area being handed over from State Forest to National Parks, a cessation of cattle grazing has meant the herb and shrub layer have grown back. However, due to a hot dry summer the area is remarkably open and very fast running. National Parks have sprayed the African Olive which was prolific on the eastern side of the map. Some thickets are still there as stands of dead shrubs. National Parks have decided which tracks will become their management trails and which will be left to grow over. So the tracks that will stay have been slashed and the ones that will be let go are growing over. With the growth of more vegetation there has been a rapid increase in the number of termite mounds. The termite mounds are likely all mapped but way too profuse to be much use, so please do not use them for navigation, except in the immediate vicinity of a control.

Course Planner: Peter Newton

Vetter: Toy Martin

Gear Van: Peter Newton

Courses: 7 courses = Very Easy 2.3km, Easy 2.7km, Moderate Short 3km, Moderate Long 4.3km, Hard Short 3.7km, Hard Medium 4.6km, Hard Long 7.8km. Easy length assumes people are confident enough to cut corners. If not, then add a few hundred metres. All Moderate and Hard courses get at least one water stop.

Start times: 9:30 - 11:30am. Course closure 1pm. Please aim to be back at the assembly area by that time.

Start & Finish: For this event there are 2 starts and 2 finishes, both adjacent to the assembly area. Very Easy, Easy and Moderate courses are contained within the paddock on the western side of the road, so use Start1 and Finish1 in that paddock. All Hard courses start in the eastern paddock, so use the remote Start2 and Finish2 over there. Only Hard Long needs to cross the road at the fence styles at the northern end of the map. A control is located at the break in the fence to ensure people use this mandatory crossing.

Control collection: Every year it is basically the same group of people doing all the work. So if you could, why not aim to start late and stay back a bit to collect some controls. Control collection can be quite a pleasant walk as you get to see things you don't when running and get a chance to have another go at finding a control you may have had a bit of a problem with. The map is fairly flat with good visibility which adds to the enjoyment of walking around.