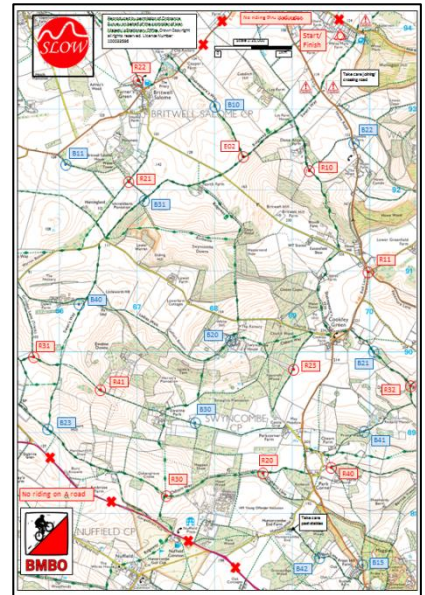


## Watlington Event Report

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> rounds of the SLOW MBO league took place over the weekend 10/11th August in the Chilterns AONB. These were both also qualifying rounds for the National league and each used the 1:25,000 Small Area Format (SAF) with 2 and 3 hour options on offer.

Both events were planned and organised by John Owens and based from a single start/finish location in a campsite in Watlington Oxfordshire. This not only made the organisation more straightforward but also provided an ideal base for two very different styles of event as well as helping to encourage some riders to travel from further afield for a weekend of competition and socialising.

Day one took in the gently rolling Western most part of the Chilterns, an area that is characterised by arable fields interspersed with wooded areas, many used for game shooting. This was a challenging area on which to plan a 3 hour event due to the limited number of bridleways and because there were no N-S routes in the middle, meaning that the only real option was two roughly circular routes. In the event, despite gale force winds, 6 riders managed to 'clear the route' on the 3hr course with Mark Rowley being the quickest, closely followed by Liam and Rachel Drew. The 2hr course was won by Tim Beale and it was great to see 7 members of a local family also taking part (the Harts/Lyons who happened to live next door to the campsite).



Day two was a much more challenging area with some steep slopes and generally wooded terrain. The area was also split in two by a long valley that could not be crossed E-W except at the top and the bottom, making it much more tricky to choose an optimum route. The planner also deliberately clustered coloured controls to give the event a different feel to day 1. All routes from the campsite led steeply uphill and it was interesting to see the different approaches to course selection, with some clearly opting to 'climb on tarmac' and others preferring to gain some points whilst climbing saving the tarmac for a fast descent at the finish.



The 3hr event was won by Rachel Drew (covering over 52km and 1000m of ascent) with Ifor Powell and Iwona Szmyd not far behind, whilst the 2hr course was won by Simon Williamson.

