

# Cerkno Cup 2022 - Slovenia, 12-15th August



**David Jukes (with Martin Wilson)**

This is an annual summer competition over 4 days staged in the west of Slovenia. Cerkno (*pronounced 'Seer-k-no' I think*) is a small pre-Alpine town which, in winter is a base for skiing. In the summer, the surrounding forests and hills provide challenging orienteering. The limestone rock is frequently dissolved by the rain and rivers resulting in areas of typical 'karst' terrain in which there can be many large and deep depressions which are usually navigated around. Overall it can provide a great technical challenge.

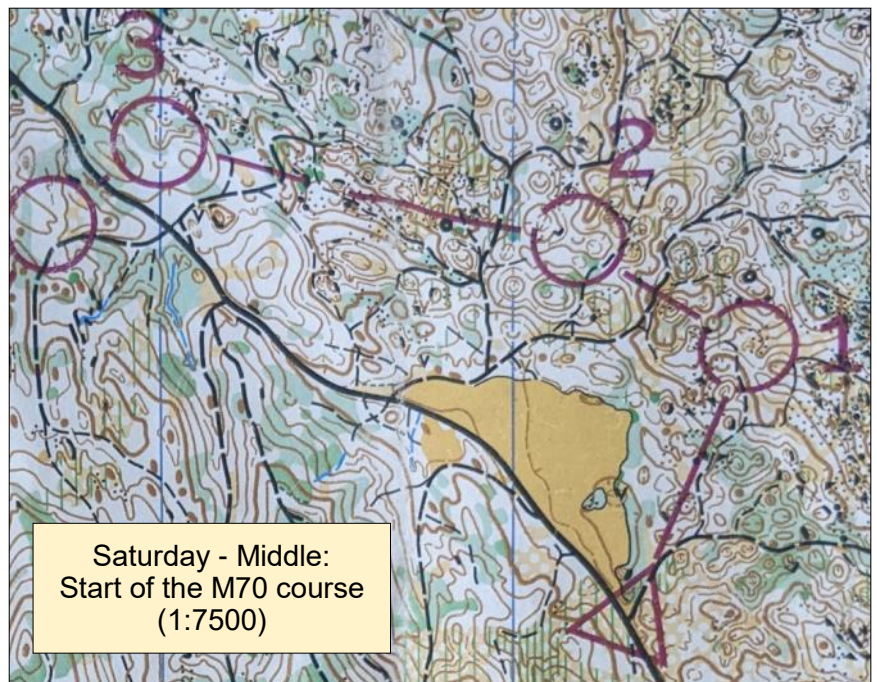
With a relatively small team of helpers, the organisation runs surprisingly smoothly and is of a high quality - with bibs, TV display of live results at download, on-line results, rapid uploading of splits and maps, and great courses. The event is quite small with just under 500 entries this year - about the same as our Concorde Chase event. It does attract a wide spread of nationalities - 26 this year with 11 UK participants.

This year there were 4 events: an urban in Cerkno late Friday afternoon, a middle race on Saturday, a long race on Sunday and a final middle race on Monday. In addition, the organisers provided a TrailO event (TempO format) on the Saturday afternoon.

Our flight out on Friday was meant to leave Gatwick at 13.20 but it was nearly 14.00 when we actually left. Our accommodation was in Cerkno itself but we did not reach there until gone 19.00 (time in Slovenia is an hour ahead) and we missed the urban event. We knew this was likely but it was a bit disappointing as the 'Cup' is based on the total of the time taken at all 4 events.

## **Saturday - Middle**

We started into an area of typical karst terrain. There was a small path which led towards the first control - speaking to an Italian competitor at the end, he had missed the left fork and headed off to the East. No such problem for me as, on the correct path heading N and slightly E, I was able to find the shallow depression near its end. Leaving #1, the direct



line would drop down into a deep depression - I chose the ridge line to the south, hit the track, turned north a bit before following the spur down towards the west, across the minor path and into #2. For #3, I headed SW and, crossing the larger track, found the small path heading NW to reach the winding major path, went round to the South of the control and then across the runnable wood north and into #3. The rest of the course involved more obvious path running and was less challenging. However an interesting introduction to karst terrain.

## **Saturday - TempO**

TrailO involves accurate map reading and reaching decisions as to whether a control marker is accurately positioned in the terrain to match the control circle on the map and according to the control description. You do not enter the terrain but remain on a path. The 'TempO' version puts competitors under intense

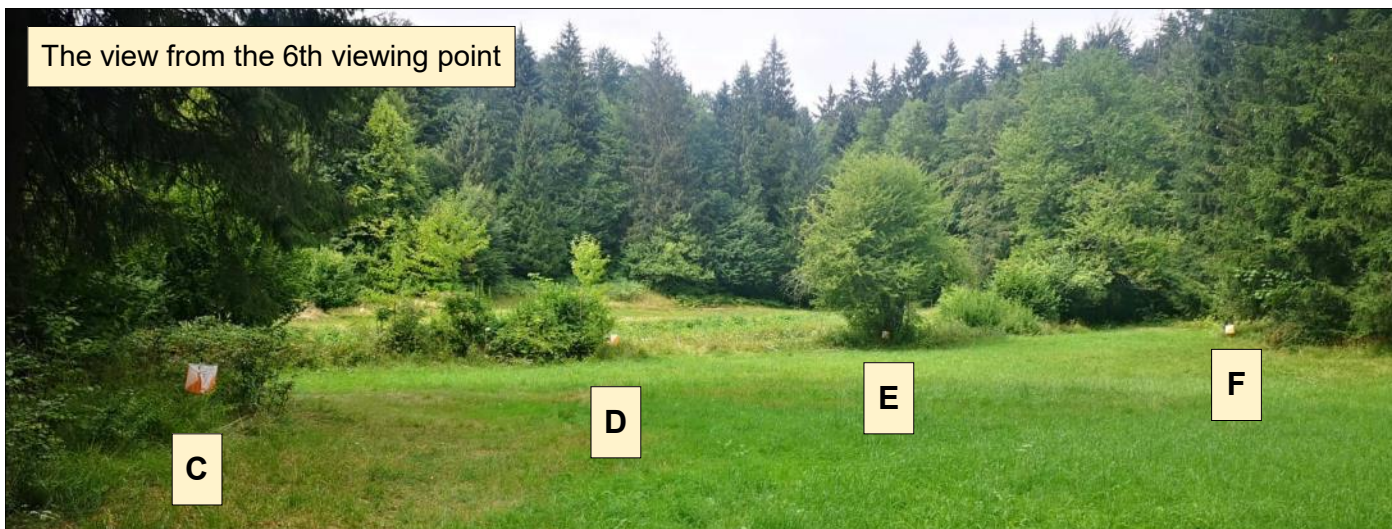
time pressure as the final results are based on the time taken to reach a decision. Any incorrect answer incurs a time penalty (usually 30 seconds) which is added to the total time taken to reach all the decisions.

In this event there were 6 fixed viewing points (or 'stations') and, at each one, there were 6 flags visible in the terrain (designated Alpha to Foxtrot from left to right). Competitors, while still unable to see the flags, wait their turn a short distance from the viewing point. When the official is ready, you are called forward, quickly shown the 6 flags and then told 'Your time starts now!' It is only then that you can turn over to see the map with the first challenge, a single control circle on a section of map. You look at the terrain, you look at the map, you look at the control circle, you look at the control description and you try and make it all fit! As an added complication, in addition to the options of A-F (Alpha to Foxtrot), another option is 'Zero': there is no flag positioned correctly. When you have reached a decision, you state the letter of your answer (A-F or Zero). You then turn over to the next challenge using the same flags. At each station we had 5 challenges to solve.

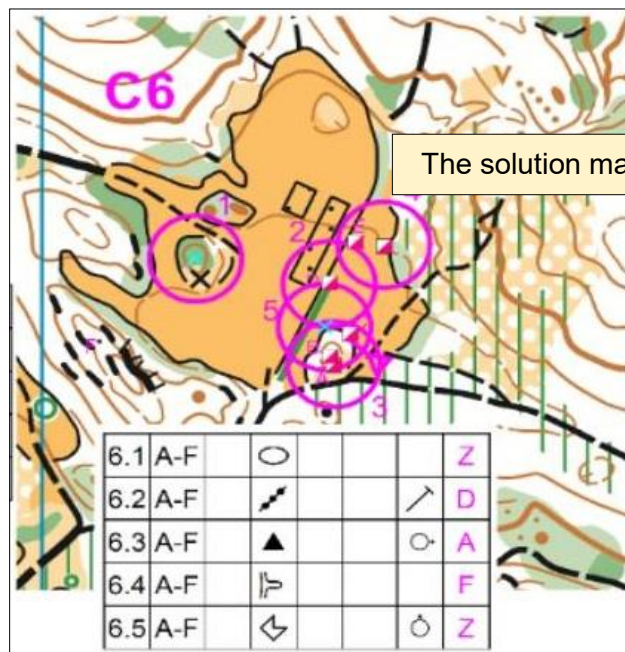
The maps that the competitors see.



The view from the 6th viewing point



As an example, the image shows most of the view from the final 6th viewing point. There were two additional flags (A and B) visible on a craggy knoll in the small wooded area to the left (shown on the solution map extract by the small control flag symbols). Just visible in the photo are the four other flags. When told to start, the first map extract had the single control circle marked with 1 in the solution map. This was a zero as it was too far away but, at first glance a competitor might believe that the small wooded area was actually the one next to the viewing point and give an answer of Alpha or possibly Beta. Note that the viewing point is not marked on the map meaning that this has to be worked out by a competitor when looking at the first map extract. Not many were caught out by this one but, under time pressure, mistakes are common.



The solution map

As I have become something of a TrailO specialist, it was great to have this opportunity to practice my TempO technique. There were 46 competitors although I think many were a group of Swiss juniors on a training tour with possibly limited TrailO

experience. I finished 4th being beaten by two Italians (who seem to have quite a number of TrailO events) and a Slovenian. I had taken a total time for all six stations of 264 seconds but had 5 errors out of the total of 30 (6x5) giving a total time with the penalties of 414 seconds. The winner managed to give all her answers in just 193 seconds but also had 5 errors giving a total of 343 seconds. Speed is vital but accuracy is important - getting the balance right requires practice! This was a good opportunity for me to do just that.

### ***Martin's Tempo Comments:***

I had never tried Temp-O before. David gave some good advice in advance (don't rush it, check the map matches the terrain at each station, decide whether to decide quickly or research more as you go, always make a decision on each problem, if time is running out just make a guess, else you get a 30 second penalty). I set myself a soft goal of getting half the problems right. I tried to be decisive, some controls were clearly not at the control description, and kept a sense of progress by not falling behind. You need to average less than 30 seconds for solving each problem, not much time to check the flag position against all the detail of the control description. If I really couldn't work out whether a CD was exactly right, I tended to record a 'zero' just to let me move on.

I managed to finish with 20 correct scores out of 30 (or, as the professionals describe it, made 10 errors!), which included getting 9 of the last 10 problems correct, which looked like I was getting the hang of things as I progressed. But what amazed me was how much quicker the top scorers were. I averaged around 22 seconds for each answer. David is a near-Elite Temp-O competitor and averaged under 9 seconds, and the winner averaged an amazing 6.4 seconds per answer. For me to compete effectively, I'd have had to need less than half my time, I can't see how I could ever match that. It does look like Temp-O needs a lot of practice to get right. I'd definitely try another one if the opportunity arose.

*Footnote:* While we were all waiting in a long queue along a track to get started, I began chatting to a Slovenian lady ahead of me in the queue. David then sidled off each side of the track in turn to take some pictures. He returned with some beautiful pics of more rare butterflies for his collection. What a lucky guy!



Knapweed Fritillary

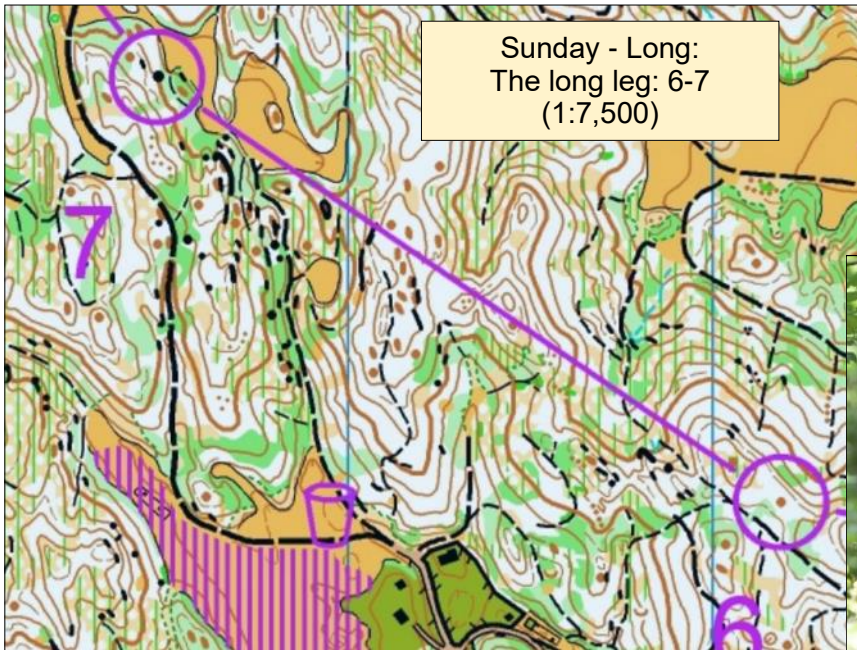


Southern White Admiral

### **Sunday - Long**

It may not sound like a long course at 'only' 3.2km but with a stated climb of 150m and with temperatures reaching 30°C, this proved quite tough enough for me as an M70. It started well with the first 6 controls being close together and involving some careful navigation - it suited my technique. At that point I was leading the class of 6 competitors with a 2 minute lead.

Then we were presented with our longest leg of the Cup - *see the map on next page*. I initially started up the small path heading NW but this was not distinct and I changed my mind and decided to head due W, down towards the drinks point. It was not as easy as the map appears to show and it involved some tough up and down sections. When I reached the open area with the drinks, I had planned to fork right and head up the path to the north, through the open areas and into the boulder on the left. Reaching the open area, I relaxed, forgot to fork right and continued on the main track to the west. I kept thinking: surely the open area to my left should be marked as out of bounds as it had an electric fence around it with some cattle grazing. Eventually, I realised that I had been running alongside the marked 'out of bounds'! Luckily this track also turned north and I was able to approach the control from across the small



Sunday - Long:  
The long leg: 6-7  
(1:7,500)

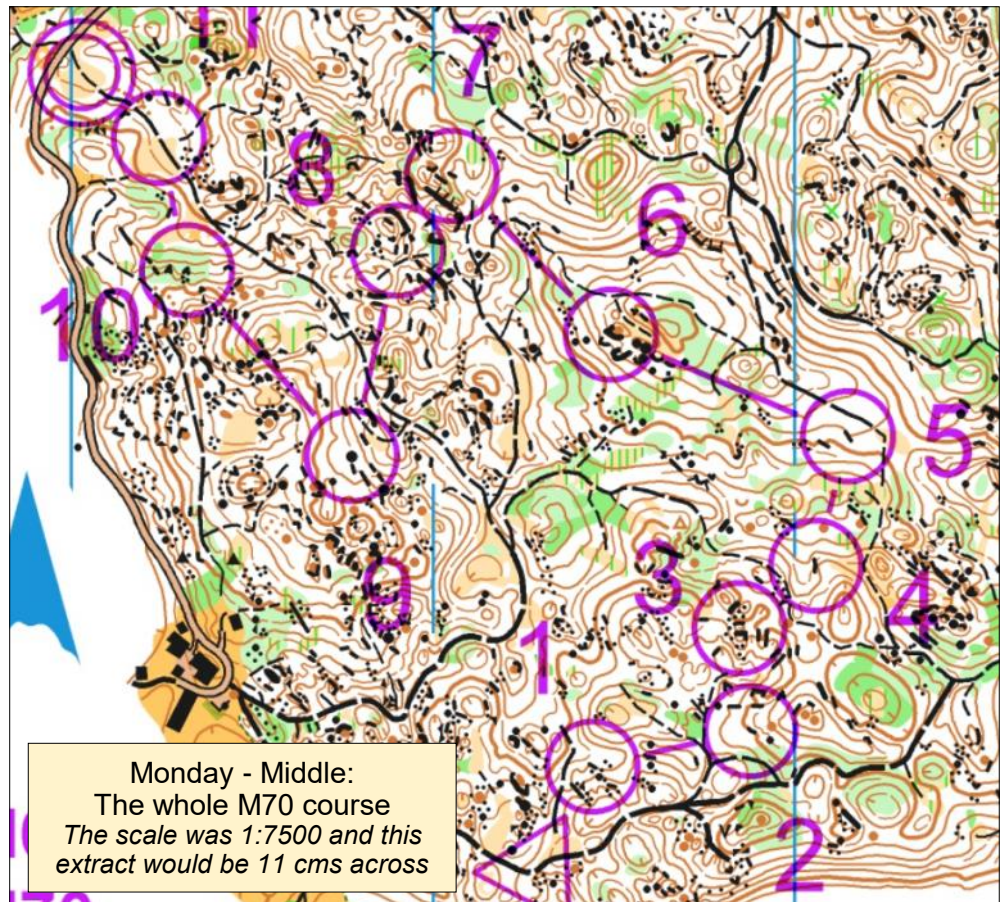
hill to its SW. Martin managed this leg in 7:05; I had taken 14:07. After that, it was a matter of keeping going. The picture shows me, looking tired, heading to the final control.



### Monday - Middle

At only 1.6km, this course was exactly half the previous day's one but it had the same number of controls, 11. It was also back into typical karst terrain. With fewer path options, careful navigation on the short legs was required to keep in contact with the map and to locate the control feature and the flag. This was my type of course and I enjoyed the challenge.

The whole course is shown on the map extract. I overshot #3 wasting about 2 minutes and, for #4-#5 I initially set off heading direct but realised that this involved a tricky descent followed by a steep climb. I turned right and took the path around the depression before heading up the slope into the control - perhaps another minute wasted. Others had more and bigger problems though and I finished first in a time of about 32 minutes with an 8 minute lead over the second place. A lovely way to finish the trip.



Monday - Middle:  
The whole M70 course  
The scale was 1:7500 and this  
extract would be 11 cms across

### Final Thoughts -

A thoroughly enjoyable long weekend - certainly a mini-holiday. The orienteering was challenging and well organised, the weather was good, the scenery lovely, the butterflies plentiful and the costs not too bad (*less than Sweden!*). A recommended option for those considering a European trip next year.