So what is a Navigational Scatter?
An Introduction

The idea of a Scatter is, as the name suggests, to *scatter* the competitors all over the countryside. This is achieved by giving a number of locations that can be visited in any order. When you reach one of these locations you will find a clue which will be an answer to a question, for example the location may turn out to be a junction and the matching question is "How far to Bath?" When you arrive at the correct junction you should see a road sign indicating the distance to Bath. If you don't it's the wrong junction!

Before the event

The basic tools needed for an event are:

- An up to date copy of the relevant OS Map;
- A map board to rest it on, made of something stiff yet collapsible; (two layers of cardboard box at right angles taped together, about 18" square is ideal. Wood is not suitable - if you have to do an emergency stop or have a crash the navigator is more likely to deform than the board);
- A clip board for the answer sheet and route information to be stored on (do not keep this on your lap while the car is moving!);
- A good supply of 3B pencils to mark the map;
- A device called a *Romer* which will allow you to plot grid references quickly (you can manage without this at a pinch);
- A good torch, and a second mounted in the car to act as a map light for the navigator
- finally an accurately set clock.

The event

The start time and location will be in the Supplementary Regulations and is usually also advertised in the club magazine. The start time is the beginning of the event; you should aim to arrive about 30 minutes before to give the organisers time to sign everyone on and issue Final Instructions. You will need to provide your own OS map, the number and area covered will be indicated in the SRs. When the event starts you will be handed a sheet of paper containing the location of some or all of the points you have to visit to answer the questions. Your first task is to plot these on your map.

Grid references

As this is the first event we have run for some time, the majority of the questions will be in the form of six-figure grid references, of the form

511 757

The first part '511' indicates the 'Eastings' part of the grid reference, which are the numbers running along the top and bottom of the map. The first two digits indicate the vertical grid line 51, and the final digit 1 indicates that the location is one tenth of the way across between the 51 grid line and the 52 grid line. The second pair are the 'Northings' which are the numbers at the side of the map. 75 indicates the horizontal line bearing that number, and 7 that the point is seven tenths of the way from line 75 to 76. When plotted on map 172 this reference should come out in the car park of Gordano services on the M5.

As well as straightforward grid references, a smaller number of locations will be defined by 'navigation', or 'nav' for short. This is more complex and will require some thought to plot. I will only be using four basic types on this event as follows:

VIAS and AVOIDS

Two lists of symbols are given, one starting *VIA* and one starting *AVOID* and a start point. You have to follow roads on the map from the start point ensuring that you go through symbols

labelled *VIA* and do not pass through any labelled *AVOID*. The symbols will be presented in order. They may be close to the road rather than on it, such as churches, public houses etc.

Grid Lines

A series of numbers that correspond to the gridlines on the map that you must cross in sequence by following a road. For example:

Start from J19 of the M5 then 50 49 48 76 47 47

This would take you along the A369 into Portishead ending at the Leisure Centre.

Tulips

Graphical representations of the junctions you have to pass through, with the direction of entry marked with a ball, and exit marked with an arrow, thus:

Bearings

A series of three-figure numbers which indicate compass bearings with 000 being North, 090 East, 180 South and 270 West, with all values in between possible. These indicate the direction that you must leave successive junctions.

Whenever plotting navigation to work out a route, you should ignore white roads on the map when trying to decide what constitutes a junction. In tulips, if one road on a junction is white, it will be shown dotted for clarity.

In addition to the locations to visit for the answers to clues, there may be additional main controls where extra route information will be handed out. They will only be open for a defined period of time, but visiting them is a very good idea because, in addition to gaining the extra route information, points are awarded for attendance.

The finish time will be given in the Final Instructions. You can arrive at the finish early without penalty, but arriving late attracts quite severe penalties and points deductions. It is as well to work out the best order to visit points so that you are near the finish at the end, rather having to make a 15 mile dash in as many minutes.

Basic Strategy - or at least, how I do it

When you get the first batch of locations, plot any additional main controls first, make a prominent note on the map of the time they will be open, then plot all the grid references. At this stage look at the time and how long you have to reach the main control (if any) - you need to evaluate how much more time you can spend plotting before heading to the main control to collect extra route information. If there is time in hand, have a go at plotting out the navigational instructions. With these it is best not to write the whole route that each one plots out to on the map; on a scatter you are only interested in the destination point where the clue is.

When you have plotted as much as you can, work out a route from where you are to the main control, taking in any clue locations if you have time. Don't worry if you cannot solve some of the navigational clues, just go on to the next one - you don't want to eat into the driving time too much as this will restrict the number of clues points you can visit.

The balance of grid refs to nav is such that there will be plenty to do even if you don't plot any of the nav. On reaching the main control, repeat the above procedure but work out a route to the finish. If you have a lot of locations plotted on the map but are running slowly it may be better to avoid too much further plotting and concentrate on using the time available to collect the answers at those that you have plotted. Working out this fine balance is difficult, and comes with experience. If the event is aimed at novices, it should be possible for everyone to amass a reasonable score using only the grid references.

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