Abbey Fields organiser/planner's comments:

Thanks to those who came to the Abbey Fields event. It was sunny and warm after some rain earlier in the day. My apologies to those early runners who had to deal with a misplaced control (12 on the middle course, 7 on the score course). One of the first finishers told me and I moved it to the correct tree (controversial, I know). Fortunately, it was not in the area with many controls, where, especially with no control codes for score runners, control location accuracy was critical. We also lost a control box near the end (in circumstances that are not entirely clear to me), but it looks like it only affected one runner.

Abbey Fields is a convenient area for me to plan at, being a 10-minute walk from home, but it is not a particularly "fun" one. I still wanted to produce something that would be interesting and challenging for everybody and came up with the "sums score" format. An attractive feature is that while it is similar to the dog-bones format (used at Abbey Fields before) in that one can run the whole course by visiting pairs of controls, fast runners can continue by visiting triples, which gives them a longer workout and a somewhat harder mental challenge. I tried to put correct pairs of controls far apart and at the same time made sure there were some close triples that would tempt runners to visit them. Alistair Landels calculated that there are 75 possible correct combinations of controls and, needless to say, even an excellent runner like him had no chance of visiting all of them. Some fun stats: of course, all 10 possible pairs have been visited, but also 11 out of 27 possible triples and even one quadruple (of, again, 27 possible). Unsurprisingly, no one did any of the 10 series of five, or the only series of six controls (1+2+3+4+5+6). The decision to complicate things by using many close controls and removing control codes from the control descriptions was made when planning the courses. In fact, since there were no entries on the short course, there were a couple of controls not on any course, but I decided to put them out anyway to make things more interesting. Based on feedback and results, some people did punch wrong controls and lost points, so the trick worked. Finally, the decision not to use kites (just stakes with control boxes) was made on the day: as I was putting out controls, I asked myself why I was making easy courses even easier by using kites. This also explains why there was a kite at one of the controls: we simply forgot to remove it.

This event was my first organising/planning experience for OD and only third overall, including two events for my previous club in Canada, where things are done differently. So, help from more experienced club members was essential. Many people work behind the scenes for these events to happen, but my particular thanks go to Bob Brandon for his suggestion that I organise this event and for his advice, Margaret Willdig for the permissions, Lesley Ross for entries, Bruce Bryant for help with the maps, Graham Urquhart for dealing with all things SI, Greta Greenall (and others) for helping on the day in many ways, and Alistair Landels and Anne Straube for help with collecting controls.