37 ¾ Mile
Isle Of Man Mountain Course
OPTIONS MANAGER
Start Positions - Pace Notes - Environments

OPTIONS MANAGER - Start Positions - Pace Notes - Environments - Visual Aids - Advertising Banners

This all encompassing utility provides a range of options for you to change how you use and experience this Full Length Isle Of Man Mountain Course.

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BACKGROUND

During the construction of this Mountain Course, I thought of several ways to vary the visual driving experience in a realistic way, to try to partially replicate local weather and time of day conditions. I also wanted to provide some assistance for people trying to learn how to survive unscathed on what is a very long, but also very fast track.

To this end, I built three separate Track Lighting Options, plus options for showing Hard Shadows, Mountain Mist In Patches, Ground Fog In Patches, Track Location Names above the road, Speed and Direction Arrows before the corners, and a built in feature to include different sets of third party "Advertising Banner Sets" if desired; *all of which could be turned on or off individually and independently.*

The only difficulty with this process was the need to manually "swap" sets of files from track sub folders, which are not recognised by GPL, into the main track directory, which are then "Read" in preference to the default files captured in the "Dat" file. Sets of transparent files with the same names could then be substituted, to effectively turn off the effects not required. That manual process is still available, but is now unnecessary!

I attempted to make my own utility to automatically "Swap" these file sets, but did not have the coding skills to make it work.

Lee Bowden then offered to develop that concept and has succeeded admirably with this all inclusive Options Manager "Utility". Thanks Lee!

He has also added versions of his own designed Track Start and Pace Notes Programs, which include start positions and "in game" audio pace notes. I added some specifically tailored audio notes to Lee's base set and then manually recorded the pace note script for the track, for the greatest possible accuracy.

I hope you enjoy the added functionality and variety these options offer.

These three videos made at release may assist to further demonstrate the options described in this Readme.

https://youtu.be/Ox_oH3KdoNg   Combined five car set TV view lap
https://youtu.be/uqkjHlBVvDM   My driven bt24 lap
https://youtu.be/V7-KUr-H8Cw   Options Manager demonstration

Jim Pearson 2019

After downloading the track and using the installer;

1] Open the separate Options Manager Zip download and copy / paste the contents, a single "Options" folder, into your main track directory, which is normally located at; SIERRA/gpl/tracks/AAIOM/........Do NOT distribute the contents, just leave it as a single sub folder..."Options".

2] Next open that Options sub folder and you should see all the "Swaps" Sub Folders, however you should never have to deal with these unless adding third party sets of advertising banners in the future. [See later].

3] *Right click on "IOM Track Options Manager.exe"*
save a shortcut to your desktop or other accessible location and you are away!

Please read on though, to understand the options being provided.

To see the details of each page / tab view this PDF at 200% scale.

TRACK START MANAGER
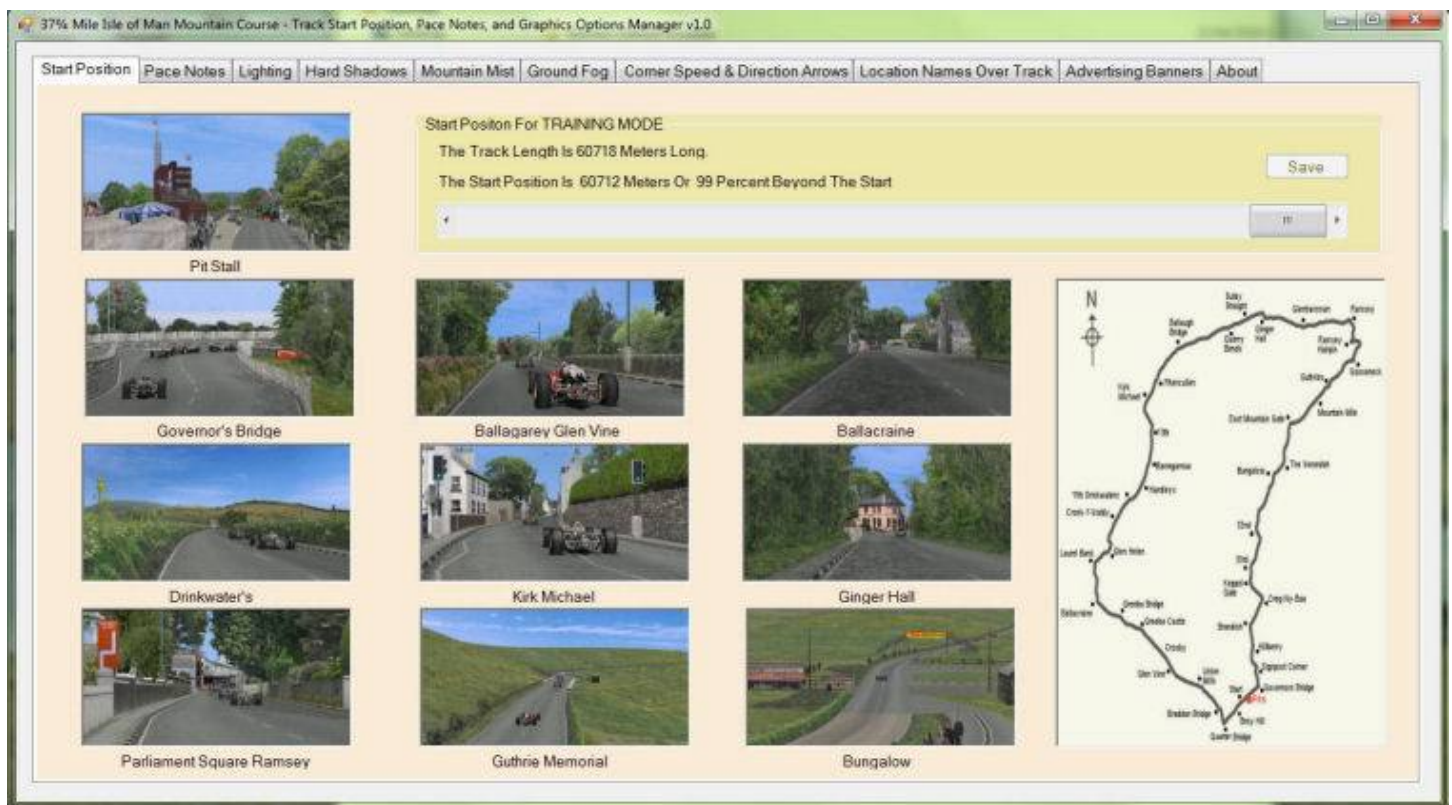
Lee designed this Track Start Manager for the Isle Of Man Mountain Course, to operate in essentially the same way his "Targa Trainer" works in that masterpiece track, the Piccolo Madonie for GPL.

Simply click on the picture representing the place you want to start driving, also shown on the map, to practice sections of track repeatedly in TRAINING MODE, or in the case of Governor's Bridge, commence a timed lap at speed and on warm tyres.

Use the slide control to fine tune your position on the Course, or place it on the start /Finish position.

CARE: When you have finished training, if you are going to proceed to a practice session for a race against the AI, click on the Pit Box option, otherwise the AI car allocated to Pit Stall #1 for race practice may be stationary on the track, in your last used "Training start" position.

PACE NOTES PROGRAM
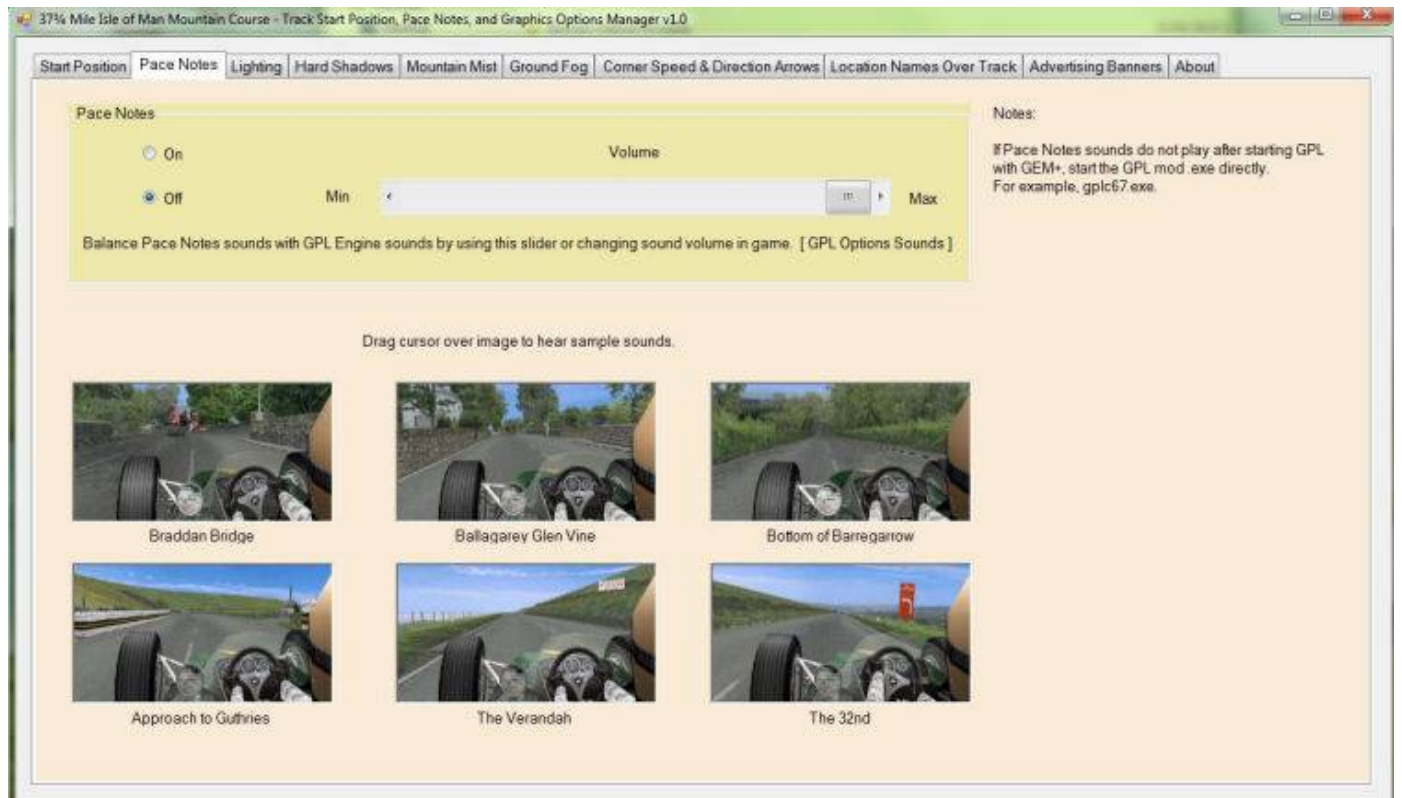
This latest program by Lee was released generically for GPL, but in this case there are some additional and carefully chosen audio Pace Notes to suit this Course specifically.

These audio Pace Notes are generated on the fly in real time as you reach positional triggers on the course and include corner direction; numerical references 1 - 5 representing slowest to fastest corners, together with other verbal clues to what lies immediately ahead.

Examples in this track include;

"Right..4..Compression..Tightens" ....Bottom of Bray Hill
"Right..4..Curb..Dont..Cut"...Ballagarey
"Right..Hairpin..Uphill..Exit..Opens"...........................Goosneck
"Left..3..Quadruple..Apex"... East Mountain Gate.

This program is a very effective and more comprehensive driving aid that the Corner Speed and Direction Arrows, but some may just prefer visual rather than audio clues, so I have left that option stay. Your choice.

On some [not all] systems this program may use up to 25% of CPU power and so could affect frame rates in game depending on your system.

ENVIRONMENT OPTIONS

As mentioned in the Background Notes I have designed a number of options to change your visual "Environment", to enhance your enjoyment of the Course and aid familiarisation with it.

These are;

A - THREE DIFFERENT TRACK LIGHTING OPTIONS

B - MOUNTAIN MIST PATCHES

C - GROUND FOG PATCHES

D - HARD SHADOWS

E - CORNER SPEED AND DIRECTION ARROWS DISPLAYED

F - TRACK LOCATION NAMES DISPLAYED

G - ADVERTISING BANNER 3DO's INSERTED [FOR THIRD PARTY / PRIVATE USE]

FIRST - HOW "ENVIRONMENT OPTIONS" FUNCTION.

These options operate by changing "sets" of image files, contained in Sub Folders of your gpl/tracks/AAIOM/Options Folder.

For [A] Lighting options, there always needs to be one set in the main AAIOM Track Folder, otherwise the track wont load. What this "Manager Program" does is substitute the set you choose by overwriting the set previously located in the main AAIOM Track Folder.

For [B to F] above, Mist Patches, Ground Fog Patches, Hard Shadows, Corner Arrows and Location names; these are options you turn off or on individually. This "Manager Program" simply copies a set of image files into your main AAIOM Track Folder from the relevant Sub Folder to turn the "effect" on, then copies a set of small transparent images to overwrite those in your AAIOM Track Folder when you want to turn the option off.

For [G] Advertising Banners, you select either the invisible [Default] set, or the Demonstration Set or either one of the three optional sets, if you have made or acquired another image set. This "swaps" files in much the same way as the above.[see later comments]

You don't really need to be concerned with the process though, because Lee's Options Manager Program performs these functions for you and no files will be lost, because copies of all files remain in the Options Sub Folders!

The default setting for this Course will be the "Bright Sunny" environment with hard shadows. All other options will be turned off [made invisible] unless you turn them on.

You decide which if any options you want to try, individually or together.

ENVIRONMENT OPTIONS - DESIGN

All textures in this track, especially these "Environment Fog/Mist sets" were made/tested using an LCD monitor set to standard Windows 7 default/NVidea default colour settings running fairly high definition 1920 X 1200 pixel resolution. If you use non standard Colour/Gamma settings, or lower resolutions on your monitors, they may not display as well as I have intended!

Because the transparent files used when these options are turned off are much smaller than the visible files used to display each visible set, people with marginal systems may experience some loss of frame rates when opting to display these effects.

I had no reservations making any of these effects except for the Corner Arrows. Apart from those, all these effects do, IMHO, is add value and enjoyment to the experience of learning and driving this Course.

Adding Speed and direction "Cheats" goes against the grain for a purist, however I recognised that a little initial help to stay on the Course without crashing at every second turn, could be useful for many, saving a lot of frustration and perhaps saving some people from giving up on such a long Course because initially, it may appear just too difficult.

Think of them as a set of training wheels, the more satisfying experience being when you can get rid of them! It may just surprise you how soon you stop relying on these "cheats" and when you do, you will have the means to make them "go away".

ENVIRONMENT OPTIONS - EXPLAINED

TRACK LIGHTING, MOUNTAIN MIST AND GROUND FOG.

Isle of Man weather can be variable, given its location in the northern maritime environment of the Irish Sea.

It is quite often sunny/clear on much of the lower parts of this 37¾ mile/61km course, while remaining cloudy/misty on the Mountain and high spots like Cronk-Y-Voddy. [This Mountain Course rises from 5 metres above sea level at Ramsey up to 428 metres high at the crest of Hailwood Rise].

Some of the lower lying "Glens" and towns can also retain localised ground fog, especially during early morning practice sessions.

Be assured that riders have practiced and sometimes raced in such marginal visibility and when there are still wet patches on the road under the trees. I have an "on-Bike" video of Cameron Donald from 2010 riding in Mist/Fog at The Cronk, 13th, Kirk Michael, Alpine and parts of the Mountain, while other parts of the Course were in full sun, all on the same lap. In recent years the limitation for riders has been related to whether Rescue Helicopters are able to fly.

Accordingly, I have tried to make some representative static weather options for this GPL track, so you can change the ambience/time of day driving experience, with or without some light Mountain Mist and/or lingering patches of Ground Fog, located only on very specific parts of the Course.

Mountain Mist and Ground Fog are depicted as lighter / denser patches with clearer sections between. This attempts to replicate real riding / driving during marginal visibility. In blanket Mist or Fog, riding / driving under fast practice / race conditions would not be viable and activity would be stopped on the Course.

THREE LIGHTING OPTIONS:
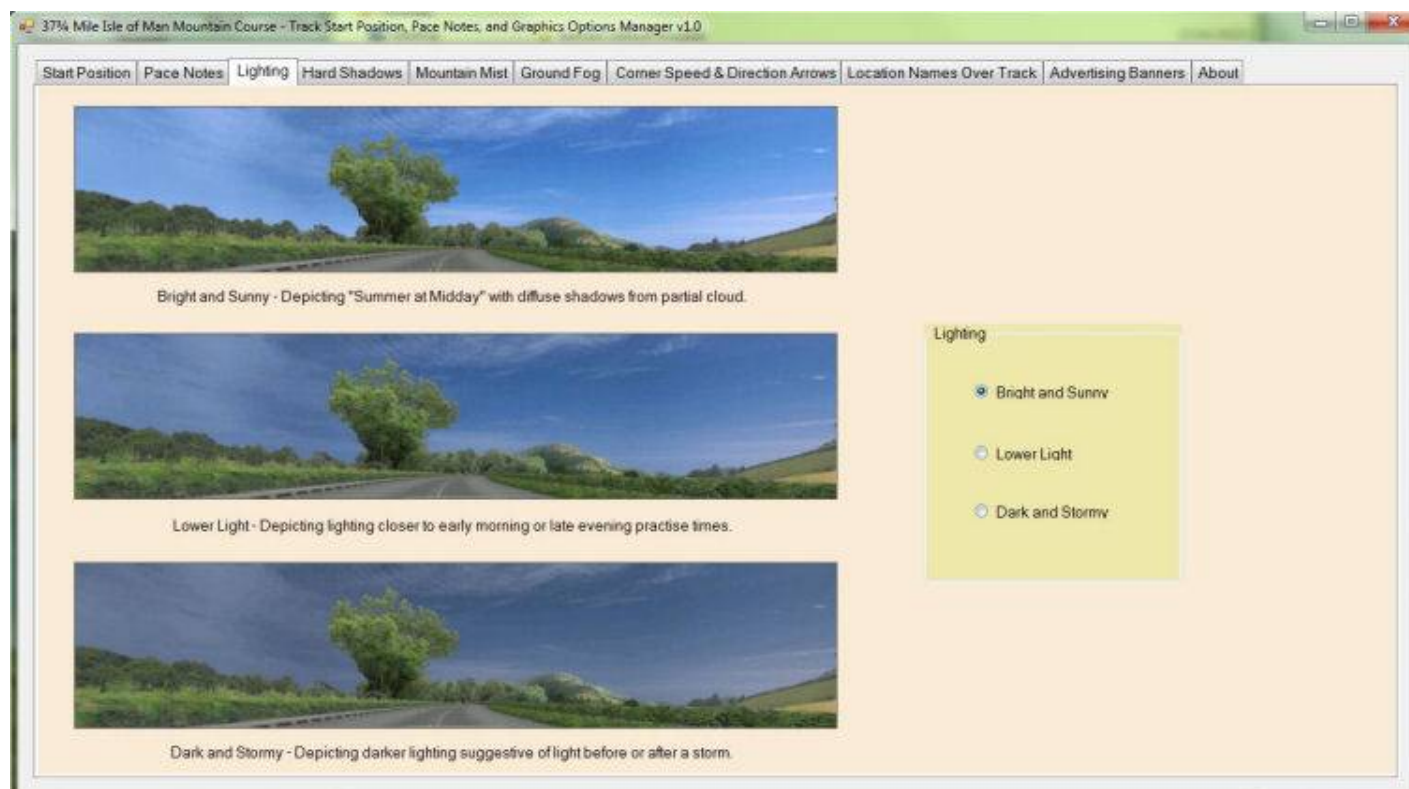
Default weather loaded in the track represents a "Bright Sunny" June day around Noon. No Mountain Mist. No Ground Fog Patches. The only other option turned on initially, will be the Hard Shadows.

Be assured that the light can be this bright here and colours quite intense on good summer days. I have the digital images to prove it!

Also please be aware that the sky always shows more intense/darker colour as you look higher, so the cockpit view seen on the steepest climbs; eg out of the Gooseneck, is realistically vivid /saturated!

The "Lower Light" option is meant to represent earlier morning or late afternoon light conditions, perhaps typical of real life practice sessions. Some people may prefer this more subdued set for normal use.

The "Dark Stormy" option I think works particularly well with "Mountain Mist Patches and/or Ground Fog Patches" turned on. Rather atmospheric and meant to approximate light you might find just before or after rain.

HARD SHADOWS
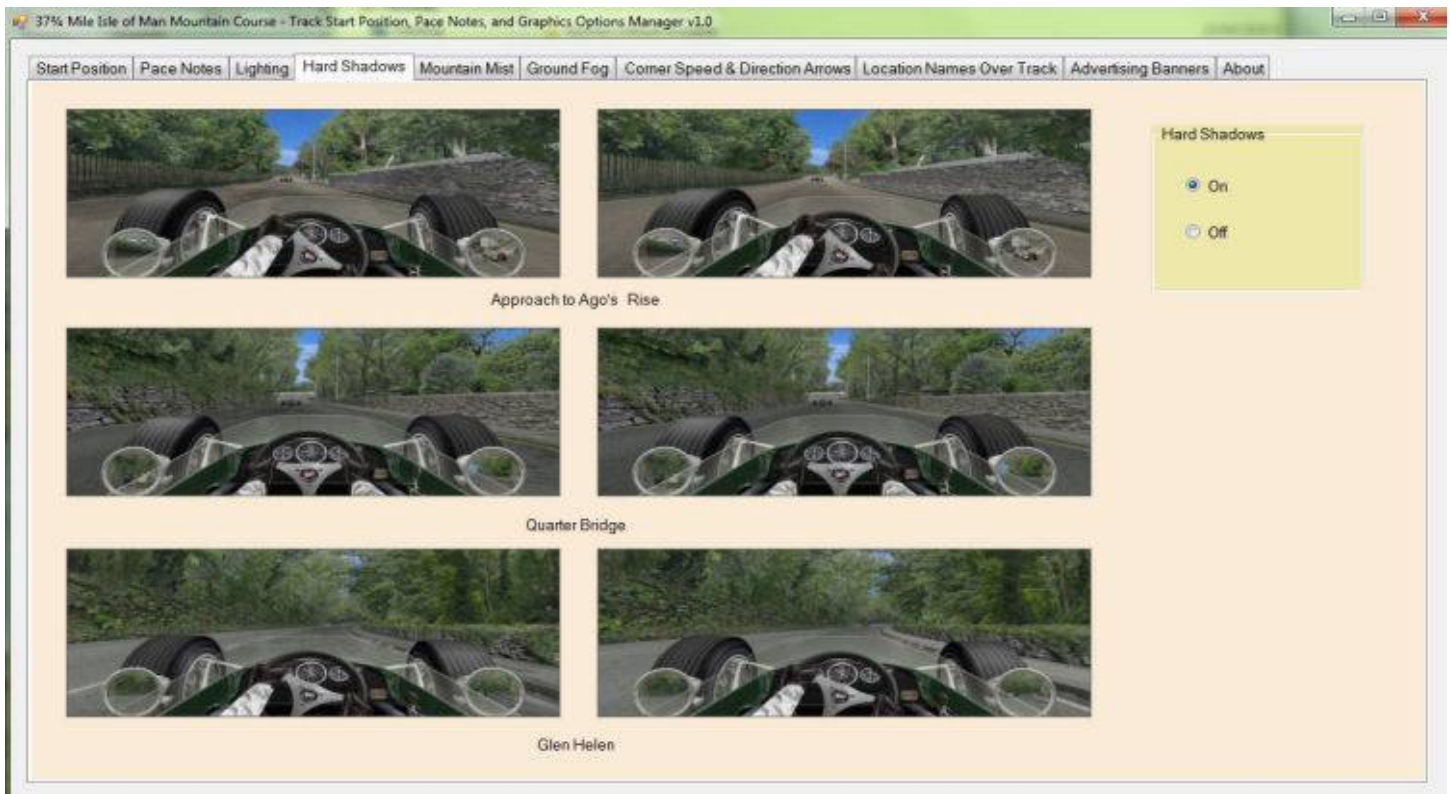
The track has three different types of shadows / shading.

Many textures on buildings etc are shaded to show light from a fixed direction.

There is also extensive Vertex Shading covering track and surrounding surfaces including some trackside walls. This provides a subdued light and shade without high contrast.

Lastly there is an option in this program to turn on "Hard Shadows" which adds higher contrast tree and some building shadows of the type you would expect on a clear sunny day.

In my view, the hard shadows work well with the two brighter lighting options. Perhaps not realistic though if you are using the Dark Stormy Lighting coupled with Ground Fog patches.

The downside is that it is more difficult to see the margins of the track and footpaths in some tree lined sections, so turning the hard shadows off could assist you to learn your driving lines.

MOUNTAIN MIST PATCHES
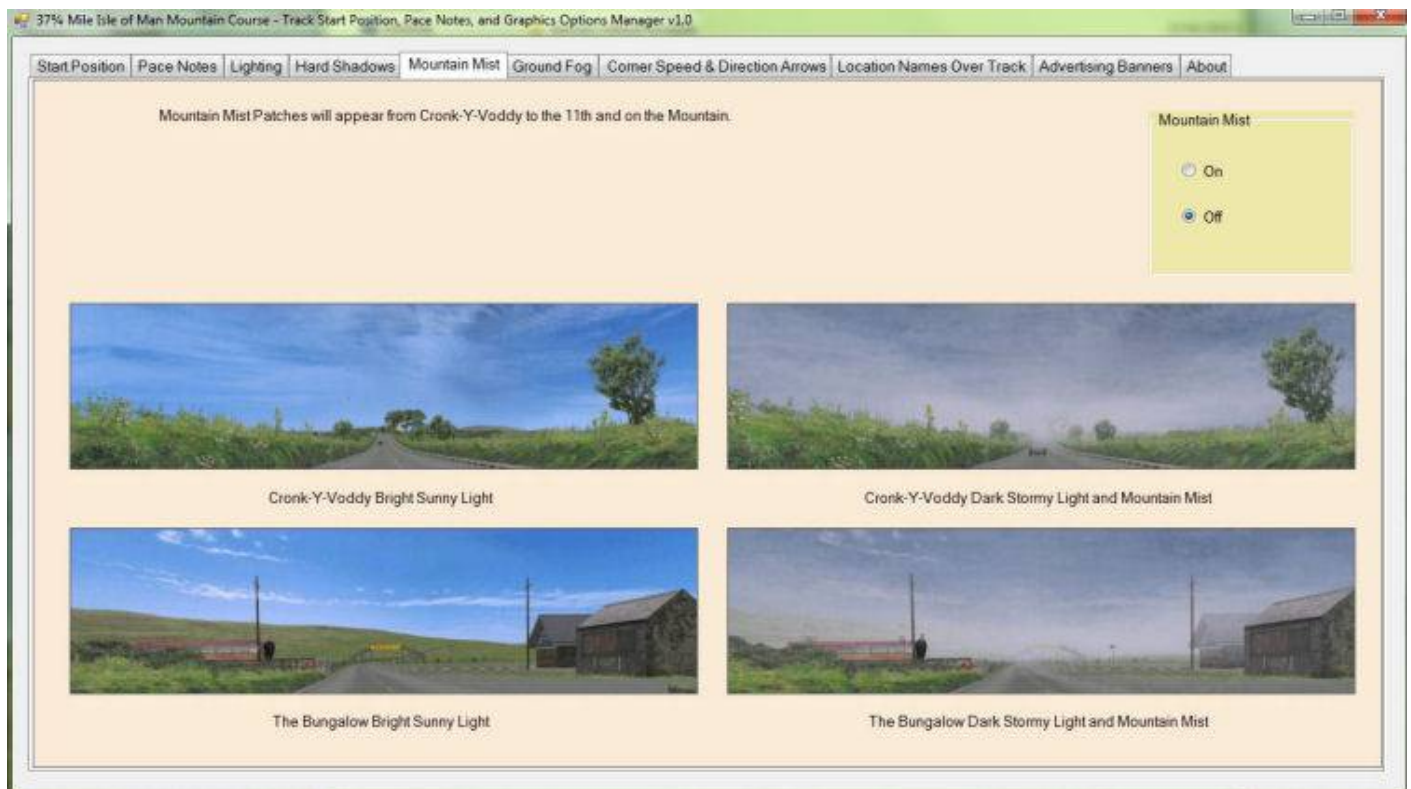
These Mountain Mist Patches are located only;

On Creg Willy's Hill, Cronk-Y-Voddy and at The 11th/Drinkwater's; plus on the Mountain, from just beyond Guthries to The 32nd

GROUND FOG PATCHES
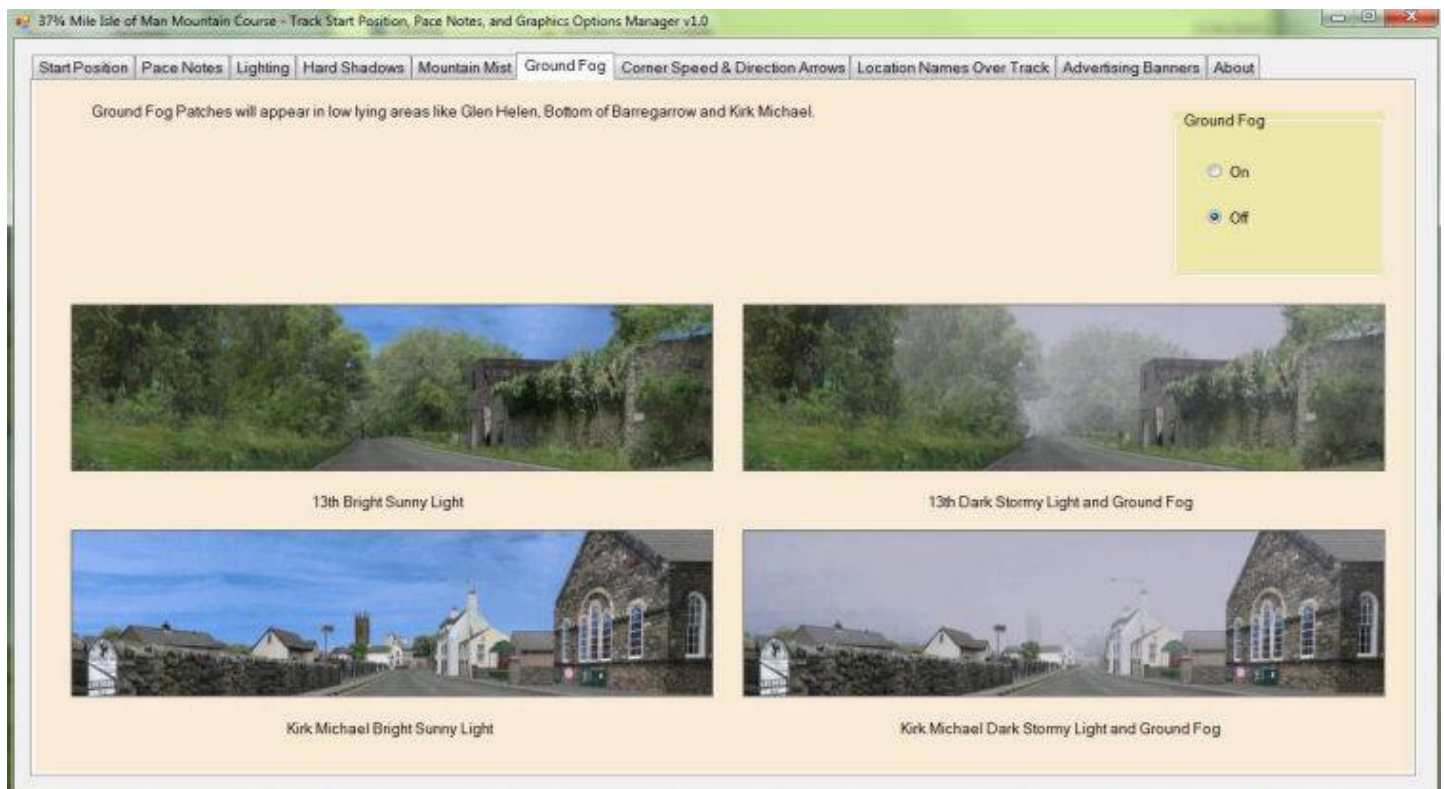
Variable sized Patches of Ground Fog are located;

At Laurel Bank, in Glen Helen, Barregarrow, The 13th , in Kirk Michael Village, from Bishop's Court to Alpine, in Kerrowmoar, Glen Duff, Glentramman, Sky Hill and at Ramsey Hairpin.

CORNER SPEED AND DIRECTION ARROWS DISPLAYED
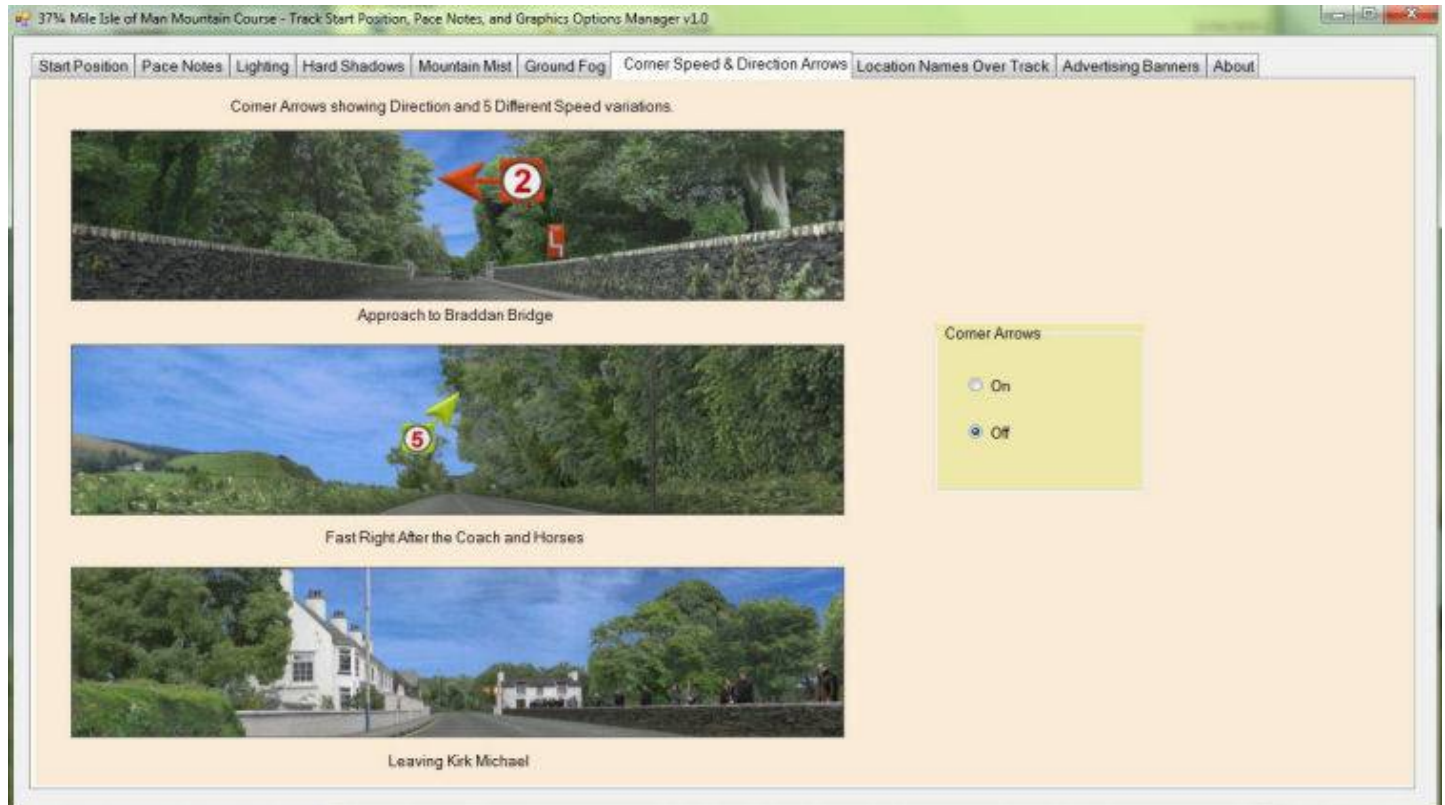
There are five differently numbered, angled and coloured corner direction arrows placed above the track, for both left and right hand bends, broadly indicating RELATIVE recommended entry speed or even recommended gear.

Red [1] represents the tightest corners and Green [5] being a fast sweeper.

So you now have a choice!

No assistance learning to find your way if you are a purist, just visual clues if you use these Corner Arrows, or a full set of audio Pace Notes using Lee's Program.

TRACK LOCATION NAMES DISPLAYED
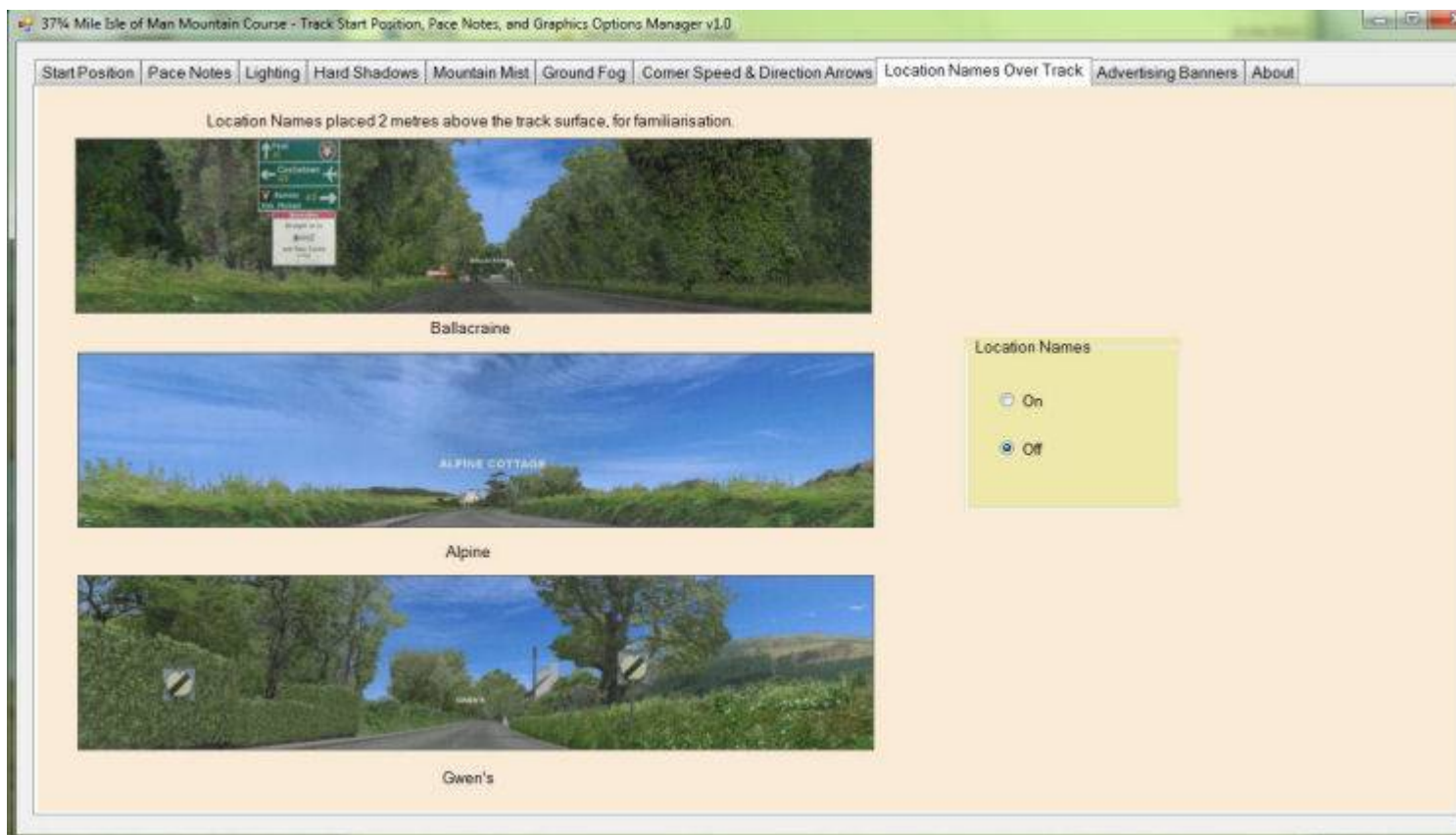
About 2 metres above the track these labels show you the common names given to relevant locations around the track without restricting your view, for ease of familiarisation.

Explanation of their meaning can be found in the separate track Readme and Driving Guide PDF.

ADVERTISING BANNER 3DO's INSERTED [FOR THIRD PARTY PRIVATE USE]
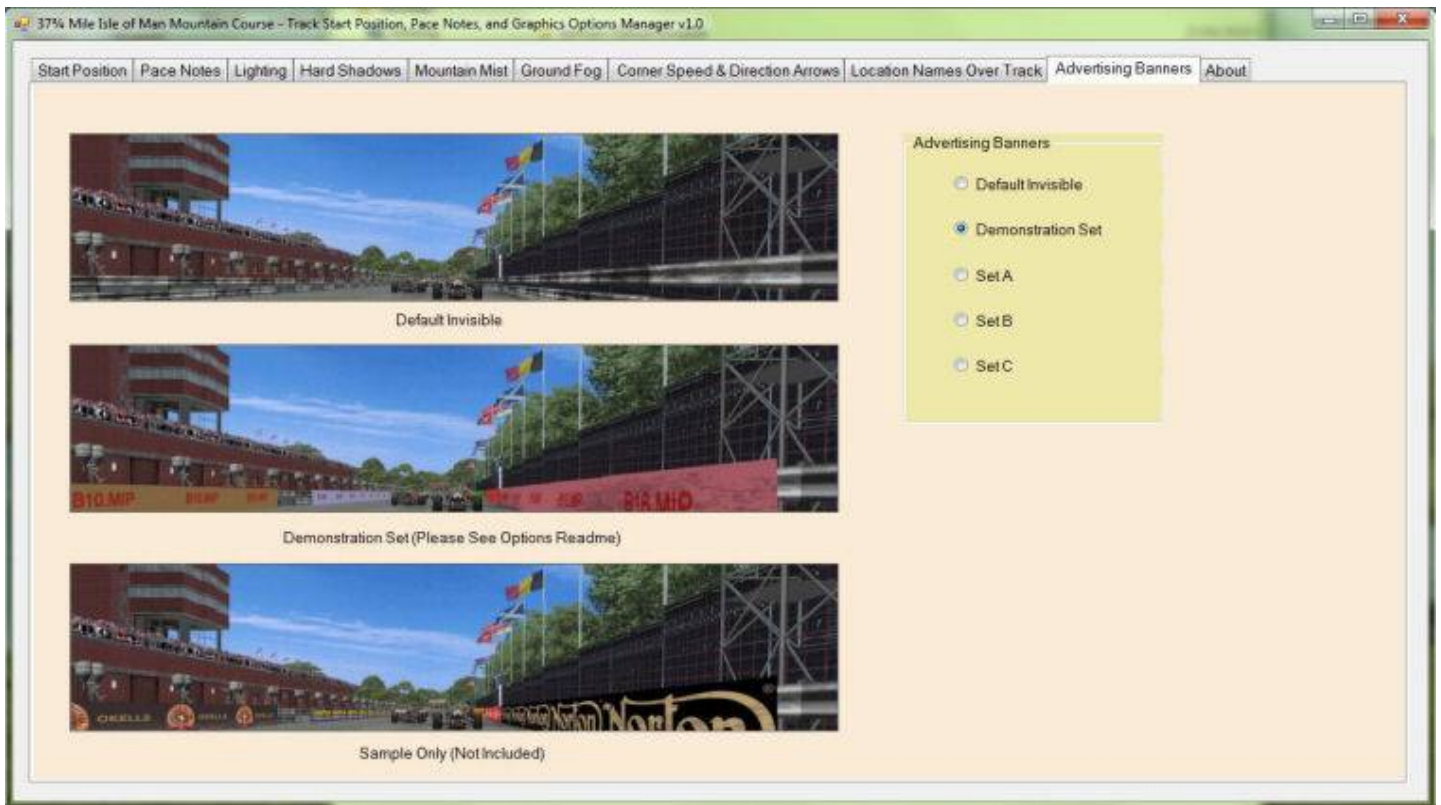
For this set of options 131 fixed 3do's have been carefully distributed around the Course, designed to accept "Sets" of "Advertising Banners".

The Default set is invisible.

Sets A, B and C are presently using invisible image [Mip] sets also, but are made available to locate and display any third party "Banner" sets. Use AAIOM/Options/Banners Set A, B or C Sub Folders to overwrite the contents and display you own visible Mips.

I have no intention of including any advertising with this Course, preferring to just provide functionality for others to design their own sets of "Adds" to suit their own tastes; be that period, modern, pictures of family?, pets? whatever your preferences.

Here is your chance to have a play with some graphics and see your work displayed, provided you can use a simple paint program and convert your textures into Mip format.

To make this process as simple as possible, all the 3do's are designed to accept images of 4 x 1 width to height. Eg; 512 x 128 or 256 x 64 pixels.

The other information you will need is the location of each of these 3do's and what file name each one uses.

Locations and Mip names can both be seen in the track by opting for the "Demonstration Set" of Mips, which are simple opaque images all with their Mip name clearly visible. There are 28 variations spread over 131 locations. Names are B1.Mip...B2.Mip......... to B28.Mip.

You don't have to use all 28 variations. Just leave the ones you don't use as the default invisible Mips.

In the addendum at the foot of this document I have included a comprehensive list of Locations and Mip names.

The "Manager" utility simply swaps these "sets" of files in the same way as other graphics options..

Jim Pearson.
2019

ADDENDUM - ADVERTISING BANNER MIPS - LOCATIONS AND NAMES

SPECIAL PLACEMENTS ON OBJECTS	SIDE	MIP NAME
Viewing Tower Between Gooseneck and Guthrie Memorial	LHS	B5
Viewing Tower Between Gooseneck and Guthrie Memorial	LHS	B5
Viewing Tower Between Gooseneck and Guthrie Memorial	RHS	B5
Viewing Tower Between Gooseneck and Guthrie Memorial	LHS	B5
Viewing Tower Between Gooseneck and Guthrie Memorial	RHS	B5
Viewing Tower Between Gooseneck and Guthrie Memorial	RHS	B5
Viewing Tower Between Gooseneck and Guthrie Memorial	LHS	B5
Overhead Bridge Leaving Pit Exit	Central	B2
Overhead Bridge St Ninians Crossroads	Central	B3
Overhead Bridge May Hill	Central	B4
Overhead Bridge Bungalow	Central	B6

PLACEMENTS TRACKSIDE WALLS IN LONGDITUDINAL ORDER		
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B9
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B9
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B9
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B10
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B10
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B10
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B10
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B11
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B11
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B11
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B11
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B11
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B11
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B11
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B11
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B9
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B9
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B9
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B9
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B9
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B10

Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B10
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B10
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	LHS	B10
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B6
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B6
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B6
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B16
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B16
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B16
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B16
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B16
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B6
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B6
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B6
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B6
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B6
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B7
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B7
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B7
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B7
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B7
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Armco between Pits and Scoreboards	RHS	B5
Front of Sandbags Quarter Bridge	LHS	B4
Front of Sandbags Quarter Bridge	LHS	B4
Front of Sandbags Quarter Bridge	LHS	B4
Front of Sandbags Quarter Bridge	LHS	B4
Front of Sandbags Quarter Bridge	LHS	B7
Front of Sandbags Quarter Bridge	LHS	B7
Front of Sandbags Quarter Bridge	LHS	B7
Front of Sandbags 1st Left Braddan Bridge	RHS	B24
Front of Sandbags 1st Left Braddan Bridge	RHS	B24
Front of Sandbags 1st Left Braddan Bridge	RHS	B24
Front of Sandbags 1st Left Braddan Bridge	RHS	B24
Front of Sandbags 1st Left Braddan Bridge	RHS	B24
Front of Sandbags 1st Left Braddan Bridge	RHS	B24
Front of Wall next Right at Braddan Bridge	LHS	B26
Front of Wall next Right at Braddan Bridge	LHS	B26
Front of Wall next Right at Braddan Bridge	LHS	B26
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	LHS	B12
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	LHS	B12
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	LHS	B12
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	LHS	B2
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	LHS	B2
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	LHS	B2
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	RHS	B27
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	RHS	B27
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	RHS	B27
Front of Wall before Right at Ballacraine	RHS	B27
Front of Wall at 11th [Drinkwaters]	RHS	B14
Front of Wall at 11th [Drinkwaters]	RHS	B28
Front of Wall at 11th [Drinkwaters]	RHS	B3
Front of Sandbags 1st Right Quarry Bends	LHS	B13
Front of Sandbags 1st Right Quarry Bends	LHS	B13
Front of Sandbags 1st Right Quarry Bends	LHS	B11

Front of Sandbags 1st Right Quarry Bends	LHS	B11
Front of Sandbags 1st Right Quarry Bends	LHS	B11
Front of Wall/ Fence opposite Ginger Hall	LHS	B25
Front of Wall/ Fence opposite Ginger Hall	LHS	B25
Front of Wall/ Fence opposite Ginger Hall	LHS	B20
Front of Wall/ Fence opposite Ginger Hall	LHS	B20
Front of Wall/ Fence opposite Ginger Hall	LHS	B20
Front of Wall at Bus Stop Schoolhouse Cnr.	RHS	B23
Front of Wall at Bus Stop Schoolhouse Cnr.	RHS	B23
Front of Wall at Bus Stop Schoolhouse Cnr.	RHS	B19
Front of Wall at Bus Stop Schoolhouse Cnr.	RHS	B19
Front of Wall at Bus Stop Schoolhouse Cnr.	RHS	B4
Front of Wall at Bus Stop Schoolhouse Cnr.	RHS	B4
Front of Wall at Bus Stop Schoolhouse Cnr.	RHS	B27
Front of Wall at Bus Stop Schoolhouse Cnr.	RHS	B27
Front of Railings Parliament Squ. Ramsey	RHS	B1
Front of Railings Parliament Squ. Ramsey	RHS	B1
Front of Railings Parliament Squ. Ramsey	RHS	B1
Front of Building exiting Parliament Squ.	RHS	B21
Front of Building exiting Parliament Squ.	RHS	B21
Front of Building exiting Parliament Squ.	RHS	B21
Front of Building exiting Parliament Squ.	RHS	B21
Front of Building exiting Parliament Squ.	RHS	B17
Front of Hedge RHS Exiting White Gates	RHS	B17
Front of Hedge RHS Exiting White Gates	RHS	B17
Bank exiting Ramsey Hairpin	RHS	B22
Bank exiting Ramsey Hairpin	RHS	B22
Front of Sandbags Creg-Ny-Baa	LHS	B8
Front of Sandbags Creg-Ny-Baa	LHS	B18
Front of Sandbags Creg-Ny-Baa	LHS	B8
Front of Sandbags Creg-Ny-Baa	LHS	B18
Front of Sandbags Creg-Ny-Baa	LHS	B8
Front of Sandbags Creg-Ny-Baa	LHS	B18
Front of Wall at turn in to Governor's Bridge.	LHS	B15
Front of Wall at turn in to Governor's Bridge.	LHS	B15