

## High Weald Challenge: Andredsweald Circuit – 11th July 2021

*Reprinted from Kent Group Newsletter number 115, August 2021*



Was it really only 5 or so weeks ago? A lot has flowed under the proverbial bridge since then.

As confirmed elsewhere, a report will appear in December's *Strider* – special call out to Eric Rolfe for providing both the photos and some commentary. Eric's photos capture the emotions well. There are some 50 photos on the Kent Group website, showing both countryside and mask wearers (at the venue and at the checkpoints); this will (hopefully) serve as a good reminder of the conditions that we were forced to work (walk) under.

This was the very first LDWA actual – as opposed to Anytime – event held in the UK since March 2020, after what seemed like a lifetime of isolating and solitary walking. And we proved that it could be done, though most everybody would have preferred the opportunity – at least at the end – to socialise over a welcoming cuppa and some food. Whilst we were able to proceed, I feel that, if Covid restrictions are re-imposed, then any events held over the winter months will perhaps be restricted to the most battle-hardened of warriors (though that phrase might describe LDWA members generally).

As many will have seen, and purely because of Covid, we went with the 'tried and tested' venue and route from 2019, so 'all' we had to worry about was Covid ... Whilst the quantum of entrants was a slightly disappointing 79 – with 64 starting, 62 finishing – the quality of those that turned up was 'top notch', and it was certainly good to see many familiar faces again. We had been unsure whether there would be pent-up demand, particularly from newer members, but this was not really in evidence. Thanks go to the entrants, who all abided by the regulations, for braving the event, and for their many appreciative comments afterwards.

Thanks, of course, to all the Marshals – most of whom were 'field based', only, and didn't venture to HQ – for their valuable time, as the event could not have happened without them. Also thanks to the eight who ventured out into the High Weald on 4th July to 'prove' the routes; some very useful suggestions made, and most incorporated into the final Route Description, with Stephanie and Helen having done a 'leaflet drop' a couple of weeks earlier (please do ask them about "Mrs Greenpeace" near Poundgate!).

Marshals, in no specific order; David Thornton, Andy Clark, Penny Southern, Michael Headley, Alan Stewart, Cathy Waters, Jim Briggs, Nicola Foad, John Gilbert, Dale Moorhouse, Eve Richards and Andrew Melling plus Jane Bates and Rob Foster on loan from LDWA Sussex. Organising Committee consisted of Stephanie Le Men, Helen Franklin, Peter Jull and Neil Higham.

**Neil Higham**