

## **Capital Challenge 2023 Report – 7<sup>th</sup> Capital Challenge**

The Capital Challenge was very popular this year, with it being the first time we had physically run the Windmill Route. This year's event had a limit of 200 walkers and was fully booked by mid January (we opened for registrations on the 4th November 2022) and when I closed the list in February we had 20 people on the waiting list (with more added during the closed period and many more asking to be considered). We over enrolled 20 people at the beginning, which took into account expected drop outs and what we thought we could safely handle.

On the morning of the walk we expected 192 people; 20 did not start, leaving a total of 172. A further 7 people retired during the walk and 1 disqualification, leaving 164 people who officially completed the walk.

- Finish times ranged from 5 hours and 58 minutes to 10 hours and 34 minutes.
- Age of participants ranged from 18 to 79 years old
- All starters registered as UK residents.
- 30 out of the 162 due to start were not LDWA members
- 33 London LDWA members took part, with 23 other LDWA groups represented
- People travelled from far and wide, ranging from Wales, Devon & Cornwall, Dorset, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cumbria, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Yorkshire and Merseyside
- As always our neighbouring LDWA groups were well represented, including Surrey, Kent, Thames Valley, Essex and Herts and Sussex

We were very lucky with the weather, with the rain showers passing through London just before we officially started the walk, leaving it slightly overcast for the morning, brightening up in the early afternoon and for those people still walking after 5.30pm we had some late showers.

Approximately 125 Hot X Buns, 70 Scones, 150 packs of mini cheddars, 400 sweets, 150 packs of crisps, 300 chocolate bars, 200 biscuits and 300 cakes were consumed throughout the day. Not to mention the hundreds of cups of tea, slightly less coffee and some squash along the way – all handed out by our brilliant Marshals.

The start was very busy at 07.30 with around 100 people eager to leave the checkpoint at 07.45, by 08.15 the majority of walkers had started with the final few through by 08.45.

A steady stream of walkers went through the 3 checkpoints, with many especially enjoying Brixton Windmill, before getting to the end (despite a few diversions).

With everyone accounted for the last checkpoint was closed and everyone headed home by 7pm.

### **Feedback**

Marshals throughout the walk reported good feedback and said walkers seemed generally happy, especially with the weather. Post-event feedback so far has been supportive:

### Feedback received (edited to remove personal details):

- *I just wanted to add my thanks for yesterday's Capital Challenge. I had another great day exploring London on what turned out to be a lovely day for walking. As ever the route description was spot on with the touch of humour we've come to expect on these events and very informative with all the places of interest well researched. The snacks at all the checkpoints certainly hit the spot and the cakes at the end delicious. And all the marshals were so friendly and encouraging.*
- *The Capital Challenge has become a given in my walking calendar, and I look forward to next year's event! Thank you all once again for a great day out.*
- *I wanted to thank you and your team for another great event. Thoroughly enjoyed taking part and appreciated all the instructions and excellent information provided. I'm such a fan of our Capital city and today's challenge ticked all the boxes of sights and history.*
- *Just to say thank you to you and the other volunteers for putting on an excellent Capital Challenge walk. I have lived in London for 20 years and discovered lots of new things about my local area during the second half of the walk. The first half was fascinating too as we explored some areas of town I don't know at all. Well done on convincing the weather gods to be kind - ended up a little sun-kissed by the end!*
- *We thoroughly enjoyed the walk and route yesterday, please pass on my thanks to everyone who helped to make the day such a good one. Thanks and best wishes*
- *Fabulous walk through those very beautiful parks, they were astounding. Great very friendly helpers. Many thanks to them they were marvellous. Finally: why not open the next year event on the morning of this year's event? Then we walkers can enter next year's event. Ok you don't know the date and the route but that's not the point: when you decide the date we can then choose to be DNS but if we choose to walk we can then turn up. This would mean we knew we had a place next year This event has such a reputation that quite frankly we don't care what the route will be. Finally finally, yes it's dead easy to tell other people what to do so I apologise. Wonderful day. Great parks. Dinosaurs!*
- *Excellent day out - please thank everyone involved - splendid route*
- *Thanks for a super event yesterday – my husband and I really enjoyed the event and the route description was perfect for finding our way. We also liked the extra contextual information too. We know how much effort goes into organising such events and making them a success, so congratulations to all involved.*
- *Just wanted to say Thank you so much to everyone who worked so hard to make Saturdays challenge walk such an enjoyable event. It was a great route and all the facts you provided made it a really interesting walk. You even managed to provide*

*some mud to make those of us who spend many hours walking in mud feel at home 😊. Hope to see you all next year.*

- *What a wonderful day and an incredible route, it was SO interesting and wonderful to finish with the dinosaurs, thank you to you and all the team.*

### **And thank you!**

Thanks to our fabulous group of experienced, cheery, and unflappable marshals, undaunted by last minute changes, football restrictions, reluctant scanners, and standing about for hours looking out for participants, making hundreds of cups of Tea and resisting the temptation to eat the snacks.

Thanks especially to Gordon Parker, for running the start and finish points so efficiently. And also to Susanne who not only designed the route but also helped out at CP2.

Enormous thanks to Pete, Chris and Monica and delivered the food to all the checkpoints and then help run them on the day.

Finally, thank you to our start, finish, and checkpoint hosts: St John's Church, The Pembroke Pub, Brixton Windmill, the Scouts Hut at Dulwich and St Hugh's Community Centre in Anerley. Without your support, this walk would not happen.

Marie Heracleous

Organiser, Capital Challenge 2023