



The 51st Punchbowl Marathon

13th February 2022

Event Report



Organisation

The 51st Punchbowl Marathon finally took place 3 years after the 50th event, after a cancellation in 2020 due to severe weather warnings, and 2021 being written off due to Covid.

Covid is still quite prevalent, and so some changes were made to the arrangements this year to reduce risks to entrants and volunteers. This followed similar precautions to those successfully used on the Winter Tanners in January.

After the 2019 event there was some question about the event continuing, as it was difficult to find someone who was prepared to take over the running of the whole event. In the end it was decided to split the organising role across a team of volunteers, which seems to have worked reasonably well for the two events that we have organised (including the cancelled one in 2020). As such this was the first running of the event “under new management”, although plenty of the familiar Surrey volunteers were there making it a success.

No doubt there were some points that could have gone better, and we will look to use these learnings to make next year even better.

New Route – New HQ

In case it wasn't interesting enough to have a new organising team, it was also decided to change the route and the HQ. The parking at Witley has long been a challenge, and so we looked around to find a decent hall with good parking nearby. We have used the Hall at Tilford as a checkpoint before, and the discovery of ample parking nearby made this our new choice of HQ.



Registration at Tilford



Scanning at the Start

The route initially heads roughly South West, around Frensham Great Pond then back up to CP1 at Rushmoor (6.2 miles). From Rushmoor it then heads roughly South, around the Devil's Punchbowl and back up North towards CP2 at Little Cowdray Farm (13.7 miles). Now avoiding the need to cross the A3, the route then heads Northwards through Thursley and Thursley Common to Elstead where the route splits. The 20 mile route (20.6 miles) then heads back to Tilford, whilst those on the 30 mile route (29 miles) head up to CP3 at Puttenham (22.5 miles), then back via Puttenham Common and The Sands to Tilford.

The Weather



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With about a week to go before the event, the weather was looking quite promising, unfortunately as the event drew nearer, the forecasts changed to heavy rain for the afternoon, and along with high winds in the afternoon, this is what we ended up with. It had been reasonably dry in the run up to the event, and this led to good conditions under foot. The Marshals' walk on the preceding weekend had fine weather and was quite dry underfoot.



Adjusting the Location of CP1



Kitchen at Tilford

Entries and Starters

As usual, the event filled up well before the closing date. We retained the normal entry limit of 350 entrants for this year. Perhaps the weather forecast put a few people off, because only 228 started the event on the day, which is quite a bit down on a normal year, and below our expected 300 starters. There were a few swaps between routes, and in the end we had 132 on the 30-mile route and 96 on the 20-mile route.

Despite the poor weather conditions in the afternoon, there was not one retirement – amazing !

The spread of times on the 20 mile route was between 3:15 and 8:19. On the 30 mile route the spread was 4:43 to 10:29.



CP2 Little Cowdray Farm



CP2 – Tractor & Trailer



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Thanks to the Volunteers

Many Thanks to all those who gave up their time to organise the event and run it on the day. We could do with more volunteers for future events, and anyone helping will always have the opportunity of taking part in the Marshals' walks the weekend before.

Route – Elton Ellis, Tony Cartwright, Mary Dee

Marshals walk leaders – Tony Cartwright, James Blogg

Registration – Mary Dee, Andy Chesworth

Event Control – Mary Dee

HQ – Andy Chesworth, Chris Hayward

Car parking – Roger Sage, Alastair Charlesworth, Chris Woodward, John Preston, Roger Moss



Marshals Walk

Start kitchen – Claire & Cathy Turton

Retirements pick-up – Steve Ford

Closedown Marshal – Tony Cartwright

Start – Frank Eberle

Splits – Roger Sage

CPN1 (Pacer Numbers Check Frensham) John Preston, John Goody

CP1 (Rushmoor) – Ted Swift, Janet Chapman, Matt Carolan, Alan Shons. Tony Cartwright (PACER)

CP2 (Little Cowdray Farm) – Mike Tuke, Cathy Turton, Elizabeth Bryan. Claire Turton, John Preston (PACER)

CP3 (Puttenham) – Richard Ireson, Avril Stapleton, Janet Chapman, Keith Chesterton. Frank Eberle, John Goody (PACER).

Finish – James Blogg (PACER)

Finish kitchen – Alastair & Sue Charlesworth, Henri & Jennie de Bossart

PACER & Website – Tony Cartwright

Certificates – Elton Ellis and Tony Cartwright

Organising Committee – Tim Bedwell (Admin & Pacer), Andy Chesworth (Marshalling), Cathy Turton (Halls/Venues), Mike Tuke (Equipment), Claire Turton (Catering), Elton Ellis (Entries & Route), Alastair Charlesworth (Finance)



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Checkpoint 3

Feedback Received

“Just a quick note to say that today’s Punchbowl was the best yet. The new route was great and, for me at least, was a big improvement on the old Witley route as staying west of the A3 made for a much better route. The marshals and volunteers at the check points were, as always, brilliant. I hope you keep the Tilford start for future years.”

“Thank you to all your volunteers for organising an excellent and enjoyable Punchbowl event once again yesterday. We were all expecting rain, but it held off until after 12.00 anyway, so that was a bonus. Route finding was fine, just a couple of places I was a bit unsure, but a great route, and some new scenery around Frensham Pond. Thanks to all those that were out doing an excellent job on the checkpoints all day, and food and drink at the finish was very appreciated.”

“I decided to join the #LDWA. Just ran my first event with them and was blown away with the quality of the aid stations. I've paid £100+ for races that weren't a patch on these guys. This event cost me £10. Speechless.”

“The volunteers were beyond helpful, and despite the shocking weather, looked after us all beautifully. Please may you pass on my biggest thanks to each and every one of them.”

“joined the #punchbowlmarathon yesterday... a very well organised event and for £10!! Will absolutely be joining more in the future (hopefully with less rain!)”

“Well done to all the volunteers at each checkpoint. It must have been cold at the farm for them. Thank you Surrey for a fantastic event.”

“It was a splendid event. Thank you to all the volunteers for making it such fun.”

“thank you to all the organisers and volunteers a really enjoyable event all round, loved the hot beans to finish 😊”

“Thank you so much for Sunday. Best beans in Surrey!! First 30 miler for me, but not the last 👍”