



LDWA Surrey



2021 Surrey Tops Report

This was the first LDWA 50 mile event since the Covid restrictions had lifted. Entries were down on previous events, possibly due to lack of training opportunities and/or the pandemic, with 113 entries and 86 starting - 24% non-starters. The weather was warm all day and mild at night with good conditions underfoot - although one entrant did manage to trip by the very last footbridge - only yards from the finish - and arrive at the finish covered in mud! So water was much in demand, particularly at the first 2 checkpoints but none was encountered overhead and little underfoot. There were 10 retirements - 11.6% - some due to the heat, some to navigational difficulties and some just due to the general demanding nature of the event.

Covid restrictions had been lifted only 3 months previously so the risk assessment had undergone a number of changes during the genesis of the event. In order to allay the possible concerns of entrants and marshals some changes were made to normal practice. The use of masks was requested in the hall at the start and finish (when not eating) and hand sanitizer was much in evidence everywhere throughout the event. A table was set across the corner of the hall to prevent use of the narrow corridor by the kitchen hatch in order to maintain social distancing. Later on those requiring access to the sleeping area and/or shower areas were asked to walk around the building, rather than along the narrow corridor. At the checkpoints all food offerings were either individually wrapped, pre-portioned and individually wrapped, or offered well-spaced out. Marshals kept an eye out for overcrowding and encouraged the use of the hand sanitisers. Indoor marshals were also masked. Some marshals elected to choose to be outdoors rather than inside.

There were 2 mass starts - 1000 for walkers, when we gathered first to remember Martyn Greaves, who had died suddenly a few months previously, and then after a few words to set off across the recreation ground. The runners started later at 1300.

On this event all the checkpoint equipment was set out in the hall and collected and brought back by the checkpoint staff themselves - this worked well.

There was a major route change this year due to the uncertainty regarding the procurement of Evelyn Hall at Abinger Common. The village hall at Abinger Hammer was procured in August and as a result the route was diverted down through Abinger Roughts to the checkpoint. From there it was routed up beside Paddington Farm, right past the Volunteer at Sutton Abinger and up via the outskirts of Tennyngshook Wood and on to new paths up and through the Hurt Wood and onto the summit of Holmbury Hill to resume the usual route. Some entrants found this challenging! The other minor route change was on leaving Smithbrook Kilns, checkpoint 4, when entrants were asked to retrace their steps for 120 yards and then cross to gain a bridleway leading back to the original route and thus avoiding crossing the blind bend on the busy A281.

As ever much gratitude must go to all our marshals who kindly volunteered on this event - some for the very first time - and to those applied themselves to the mastery of the intricacies of PACER to ensure all the entrants were accurately accounted for during the event. So many, many thanks to:-

Registration - Tony Cartwright

Car Parking - Roger Sage, Tara Williams

Early Kitchen - Jan Chapman, Elizabeth Bryan

Support Drivers - Steve Ford, Vincent McDonnell

Sweepers - Debbie Wilkes, Jackie Barker

Closedown - Tony Cartwright

Checkpoint 1 - Sussex Group - Andy Clark, Cathy Waters, David Thornton, Helen Franklin, Stephanie Le Men, Tony Cartwright (PACER)

Checkpoint 2 - Chris Woodward, Joanne Morris (PACER), John Morris(PACER), Jill Green, Simon Delph, Tara Williams

Checkpoint 3 - Sussex Group - Chris Baines-Holmes, Frank Eberle (PACER), Gabriel Pol, Jackie Baines-Holmes, Jane Bates, Jane Giles, Joe Baines-Holmes, Manfred Engler, Paul Collis, Roger

Checkpoint 4 - Andy Houldsworth, Fiona McNicol, Jeff Campbell (PACER), Jill Green, **Ted Swift**

Finish - Tony Butterick

Breakfast Kitchen - Alastair Charlesworth, Henri de Bossart, Jennie de Bossart, Sue Charlesworth

Event organiser - Mary Dee

Entrants' comments after the event included

"It was wonderful to be back on a 'real' event and I am full of admiration for the marshals and checkpoints who are prepared to give up a night's sleep to enable this to happen. The welcome back at the finish was particularly appreciated (as was the the bowl of custard at CP3)"

"Fantastic event - well done all the marshals ... will be back for the next one."

"Thanks to the Surrey group (and friends) for a really great day out. Some great memories ... if only my ability to follow the route matched your ability in writing it."

"The marshals were very polite and helpful and made us feel at home. The other walkers were very friendly. The route was fantastic and I will do again. Loved it."

"It was rather tough even for us climbers."

"Tough challenge - I didn't expect it to be as hard. The weather was fantastic."

"I completed the Surrey Tops 50 yesterday ... It reminded me of what I've been missing all this time. An understated, friendly, challenging event with the chance to talk to other like-minded nutters! Many many thanks to everyone who made this well-organised event possible. A challenging route, friendly and encouraging marshals, an accurate route description and great food at checkpoints (individual pots of rice pudding a hit!)."

"Thought it was tough though the forests were fantastic. The climbs were tough tough on the last section. The views were fantastic though. And the rice pudding was just what I needed at about 45 miles."

"I found those repeated small hills on the last section tough on tired legs."

"It was a gem of a walk - the climbs at the end were telling."

"I knew it was going to be hard. They were quite technical climbs. And with the amount of paths some serious navigation in the dark. Fantastic event will have to do it again. Loved it."

"I absolutely loved it ... right from the start when I received your lovely email. ... Your food in all the checkpoints was perfect for the job! .. such lovely people! I would just like to say thank you to the lovely gentleman who welcomed us home at the end. His warmth and enthusiasm meant so much! A fabulous day today! Thank you!"

Mary D (Organiser)