

# Surrey Group, Long Distance Walkers Association Winter Tanners 2015 Report



Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January saw 332 entrants set off from Leatherhead Leisure Centre on the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Tanners. 200 started the long (30.4 miles) route and 122 on the short (20.6 miles). Although there had been poor weather that week Sunday was cold, initially overcast, but dry throughout. The previous rain had freshened up the mud along the route (as befits this event). John Westcott and Mary had devised new routes that included splendid sections of the Surrey Hills (many thanks to them).

The fastest times were significantly faster than in 2014. The results can be summarised as:

| Class | Entrants | On the day | Retired | Ave Time | Min time | Max time |
|-------|----------|------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|
| Total | 448      | 322        | 10      |          |          |          |
| Long  | 301      | 200        | 8       | 7h 43m   | 5h 01m   | 11h 43m  |
| Short | 147      | 122        | 2       | 5h 45m   | 2h 53m   | 9h 42m   |

The full results are at [www.ldwa.org.uk/lgt/downloads/Surrey/WT\\_Docs/WT15\\_results.xls](http://www.ldwa.org.uk/lgt/downloads/Surrey/WT_Docs/WT15_results.xls)

There were only 10 retirements most of these being towards the end of the route. Two entrants managed to download the route of the 2014 Winter Tanners from the archive section of our website and got hopelessly out of place. At the start of the week an email had been sent to all entrants saying the route was published (with a hyperlink) and saying it was a new route. It's important to carefully read the communications we send!

We used the Sports Pavilion at Leatherhead Leisure centre for the second time, it served us well as a basic base for the event. The Fabian on-line entry system was used for the third time and gives a transparent system for both entrants and organisers. For the first time we tried a waiting list arrangement (see below). The major technical innovation was the trial use of a real time entrant recording system, Chekpoint, developed by David Hodge of Sussex LDWA group (and further developed from input by Surrey LDWA). Each entrant carried a RFID card (similar to an OAP bus pass) that could be scanned by a reader connected to a netbook with a mobile data connection. The system mostly worked well though the readers gave a few problems that interrupted some data collection and there were some bottlenecks at the end when entrants wanted their certificates. It is clear that this approach is the way to go and further development work is being



undertaken and an updated system will be used on the Punchbowl Marathon shortly. The system made it possible to produce the results list early on and to give details of times at intermediate points. We thank entrants for their patience. There were



*At the Pitch Hill Toposcope, memorial to the LDWA founders*

amusing points. At CP3 the Surrey secretary, with avid enthusiasm, dragged a man's arm with RFID card (and so the rest of his body) to the CP box to register his arrival, he noticeably grimaced under the sudden demand placed on his stiff limbs. However no sooner than he had regained his balance, it was decided that a second read was required and he was promptly dragged back in the same way!!

The event was only possible because 35 marshals turned out to run checkpoints and otherwise support entrants; there was a ratio of one marshal to every 10 entrants!. Without these volunteers there could be no event and we are immensely grateful to those who offered their time (and were prepared to stand about in very cold temperatures). Once again we were particularly grateful to Serpentine Runners who again efficiently ran CP2 on the long route and it is welcome that a running club should support a LDWA event.

There was a 29% 'no show' rate at the start. This compares to 33% in 2014.

Traditionally our events have operated at about a 10% 'no-show' rate but the changing nature of entrants and the impact of winter colds and injuries seems to pointing towards perhaps at least 25% no show becoming the norm. Although for the first time there was an automated waiting list facility it was only required for a couple of weeks before the event (as the last entrants were able to get places fairly late on). There was, however, only a small proportion of potentially unused places that were being offered back (our low entry fees and refund costs provide little incentive to withdraw). From the emails received it would appear that entrants' decisions not to participate are only taken a few days before the event by which time it is too late to practically offer waiting list places (the organisers need to finalise control lists and need a few days before the event to do this). The entry limit for the Winter Tanners used to be 350 and had been raised to 450 (though the organiser partly did this expecting that this would lead to about 400 participants on the day). We are considering whether to operate a waiting list for 2016.



*Traditional WT mud at Longmore Lane*

It may be noted that the event operates a 'no substitutions' rule and a waiting list system would allow entrants to surrender a place. Some entrants may find this puzzling and feel they have bought a place in the event and so should be able to reallocate this to a substitute of their choice. Apart from the practical problems of updating event control systems, the organisers would, if any accident inquiry were necessary, be cast as irresponsible if late substitutions meant that they no longer had accurate details of who was on the event and their contact details, additionally substitute entrants would not be bound by the terms and conditions of the event (which they would not have had to agree to). All entrants agree to 'no substitutions' when they accept the terms and conditions in the entry process.

It was a source of regret to the organisers that there were reports of dog, accompanying an entrant, worrying sheep. It is important to us we observe the Country Code and that local landowners are welcoming of the event and its entrants. The LDWA, when organisers decide to permit dogs on an event, require entrants to control their dog and to have their own third party insurance. The organisers are going to reconsider whether (or on what terms) to continue to allow dogs on the event.

I hope you enjoyed your event and I look forward to offering an even better 38<sup>th</sup> Winter Tanners on **10<sup>th</sup> January 2016**. Put it in your diary, I hope to see you there.

*Richard Ireson,  
For Surrey LDWA, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2015*



*Coming down Leith Hill*