



Winter Tanners 2022 Report



The 43rd Winter Tanners was held on Sunday 16th January 2022, the weather forecast had been for a cold dry day, but it turned out warmer than expected (though that's not saying much!). There had been heavy rain earlier in the week and the mud was extensive. During the morning there was a surreal view from Ranmore as the clouds inverted down in the valley and in the middle of the day the sun briefly shone.



The organisers had an 'on/off' view of whether the event would again be caught in post-Christmas Covid restrictions. It was only 3 days after Christmas, when the Health Secretary criticised the restrictions that cancelled ParkRun in Wales by Tweeting "*I can't see how restricting outdoor exercise in this way is justified or proportionate*", it became clear that we could be running the event. We had run the Surrey Tops in mid-September with just over 100 entrants (then followed by increased Covid restrictions), and generally there had been a limited restarting of large Challenge Events. After having 465 entrants to the WT we now feel we're 'back in business' (the Punchbowl Marathon is on 13th February).

We were apprehensive about how many would enter; we have an entry limit of 500 and 93% of the places were taken. As entries opened in October it was also in doubt how many would still come to the event as Covid fears were rising. 23.7% of entrants didn't arrive but that was only slightly higher than the 22% average for the previous 7 events. Interestingly about half the intended entrants for the 20 did not show but 91% of the entrants for the 30 did (though, as 33 switched from the 30 to the 20, that may not have been obvious).





However, Covid/Omicron created considerable issues for our ability to run an event (and some significant extra costs). Omicron is highly transmissible and cases, though in decline, were at high levels. The event needed to be 'Covid safe' which required considerable modification of our previous tried and tested approaches. Generally, it was accepted that virus transmission in the outdoors was less of risk and the event became fully outdoor; the registration/start moving to be open to the fresh air and entrants no longer finished with a sociable lounge. Luckily we don't have mass starts. Entrants carried their own mugs, with marshals not handling them, and food was mostly individually wrapped (unfortunately, some favourite items were no longer offered). There were lashings of anti-bacterial gel that were sloshed on at each CP or any other opportunity. Entrants were asked to take a Covid lateral flow test before coming. We recruited extra marshals both for CPs where restricted handling required extra hands and for standby (though, remarkable, none of the marshals withdrew because of Covid). **We would like to offer a 'Thank You' to all entrants who fully cooperated with these burdensome requirements.** We now have the confidence to run more 'Covid safe' events.

Right: wrapped CP food, Below: Early morning registration open to the elements



The Routes

The routes were again designed by John Westcott, the master of finding unused paths. There was a new unused path from Network Rail whose new bridge eliminated the dangerous foot crossing across the railway south of Shere Heath (long used by us). However, using it would take the 20 to a longer distance. The organisers readily agreed to using it for the 30 but, as guardians of the entrants' interests, were resistant to adding 10% to the 20 route. John, however, was having none of it and provided poetic pleading (see box) to justify the extra length (he even claimed this justification might challenge the position of Carol Ann Duffy). We, of course, had to accede to his request (and some of you had to walk further!).

The 30 route (30.8 miles) went out of Leatherhead as it usually did past the Sports Centre to divide into outward and return routes close to Bocketts Farm. Then south west past Polesden Lacy, along Ranmore Edge (crossing Blatchford Down) to drop down to Gomshall and through Shere to Shere Heath (CP1, 11.4 miles), then south to ascend Pitch Hill before turning east to go over Holmbury Hill and to CP2 (19.5 miles) on the Greensand Way before Leith Hill. Then north, through Wotton, and up to Tanners Hatch (CP3, 26.5m, just over 5 miles to the finish). Then past Bagden Farm, Bocketts Farm and to the finish. 4,300ft of ascent with a highest point of 960ft.

The 20 route (now 22.6 miles), took the same route to CP1, then to Abinger Hammer, crossing the railway to ascend Ranmore and on to CP3 at Tanners (18.3 miles). 3,300 ft of ascent with highest point of 717ft.

The 30 route



ODE (or OWED) TO A BRIDGE NOT QUITE TOO FAR?

If you take a wander south of Shere,
A nice little heath may well appear,
With car park handy for the planners,
of a walking event – The Winter Tanners.

Used as a checkpoint many a year,
Dispensing refreshments and good cheer,
Squash by the gallon and maybe a bun,
Biscuits and sweets by the ton.

Most routes to and from the heath,
cross a railway in the cutting beneath,
It has previously been the very devil,
that the crossing is made at trainline level.

But now they have constructed a bridge,
along the line just above the ridge,
No longer will we have the pain,
of watching out for an oncoming train.

As the bridge is there it seems rather cute,
to include it on the very next route,
The one which heralds the welcome resumption,
of the year when the event suffered a cruel
gazumption.

To visit Shere is confined to the thirty,
although it would seem to be doing the dirty,
to exclude those who take part in the twenty,
From joining the fun exuding in plenty.

It is very difficult I rather fear,
for a route to include Leatherhead and Shere,
Confined to the distance of twenty miles,
So how can we resolve it for the files.

With a little increase in the allowable tolerance,
although it may stretch the tolerable moralance,
A mileage increase would not cause a fuss
if the short walk worked out at twenty three plus

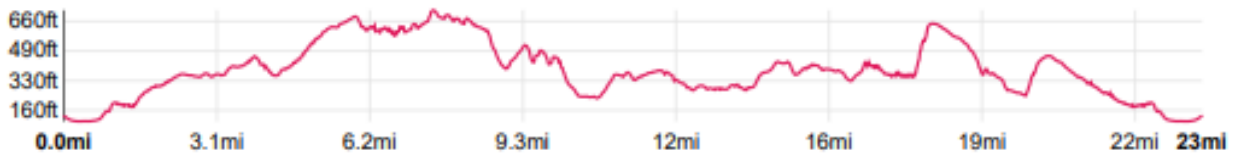
When crossing the line up ever so high,
look down to the west as you pass by,
to observe with sadness the old level crossing,
now condemned to the mode of dossing,

Since the event began, always on hand,
to link a route to the hills of the green sand,
very soon it will be forgotten,
as the gates both sides start to go rotten,

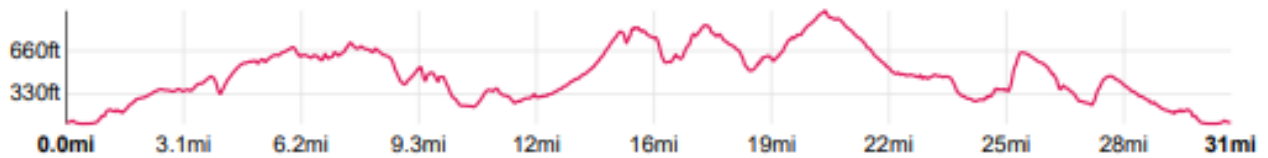
For ambience, it's not really full of grace,
just a means to get to another place,
to do that though it's been a beauty,
So farewell friend, you've done your duty.



Elevation Profile 20 route



Elevation Profile 30 route



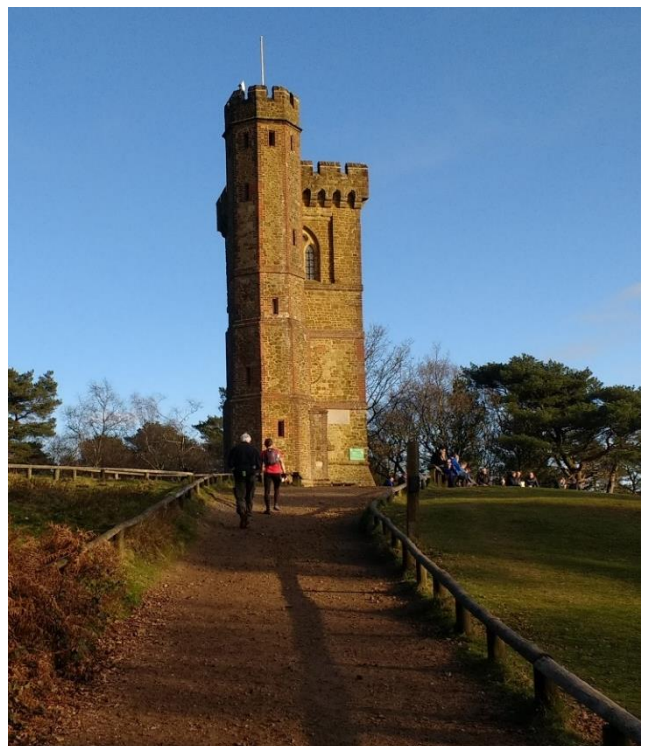
The Results

For the 30, times generally were significantly longer than in the last, 2020, event (that event had near ideal conditions). The fastest entrant did 6.6mph which was significantly slower than 2020, similar to 2019, but 10% faster than the average fastest for 2015-2018. However, the average speed was 10% less than previous years. 33 entrants to the 30 transferred to the 20.

For the 20, the fastest entrant went at 6.2mph, similar to the average fastest in previous years. The average speed, 3.5mph, was similar to the average for previous years, but slightly slower than the last two.

There were high levels of retirements and disqualifications. Some entrants failed to follow the route description (described on the webpage as "*the definitive descriptor of the routes*"). In some cases blind adherence to a GPX route was being used (for some, on a watch with no mapping). On the outward route the split, about 1½ miles out, gave a choice between outward and inward routes on devices that didn't show direction of travel. A few followed the return path rather than the outward route. This was unfortunate and they then tried to go the wrong way round the route and either got disheartened and retired and/or missed CPs (perhaps now closed). 5 entrants explicitly told marshals that had attempted to follow the route in the wrong direction. Part of the challenge is visiting all CPs on the route; the organisers had little choice but to not offer finishers certificates to such entrants where the tracking system showed not all CPs were visited. That system uses the term "disqualification"; we recognise that this is somewhat pejorative, we don't think entrants aimed to shortcut but they did fail to follow the course. There is a learning point here (maps, which are required and could be on a phone, are an aid to navigation). There were 10 disqualified and 8 retired. 5% did not finish, we have only had a handful of disqualifications previously and retirements have tended to be when conditions were extremely poor. It is also a concern that some who went off route were in light clothing and alone which risks hypothermia (and breaches the T&Cs).

Summary results analysis is on the next page. Full results can be seen at https://ldwa.org.uk/results/full_results.php?event_id=266; see individual results & download the results data, (you can rank and compare as you wish).



Leith Hill Tower on the 30

WINTER TANNERS SUMMARY STATISTICS

Route miles	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	40
Year	2022	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2022	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2018
<i>Times: hours/minutes</i>																	
Average	8:03	6:27	07:30	08:55	08:31	07:40	07:43	07:54	6:47	6:00	05:35	06:57	06:22	06:48	05:45	06:27	11:29
Median	8:29	6:22	07:22	08:30	08:28	07:35			6:55	5:58	05:47	07:04	06:32	06:53			11:25
Max	12:16	10:38	10:59	14:16	12:52	10:54	11:43	12:01	10:12	8:50	08:15	10:31	09:04	10:32	09:42	09:35	15:12
Min	4:38	4:03	04:43	05:23	05:21	05:10	05:01	04:15	3:37	3:11	03:17	03:48	03:29	02:56	02:53	03:33	07:39
Mileage	30.8	30.8	30.6	30.4	31.4	30.4	30.4		22.6	20.5	20.8	20.8	20.9	20.9	20.6		40.7
Average mph	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.7	4.0	3.9		3.5	3.6	3.8	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.6		3.1
Fastest mph	6.6	7.6	6.5	5.6	5.9	5.9	6.1		6.2	6.4	6.1	5.5	6.0	7.1	7.1		5.3
Entrants	295	296	317	162	329	309	301	266	170	206	158	138	121	141	147	184	193
Started*	236	236	223	131	225	242	200	166	119	201	149	129	116	118	122	131	103
Retired	10	1	2	1	11	9	8	5	8	1	0	5	2	5	2	2	2
Finished	193	223	221	149	214	203	192	161	144	189	149	133	114	143	120	129	76

All routes

Entrants	465	502	475	494	450	450	448	450
Started	355	412	372	366	341	360	322	297
Finished	337	410	370	358	328	346	312	290
Retired	18	2	2	8	13	14	10	7
Did not show	23.7%	17.9%	21.7%	26%	24%	15%	26%	24%
Finished %	95.0%	99.5%	99.5%	97.8%	96.2%	96.1%	96.9%	97.6%

The split between 20 & 30 mile routes can be distorted by route switching. PACER records all data according to route finished which could differ from route intended on entry/start. For 2022, 33 switched from 30 to 20. For 2022 10 disqualified have been included in 'Retired'

Event information:

2022: Mostly overcast, dry (but wet mud), brief sun. 30 route went to: Shere Heath; Pitch, Holmbury and Leith Hills and returned via Tanners. Route 20 to Shere Heath, back via Tanners. Extra 'Covid Safe' precautions.

2021: Aborted due to Covid Pandemic restrictions.

2020: Excellent conditions, Sunny crisp with initially frozen mud rain freshened earlier in week, cold pm. 30 route: south to Norbury Park, Denbies, along N Downs, Abinger Roughts (CP1), Shere, St Martha's (CP2), Newlands Cnr, NDW, Effingham Forest, Tanners (CP3), and Fetcham Downs. 20 cut across to 30 at Hackhurst Down. Fast times

2019: Excellent conditions, Sunny crisp day with little mud. 30 route went south Bagden Farm, Westcott, Holmbury St Mary, Pitch Hill Winterfold, Shere, Abinger Hammer, Ranmore, Tanners Hatch and back through Bagden Farm. The 20 went left the 30 at Abinger Bottom, to go through Wootton and up to Ranmore.. Fast times

2018: Added 40m route for 40th event (5 CP's organisationally demanding), started dry but light snow later in day, however established new records for mud and was very challenging. Routes went SE, Reigate Hill, Box Hill (v muddy/slippery descent). 40m went further S across fields towards of end of Gatwick runway. Upped entry limit to 500.

2017: Light snow previously, turned to rain over icy patches (weather off putting to many intending entrants), mud worse than 2016, Both PACER recording and MatOrtho HQ used for first time. Short route Fetcham Downs, Gomshall, Ranmore/Tanners. 30 also went on to Shere, Winterfold and Holmbury/Leith Hills.

2016: Poor weather previously, chilly but largely dry, mud freshened up and much standing water. Last use of Leatherhead Leisure Centre. 20m route East Horsley, Netley Heath, Ranmore with the 30m also going through Shere, Albury Heath and Gomshall.

2015: Poor weather previously, cold, initially overcast but dry throughout, mud freshened up by previous rain. Online recording first trialed. South past Dorking, Chadhurst Farm, and back through Ranmore. The 30 added Holmbury + Pitch Hill, Peaslake.

2014: Wet week before, sunny morning with beautiful views, but cloud/drizzle/wind later, skidded and sloshed through still frozen fields. 1st use of Leatherhead Sports Pavillion. 20m went Headley, Westhumble, Ranmore with 30 also taking in Holmwood Common S of Dorking.

2013: Thickening snow from Saturday onwards made accessing some CPs impossible and some paths dangerously icy. With regret event cancelled on Saturday evening.



It is pleasing to see many other clubs supporting the WT. Apart from LDWA groups, entries included: 100 marathon Club (16), Runnymede Runners (12), Blackwater Valley Runners (14), and, with 5 or more, Burnham Joggers, Collingwood AC and Wimbeldon Windmilers

A slight decline in group entries perhaps.

I would like to offer my apologies that we failed to meet some special requests made on the entry system:

"No hills, please, and lots of sunshine with no rain. Or mud"

"Can we not have it muddy this year please?"

"Sunshine, cake, champagne please :)"

Perhaps some entrants need to consider if the event is really for them?

We have been pleased to receive feedback on the event. Tara Williams, a regular WT'er, wrote:

Just to say thank you for a fabulous day yesterday. The weather was good, the mud was very 'tame' (by comparison to some years) and, as always, a well organised, well fed-and-watered great fun day.

I doubt that it was easy with the 'will it/won't it go ahead' due to Covid but I am so glad that you were able to hold the event, even if we had to forsake some of the social side of it. Hopefully, next year, we can have the usual after event indoor gathering.

It was a great route and no doubt you will have seen some of the amazing photos taken from the NDW with the mist in the valley; it was like being in the mountains...as was the final climb up and over the ND to get to Tanners Hatch!

Thank you to everyone and well done for putting it all together for us.

Others said: *"It was fantastic and the Covid precautions did nothing to detract from the day."; "a fantastic event yesterday - it was a really lovely route and you even laid on some lovely weather"; "a great event. Course and weather lovely."; "a wonderful day. While the traditional mud was still present in abundance, the balmy weather made it more like the Spring Tanners! Enough mist to look atmospheric without being enough to impede navigation."*

Our thanks to all others who expressed their appreciation. We welcome feedback (email address below). We had to run things slightly differently this year and we would be pleased to know, from the entrants viewpoint, what went well and what could be improved. We are particularly interested in the changes that Covid forced on us.

Once again, I thank Tony Cartwright for skilfully running the PACER tracking. His (and my) WT afternoon was somewhat disrupted by the LDWA computer server going down for 2 hours. We lost track of entrant progress and the emergency paper recording was not fully reliable. It took us



Tony Cartwright checking PACER cards



Mary Dee

almost 3 days to construct as reliable a set of results as possible. This didn't help our analysis of who had missed CPs or getting the results and this report out in a timely fashion.

I am also very grateful to John Westcott who devises the route. He lives near Woking but checks the routes using public transport! (he writes a good poem too!). His route idea passes to Mary Dee who writes our route description, walks it out to check it herself and then again with the help of a team of route checkers.



John Westcott

Mike Tuke did a great job arranging our equipment and logistics (he also facilitated our use of the MatOrtho building). Juliet and Frank Erbele spent a whole day packing the goody bags for the finish (slicing fruitcake and individually wrapping in cling film is not quick!).

Putting on the event was very much a team effort and that team (see next page) worked together to make it the tremendous event that it is (30 marshals committed to working on the WT). We really appreciate their efforts to make the event. Many thanks. Apart from losing the server, organisationally it went smoothly; no injuries, no lost walkers, it all worked well. I'm pleased to report that no one has said they had Covid immediately after the event (which is quite an achievement given the numbers involved). We are grateful to all at MatOrtho at Leatherhead who made every effort to welcome us to their building. We also received very efficient service from Adrian Moir and Ellie Salisbury at Fabian4 who handled our entries.

With your entries you have donated £270 to the National Trust, many thanks.

I have organised the WT for 10 years but I'm slowing down and stepping down (as I told the committee 3 years ago). I would like to offer my thanks to all who have entered, marshalled and otherwise supported the WT over that decade. You have all been fantastic. I'm delighted to say that Mary Dee is going to take over as WT organiser. Also, my thanks to Surrey Group for a rather nice bottle of Champagne. I really ought to save it for something special (such as doing the WT myself!)



Richard Ireson, Organiser
For Surrey LDWA, 23rd January 2022

The 44th Winter Tanners will be on
Sunday 15th January 2023
We look forward to seeing you there.

surrey.wt@ldwa.org.uk www.ldwa.org.uk/surrey

You can see previous WT routes, results and reports and more pictures of this event. at:
<https://ldwa.org.uk/Surrey> Select 'Archives', 'Challenge Walks', 'Winter Tanners'.

Thanks to the Marshals

Car Park: Mike Tuke, Colin Jones, Ruth Coleman
Registration: Tim Bedwell, Mary Dee
Start, check out: Frank Eberle, Tony Cartwright



Check point 1 *In picture*; Roger Sage, Keith Chesterton, Avril Stapleton, Elizabeth Bryan, Ertan Ali Faik and (*behind the camera*), Janet Chapman (CP Leader) **Split point:** Chris Woodward



Check point 2: Henri de Bossart (driver), Sue Charlesworth, *an entrant*, Alan Shons, Colin Jones (driver), Vincent McDonnell, and, *behind camera*, Alastair Charlesworth (CP Leader).



Tony Cartwright (PACER CP1 and leader), Andy Fogel (driver), Frank Erbele (PACER and 2nd cake wrapper).



Check point 3: Tim Bedwell (PACER), Ted Swift, John Fraser Preston, Mike Tuke (CP Leader, Equipment manager, MatOrtho).



Juliet Erbele, finish and 1st cake wrapper

Finish: Mary Dee, Tony Cartwright and Richard Ireson

Reserve marshals (luckily not required): James Blogg, Sue Boyman, Claire Turton, Elton Ellis, Dave Watmore, Simon Delph