

Organising a challenge event in January, in Britain, does mean that the weather is the hot topic of conversation within the group in the weeks leading up to the 45th Winter Tanners. Over 400 entrants, thousands of trees, and Storm Isha forecast to bring rain and high winds - what could possibly go wrong? Well maybe quite a lot actually. But in fact rather disappointingly all went well. Our equipment officer had done a training session for the marshals with our brand new sturdy gazebos and everyone knew how to secure them down. Answered prayers delayed the storm until everyone was on their way home and Mike went home still wondering how well they would have withstood the forecasted high winds.

All the entrants toiled "relentlessly" up the long hill above Denbies to gain the top of the North Downs and stroll through the woods to Stony Rock. From there the 20 milers found several Lovelace bridges and made a gradual descent down to Great Riding Wood to find our two Red Riding Hoods hiding there. The 30 milers crossed Sheepsteas and then headed north on unfamiliar (and unmapped in some cases) paths, and over an airfield to find a welcome checkpoint beneath a semaphore tower.

After rejoining the two groups travelled eastwards past Barnes Wallis' grave, skirted Effingham and ascended the path past Goldstone Farm (sadly no ice cream in evidence on the day!), and past Polesden Lacey to the final checkpoint which was "at the top of Mount Everest" (aka Prospect Lodge) according to one report I received at the finish! Maybe tiredness and hallucinations had set in at that stage! Then it only remained to walk past Tanners Hatch and on well known paths to the finish.

Everyone arrived back safely well within the time limit. The mud was not up to the highest standard but thankfully no one went home with clean legs. Only our new finish marshal complained that he went home an hour earlier than planned - we'll try to work him harder next year. Many thanks to all those who toiled, seen and unseen, to make this another great event.

The route planning had its challenges this year, largely due to the number of wooded areas it traversed. Chatley Heath had major forestry work undertaken on the route at the end of year, followed by tree felling at Sheepsteas. They say these things come in threes, and sure enough on the marshals' walk, the week before, we discovered that a large swathe of wooded land had been closed only a few days previously for work on ash dieback to commence. So the route was planned, written and rewritten quite a few times, right up to the last few days before the event!

Comments received included 'the route description was spot on as always', 'My first LDWA event. Very inclusive with brilliant route, organisation and people', 'a wonderful day out on the trails with the Surrey LDWA', 'Alison

was so made up at the end as she didn't think it possible', 'just enough mud to add some additional side sliding distance' and 'the RD was well written and took me to some local areas which I had not been to before'.

Thanks are due to

**Car Parking** Fiona McNicol, Mike Tuke, Paul Chamberlain, Vincent McDonnell

**HQ** Cathy Turton, John Goody, Sue Charlesworth

**Registration** John Goody, Mary Dee

**Start** Fiona Cameron, Frank Eberle, Tony Cartwright

**CP1** Ertan Ali Falk, Roger Sage Simon Delph

**CP2** Alan Shons, Fiona Cameron, Nigel Barraclough, Paul Chamberlain, Tim Bedwell

**CP3** John Preston, Mike Tuke, Tony Butterick, Tony Cartwright, Vincent McDonnell

**Numbers check 1** Stewart Hilton, Tony Butterick

**Numbers check 2** Debbie Wilkes, Jackie Barker

**Recovery Vehicle** Stewart Hilton

As well as those marshals listed above I would also like to thank John Westcott for the benefit of his long experience over past years, Mike Tuke for sorting, preparing and restoring all the equipment to its rightful place, and for training those who needed it with the new gazebos, all those who helped with the route checking, Tony Cartwright for sorting PACER and its necessary equipment and training the new PACER marshals, the landowners who kindly granted us permission to site our checkpoints, all those entrants who made all that hard work worthwhile and last, but not least, the Almighty for staying the local effects of Storm Isha until after the event and for providing the mild but sufficiently muddy conditions on the day.

## Statistics

Our entrants came from far and wide in the UK. There were 407 entrants, ie with 81% take up of the 500 places available. 307 entrants started, that is only 75% of the entrants - a high rate of non-starters, some deterred by the warnings of the incoming weather. We had 4 retirements - a group of 4 on the 30 mile route who retired late in the day, in the dark at checkpoint 3. Six people were disqualified as they inadvertently downloaded the details of the previous year's route, but did it anyway, unsupported, and enjoyed their day out.

This event is not a race and entrants took it at their own pace, which varied from 2.62mph on the 20 mile route to 6.99mph on the 30 route. Both routes were flatter than some previous years with the 20 being 20.2 miles long with 2182 feet of ascent, and the 30 being 30.9 miles long with 2987 feet of ascent.



Above an entrant under a Lovelace bridge, and another coming up to the numbers check in Great Ridings Wood. Below two marshals in the same wood and the checkpoint at Prospect Lodge.







Above the welcoming marshals at the finish - and below their first three customers!



Above as darkness falls a couple of marshals get on with the less glamorous side of marshalling!

# Winter Tanners Summary Statistics

Year	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018			
Route	20	30	All	20	30	All	20	30	All	20	30	All	20	30	40	All
Times: hours/ minutes																
Mean	06:27	07:54	—	05:45	07:43	—	06:48	07:40	—	06:22	08:31	—	06:57	08:55	11:29	—
Median	—	—	—	—	—	—	06:53	07:35	—	06:32	08:28	—	07:04	08:30	11:25	—
Max	09:35	12:01	—	09:42	11:43	—	10:32	10:54	—	09:04	12:52	—	10:31	14:16	15:12	—
Min	03:33	04:15	—	02:53	05:01	—	02:56	05:10	—	03:29	5:21	—	03:48	5:23	07:39	—
Mileage	—	—	—	20.6	30.4	—	20.9	30.4	—	20.9	31.4	—	20.8	30.4	40.7	—
Mean mph	—	—	—	3.6	3.9	—	3.1	4.0	—	3.3	3.7	—	3.2	4.2	3.1	—
Fastest mph	—	—	—	7.1	6.1	—	7.1	5.9	—	6.0	5.9	—	5.5	5.6	5.3	—
Entrants	184	266	450	147	301	448	141	309	450	121	329	450	138	162	193	494
Started	131	166	297	122	200	322	118	242	360	116	225	341	129	131	103	366
Retired	2	5	7	2	8	10	5	9	14	2	11	13	5	1	2	8
Finished	129	161	290	120	192	312	143	203	346	114	214	328	133	149	76	358
Did not show	—	—	24%	—	—	26%	—	—	15%	—	—	24%	—	—	—	26%
Finished	—	—	97.6%	—	—	96.9%	—	—	96.1%	—	—	96.2%	—	—	—	97.8%

# Winter Tanners Summary Statistics

Year	2019			2020			2022			2023			2024		
Route	20	30	All	20	30	All	20	30	All	20	30	All	20	30	All
Times: hours/ minutes															
Mean	05:35	07:30	—	06:00	06:27	—	06:47	08:03	—	06:59	08:20	—	05:34	07:27	-
Median	05:47	07:22	—	05:58	06:22	—	06:55	08:29	—	07:04	08:08	—	05:37	07:19	-
Max	08:15	10:59	—	08:50	10:38	—	10:12	12:16	—	09:59	12:31	—	07:43	10:52	-
Min	03:17	04:43	—	03:11	04:03	—	03:37	04:38	—	03:54	05:41	—	03:08	04:25	-
Mileage	20.8	30.6	—	20.5	30.8	—	22.6	30.8	—	21.4	30.8	—	20.2	30.9	-
Mean mph	3.8	4.2	—	3.6	4.2	—	3.5	3.9	—	3.9	3.4	—	3.6	4.2	-
Fastest mph	6.1	6.5	—	6.4	7.6	—	6.2	6.6	—	5.5	5.4	—	6.5	7.0	-
Entrants	158	317	475	206	296	502	170	295	465	175	266	441	191	216	407
Started	149	223	372	201	236	412	119	236	355	184	181	365	139	168	307
Retired	0	2	2	1	1	2	8	10	18	8	3	11	-	4	4
Disqualifi ed	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	3	3	5	1	6
Finished	149	221	370	189	223	410	144	193	337	172	177	349	139	164	303
Did not show	—	—	21.7%	—	—	17.9%	—	—	23.7%	—	—	17.2%	27%	22%	23%
Finished	—	—	99.5%	—	—	99.5%	—	—	95.0%	—	—	96.2%	96%	97%	99%

## Winter Tanners Summary Statistics

### EVENT INFORMATION

#### 2013

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

#### 2014

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

#### 2015

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

#### 2016

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

#### 2017

Light snow previously, turned to rain over icy patches (weather off putting to many entrants), mud worse than 2016. Both PACER recording and MatOrtho HQ used for first time. 20m - Fetcham Downs, Gomshall, Ranmore, Tanners, 30 also went to Shere, Winterfold & Holmbury/Leith Hills

#### 2018

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

#### 2019

Excellent conditions, sunny crisp day with little mud. 30m route went S - Bagden Farm, Westcott, Holmbury St Mary, Pitch Hill, Winterfold, Shere, Abinger Hammer, Ranmore, Tanners Hatch & back through Bagden Farm. 20m left the 30 at Abinger Bottom to go through Wotton & up through Ranmore. Fast times

#### 2020

Excellent conditions - sunny, crisp with initially frozen mud, rain freshened earlier in the week, cold pm. 30 route: S to Norbury Park, Debbie's, along N Downs, Abinger Roughts (CP1), Shere, St Martha's (CP2), Newlands Corner, NDW, Effingham Forest, Tanners (CP3) & Fetcham Downs. 20 cut across to 30 at Hackhurst Down. Fast times

#### 2021

Aborted due to Covid Pandemic conditions

#### 2022

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

#### 2023

Sunny am, cloudy later. Flood route (with large puddles) utilised. Muddy, especially on the 30 after CP1. All went out via Mickleham, Juniper Top & Box Hill to Strood Green (CP1), & met at Steers Field (CP3) to return via Tanners. The 20m continued via Brockham, Box Hill (again) & gently up to Ranmore, the 30m went SW via Holmwood Common, Sheep Green (CP2), steeply up Leith Hill, Duke's Warren, Logmore Green & steeply up to CP3.

## Winter Tanners Summary Statistics

### **2024**

Mild, mostly overcast, moderate mud, forecast high winds & rain of Storm Isha came just after event. Out via Crabtree & Denbies to Stony Rock (CP1). 20m down thru' Lovelace bridges, via Dirtham Lane to Great Ridings Wood. 30 m over to Sheepleas, West Horsley Place, north to Chatley Heath & semaphore tower (CP2), back via Horsley. All skirted Effingham, past Goldstone Farm to Prospect Lodge (CP3) & back via Tanners Hatch.