

Thank you all for turning up on what was a sport infested Sunday, and for the kind comments you made regarding the course variety, views, challenge and the written RD; hopefully the first three of these all lived up to 'pre-match' billing that I had provided.

Regarding the RD, Yes, there were a few points open to misinterpretation, must do better next time! One entrant admitted that they didn't quite know how to 'shimmy' through the clump of trees, whilst another, feeling tired no doubt, wasn't sure what a 'yellow hydrant' was

Difficult, this RD writing business; I can only describe the route as I see it (tempered and enhanced by what the route checkers saw). We will never be able to get it 100% perfect for everyone (and that, surely, would take some of the fun out of these events?).

A few have sent in photographs and some may well appear on the Kent Group website shortly. The 'results' are also shown there, the relevant link being <https://www.ldwa.org.uk/lqt/downloads/Kent/hw/19hw-results.pdf>. If anybody has an incorrect time showing, then please feel free to contact me.

Entrants came from wide and high, Liss, Halifax, Gloucester, Daventry to name but a few places, whilst others were from surrounding towns and villages. Friends old and friends new. I trust that you all had a good day out and returned home safely.

The day was cloudy, hot and humid, so quite testing conditions, especially given the terrain – but thankfully not too hot or humid; no doubt the early morning drizzle helped as, perhaps for some, did the ice cream van at Gills Lap car park.

We had 109 starters, including 7 entering on the day, with just the 2 retirements, so 107 finishers, a pleasing number overall.

Although I mentioned **Pooh (sticks) Bridge** in the lead up to the day, this was because the (natural) route that I devised went that way – rather than the route being artificially forced via the bridge. And I didn't really expect anything but passing interest (apart maybe from Finney, see below). However, I have heard that (no names, to save any possible embarrassment):-

- One lady has admitted that she 'won' at Pooh Sticks
- There are one or two incriminating photographs
- An otherwise sensible couple admitted afterwards that they 'play' pooh sticks wherever they go, but they had never been to its origins!

One entrant was heard to remark that the standard of cutting back of brambles and nettles hadn't been quite up to the lofty standard of previous years – well, perhaps the weeds were more pernicious or growing quicker this year!

As organiser, one is always rightly cautious about any younger participants, and on this event we had Finney, who is age 11 – well, this shows just how much I know, as Finney and her mother ran / jogged the 15 mile route, and were first back, at a pace that only maybe 7 of you matched on the longer route! Her mother proudly admitted that Finney had also mastered a new talent, namely eating an ice cream whilst jogging. What a talent!

I have always understood that there are three unwritten laws for LDWA Challenge Walks – a) if there's a **hill**, go up it, b) if there's a **road**, keep off it and c) on a '**there and back**' route, one must endeavour to find a **different** route back (this, I believe, sets LDWA members apart from the general populace, who are usually only comfortable retracing their steps, as a recent report confirmed); now, perhaps belatedly, I have come to realise that there is a fourth law - this one is really immutable (ie a law that cannot be changed under any circumstances), namely that if – once entrants are spread out, so after perhaps 2 miles – there is a **golf course** to cross, then some 25%+ of all entrants **will** go astray (no matter how detailed the RD).

For the 26 milers, only, the bonus point for "the answer to 'why' the lone gate was there" was awarded to Jane G, with 'because', which is probably as good an answer as any (although, in truth, this may have been the only answer submitted!)

Some 'old timers' will no doubt recall bits of the Weald Way and Nutley Village Hall (which was opposite School Lane) from the 100K Wealden Waters Walk days of olde.

One entrant mentioned that the elevation (on the longer route) was 3,167 feet (if I heard correctly), whilst another's gizmo indicated a distance of some 27.6 miles (slightly further than the map suggested), but I understand that such matters are all approximate. One lady even suggested that completing this event was harder for her than the recent Hadrian's Hvdred

For those who didn't hear, there are, according to the Conservators of Ashdown Forest, forty nine (49) named car parks on the Forest and, whilst there was no fee to pay for us to use two of these as checkpoints (although we did obtain permits), we will be making an appropriate donation which, I am sure you will all agree, is well worthwhile.

Last, but certainly not least, my thanks to the wonderful marshals without whom the event could not have taken place; they, as well as you, and me, forsook an afternoon etc in front of the television watching sport (though I think I spotted some checkpoint crew surreptitiously listening to a radio or looking at an iPad – their cards have been marked!). In no particular order, and listing main responsibilities only, the marshals were

- Checkpoint 1 Andy Clark, Dave Thornton and Brian Buttifant
- Checkpoint 2 & 4 Jim Briggs, Jan O'Rourke, Neal O'Rourke plus Andy Clark
- Checkpoint 3 Dale Moorhouse, Andrew Melling, Nick Dockree plus Dave Thornton and Brian Buttifant
- Computer Don Arthurs
- Salad/Meal at end Joy Davies, Brenda Trew and Audrey West
- Floating Peter Jull – held back at base, in reserve; would have been sent out to rescue anybody who had got lost, or was in trouble; he was sorely disappointed

In addition or, perhaps more pertinently, in advance – Jim Briggs and, on a separate occasion, Jan and Neal O'Rourke walked the longer route (and thus, by implication the 15 mile route as well) and provided some very useful critique, though I take full responsibility for any remaining gremlins. Take a bow, Jim, Jan and Neal.

Finally, an apology from me – contrary to what was implied, there were no individual badges available (we ran out last year, or perhaps the year before) and, when I remembered/realised the situation, it was too late to do anything about this; I hope that this may be resolved by this time next year and that it didn't ruin too many people's day. A couple of people requested their Triple badge, where we do still have a stock of badges and certificates.

Next year's High Weald Event is due to be based in Wadhurst (which, like Forest Row, is also 'just over the border', in East Sussex), and almost certainly on (Sunday) 12th July, but please do check in with the Kent Group website nearer the time. Before then Kent Group hosts the **White Cliffs Challenge** in just under 4 weeks' time (**Saturday 24th August**), details on the Kent Group website and SIEntries. Hope to see some of you there.

Stop Press – **Lost property** – a 'fitbit' of some description was handed in (*though this may have belonged to someone who wasn't on the event*); if you think it's yours, please contact me.

Neil Higham

Andredsweald organiser, 30th July 2019