

LDWA Kent

White Cliffs Challenge 2017

Report by Graham Smith



A total of 115 walkers stepped out on this year's White Cliffs Challenge, held on 26 August as part of the 2017 White Cliffs Walking Festival.

As usual, there were two routes – 32 miles and 18 miles – and the event was based at St Margaret's at Cliffe, north of Dover. There were 80 walkers on the longer route and 35 on the shorter one. The eight retirements were all on the longer route, and this was attributed to the exceptionally hot weather.

The route on the 32-mile walk was generally considered tough, with several climbs – including one extremely steep one coming out of the Warren at Folkestone. For this reason, walkers on the longer route were given 12 hours to complete it, compared with 11 last year. Walkers on the shorter route had eight hours.

Both routes went to the White Cliffs from St Margaret's and headed over to Dover on a high path which will also feature on next year's Cinque Ports 100, before heading down to the town's seafront. Walkers on the longer route were able to see Dover's famous Banksy mural.

The longer route then climbed up to the Western Heights before following the White Cliffs all the way to Folkestone, dropping down to the Warren and the steep climb out of it mentioned above. Then there was some retracing of steps before a cycle path was followed to Aycliffe, on the outskirts of Dover, and a climb to walk through another part of the Western Heights.

Both routes then followed the North Downs Way out of Dover to Maydensole Farm, then headed to Sutton, Sutton Hill, Ripple and Ringwould before going into Kingsdown Wood and Oldstairs Bay to pick up the White Cliffs again for the walk back to St Margaret's.

We are, as always, very grateful to the marshals – Phyl Butler, Brian Buttifant, Joy Davies, Nick Dockree, Wayne Elliott, Michael Headley, Neil Higham, Stephanie le Men, Dianne Marsden, Peter Jull, Jan and Neal O'Rourke, Mike Pursey, Eve Richards, Steve Russell, David Sheldrake, Graham Smith, Michael Sullivan, David Thornton, Brenda Trew, Sarah Turner and Audrey West.

*One walker left a map case at the HQ containing a compass, an OS Explorer map no 138, a route description and a pair of glasses. If it is yours, email Graham Smith on grahamsmith53@btinternet.com