

Capital Challenge 2019 Report

The Capital Challenge has increased in popularity over its three years. This year's event was fully booked by 1 January (we opened for registrations on 1 November 2018) and when registrations closed on 1 April we had 69 people on a waiting list. We overenrolled 30 people, which is what we thought we could safely handle.

On the morning of the walk, because of a couple of late cancellations we expected 228 people; 12 did not start, leaving a grand total of 216 starters. A further 12 people retired during the walk, leaving 204 people who completed the walk.

Finish times ranged from 5 hours and 26 minutes to 10 hours and 51 minutes.

Some stats on the 216 starters:

All starters registered as UK residents.

Fifty-one starters (24%) did not register as LDWA members. Of the 165 starters who registered under an LDWA group, these were the numbers per group:

Anytime Anywhere	2	Marches	1
Beds, Bucks & Northants	9	Norfolk & Suffolk	5
Bristol & West	5	South Wales	5
Cornwall & Devon	4	Surrey	12
Dorset	12	Sussex	12
East Lancashire	2	Thames Valley	9
Essex & Herts	28	The Irregulars	1
Heart of England	9	Wessex	5
Kent	7	Wiltshire	5
London	31	Yorkshire Coast	1

Ages ranged from 17 to 83 years, clustered thus:

Under 20 years	3	1.4%
20-29 years	2	0.9%
30-39 years	13	6.0%
40-49 years	40	18.5%
50-59 years	83	38.4%
60-69 years	55	25.5%
70-79 years	19	8.8%
80 years and over	1	0.5%

(And although it's not a race, I can't resist mentioning that the oldest participant finished faster than three of the five youngest.)

Feedback

Marshals throughout the walk reported good feedback and said walkers seemed generally cheery despite a few blisters and some sore knees. Post-event feedback via email and Facebook has been universally supportive:

Facebook (edited to remove personal details):

- Big thanks to the London group for another excellent 3rd Capital Challenge. So much to see on this great event. Thank you to all the volunteers for giving up your day for us to enjoy. LDWA is such a fantastic organisation.
- Thank you to the organisers, volunteers and everyone involved in yesterday's Capital Challenge. Thoroughly enjoyed it & it was great to see the less touristy parts of London
- Thanks to everyone involved for a fantastic day's walking.
- Another great day out. 16 of us started and 16 finished! A fantastic effort considering we had 7 people taking on a walk of this distance for the first time. Some nice sites and passing through some parts of London a majority of people would never see. [...] Do it all again next year.
- My husband and I did our first walk with the LDWA yesterday; the Capital Challenge. It was a lovely day and we saw parts of London we've never seen before! The route was great and the organisation perfect. Thank you so much to everyone involved - looking forward to next year!!
- A great day out.

Email (edited to remove personal details):

- Thank you for the 2019 Capital Challenge. What an amazing route; I didn't know London was that brilliant. At one point, heading towards Paddington Station, a route I know, we did a slight loop and I found out why - the mews were a treat. You obviously spent a lot of time searching out all the best places and sights in London. The highlight was definitely the pergola.
- Just a short note to say thank you for arranging the above event yesterday. I know how much work goes into making these events successful and yesterday was certainly well organised from start to finish. Many thanks again to you and your team.
- Just wanted to say huge thanks for yesterday's walk...it was really brilliant again! The route is amazing & the areas of London you get to walk through & experience a bit of are quite amazing at times, from the big formal parks to the little news to north London leafy suburbia to the miles of canals & the expanse of the marshland...it's so good! I look forward to this being pretty much an annual pilgrimage for me.
- We had a fabulous day and were so impressed with the organisation both before and during the event. We retired at 15 miles. This was partly due to an hour we spent rather lost on Hampstead Heath! Directions were a little confusing at this point... Thank you so much to the London LDWA for all their wonderful effort which resulted in such an interesting and beautiful route. I hope to return next year... and nail that Heath!!
- Thank you so much to you and the volunteers who put on yesterday's event. I had a wonderful day out despite some blisters making the last few miles a bit of a struggle.

There were so many highlights of the event I can't mention them all. Hope to do it again in the future.

- Thank you to all involved in organising the Capital Challenge – we really enjoyed it! Initially I was worried about navigation because I usually find navigating in towns / cities is much more complicated than in the country, and the route description seemed quite slim. However, my fears were completely unfounded as the directions were succinct yet unmistakably easy to follow. I was also thankful to know where all the toilets were in advance! We really enjoyed exploring both old favourites and new areas of London, and places we'd heard about, but never found. Favourites included Little Venice and the graveyard, the lovely parks and woods, and fantastic views. So thanks to all the team and well done, the welcome at each checkpoint could not be faulted.
- Just a quick note to thank you and all the wonderful volunteers for yesterday's Capital Challenge. It really was a well organised event and I enjoyed every minute of it. This is the third time I've walked the Capital Challenge, and it still amazes me that I notice different things every year. Thank you once again, and I'm really looking forward to next year's Challenge.
- Thank you so much for a brilliant walk. You've asked for feedback, the only thing I would feedback is that you make it clear that if someone has special dietary requirements they should not be expected to be catered for. I saw a lady at a checkpoint asking one of the volunteers whether they had anything vegan.
- Merely a sincere vote of thanks to you and all the members of the LDWA London Group for the excellent challenge walk on 6th April. It was most enjoyable, mainly because the organisation was so good. Hope to repeat the experience again next year.

And thank you!

Thanks to our superb group of experienced, cheery, and unflappable marshals, undaunted by dodgy WiFi signals, reluctant scanners, and standing about for hours looking out for participants and resisting the temptation to eat the snacks.

Thanks especially to Gordon Parker, for running the start and finish points so efficiently. And also to LDWA Chair David Morgan who had to drop out of the walk at the last minute but came to the finish point to work as an impromptu (and much appreciated) marshal.

Enormous thanks to Hazel Stokes for buying and delivering food and water and supplying tables and chairs for the checkpoint at Jack Straw's Castle. And to Finsbury Park Café and the View Tube Café for providing cakes.

Finally, thank you to our start, finish, and checkpoint hosts: St John's Church, Paddington Station, the City of London Hampstead Heath Team, the Finsbury Park Café, Lee Valley WaterWorks Nature Reserve, and the View Tube Café. Without your support, this walk would not happen. We're especially grateful to the View Tube Café, which interrupted its renovations and reopened for one day just to host this walk.

Jean O'Reilly

Organiser, Capital Challenge 2019