

Report on the 15th Founders Challenge 23rd October 2011

189 people started this year's Founders Challenge from Peaslake. For a third year two routes were offered. The weather was once again extremely kind; the woods and downs looked beautiful. It was good to welcome old faces and first-timers. Everyone went home safely, having had a rewarding day and being overwhelmingly positive and complimentary about the event.

This event was first held in 1997, when it was called the *Founders Jubilee Challenge*. Tony Youngs devised the 26-mile route linking various places connected to the origins of the LDWA 25 years earlier. The walk was a commemoration of the founding of the LDWA and the role of Alan Blatchford and Chris Steer in this. The route passes several places associated with them: the Old Post Office in Peaslake, the memorial toposcope on Pitch Hill, Blatchford Down and Steer's Field. Tony was an excellent artist and his line drawings decorate the Founders' Challenge certificate.

Our sincere thanks go to the Friends of the Hurtwood, the Albury and the Wotton Estates, Dunley Hill Farm and Surrey Wildlife Trust for use of their car parks and paths; to Tanners Hatch YHA for hosting a checkpoint; and to the Hurtwood Inn for providing the essential emergency phone number. Small donations, as a token of our appreciation, have been made to the Surrey Wildlife Trust, the Friends of the Hurtwood, Abinger PCC (at the request of the Wotton Estate) and Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel.

The 192 pre-entries had suggested that we might have 200 starters. Despite a significant number of on the day entries the disappointingly large number of No Shows (see below) meant that we fell just short of the total number of starters in the previous two years. Numbers are however substantially higher than before the 16 mile route was introduced.

The event remains popular with runners who made up 24% of the participants.

An innovation this year was placing a marshal on Blatchford Down, where the two routes divide. Stephen Todhunter advised slow 26 milers to consider the shorter route and provided them with the route description.

An event of this type cannot take place without a considerable amount of time and effort put in by the marshals. We would like to thank all the marshals who did a great job as ever, many multi-tasking. We again had a good blend of experienced, confident helpers and new, enthusiastic people. Everybody did their job with great competence (and with admirable serenity, when needed!).

	Pre-Entries	OTD Entries	Entries	No Shows	Starters	Finishers
26 mile Walkers	95	18	113	17	91*	86
26 mile Runners	49	4	53	8	45	44
Total 26 mile	144	22	166	25	136*	130
16 mile	48	7	55	7	53	56
Grand Total	192	30	221	32	189	186

**5 people entered for 26m changed to 16m before the start; 4 more changed during the event.*

Brief event statistics since 2004

	Entries	Starters	Finishers
2010 26m	172	145	138
2010 16m	41	36	35
2009 26m	172	147	145
2009 16m	55	53	51
2008	127	117	113
2007	127	114	102
2006	163	149	139
2005	132	114	114
2004	124	116	110

Particular thanks this year go to Dave and Lynn Yorston from the Beds, Bucks & Northants LDWA Group who despite the early starts help us regularly.

Catering was coordinated for the first time by Chris Ketteringham and Susan Cannell. Their careful planning resulted in the provision of excellent refreshments at the checkpoints and a delicious, nutritious meal at the finish of soup, shepherdess pie, apple crumble and custard. The whole operation went smoothly and was very good value for money. Marita Sanders (the crumble – with the assistance of her neighbour!) and Judith Griffiths (bread pudding) baked food in advance. On the day the kitchen crew produced hot drinks, sandwiches and the meal with maximum efficiency and minimum fuss, washing up continuously!

Nigel Marshall handled pre event entries. Lonica Vanclay, Aase Christensen, Colin Saunders and Deep Kanungo handled registrations on the day; Sarah Wilson replaced Colin on the team to help handle check-in and the issuing of certificates. Colin then walked the long course, acting as sweeper to make sure no one was left in the woods. All went smoothly!

The Marshals Walk, led in good conditions by Gordon Parker (who is still

apologizing for a “minor navigational error” at Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel that meant the group spent some time with the bats and owls), did a final check on the route descriptions produced by Don Bolton; Don Newman, a Peaslake resident, looked after liaison in the village and local storage of gear. Nigel Barraclough and Douglas Robinson transported people from Clandon station. Gordon Parker was the overall coordinator and organised the marshals.

Car parking and village marshalling: Don Newman, Dave and Lynn Yorston, Mike Ratcliff, Hazel Stokes and Nigel Barraclough.

Catering: Chris Ketteringham, Susan Cannell, Ted McCabe, Teri Griffith, Peter Smith, David Rossington, Marc Domingue, Rebecca Kemp, Claire, Colin Hillsden, Ali Pretty and Douglas Robinson.

Checkpoint Pack Preparation: Stephen Todhunter and Paul Lawrence.

Registration and Finish: Lonica Vanclay, Deep Kanungo, Aase Christensen, Colin Saunders and Sarah Wilson.

Checkpoint 1: Peter Charlton, Dave and Lynn Yorston, Ali Pretty, Steve and Landy Garnsey.

Blatchford Down (where the routes divide): Stephen Todhunter.

Checkpoint 2: Paul Lawrence, Peter Russell, Colin Hillsden, Dorothy Shepherd, Dave Williams and Laurence Foe.

Checkpoint 3: Mike Ratcliff, Nigel Barraclough, Tara Williams, Fabrice Leistner, Marie Doke, and Peter Charlton.

Checkpoint 4: Don Newman, Hazel Stokes, Graham Perry and Charles O’Toole.

Hall set up: Don Newman, Don Bolton, Sylvia Nagarkar, Paul Lawrence, Colin Saunders, Lonica Vanclay and Gordon Parker.

Hall clearing up: Don Newman, Susan Cannell, Chris Ketteringham, Hazel Stokes, Douglas Robinson, Dave Williams, Lonica Vanclay and Gordon Parker.

Thanks to all of you for supporting the event!