

The Penultimate Surrey Summits?

A Report on the Millennium Event, April 8/9 2000

Prior to this year's event, only Martyn Greaves and Bill Grace held a full set of 23 completions for this tough challenge, so we were delighted when Martyn agreed to write a report of his experiences on the Millennium Summits. Does the event become easier with many years of experience? Martyn's report suggests not - in fact he describes his annual apprehension and self doubt in his ability to complete the challenge, and takes comfort in the knowledge that most walkers feel the same!

Before 'handing over' to Martyn, perhaps the title should be explained – next year will be the 25th Anniversary of the Summits as a challenge event, following its inception as a social walk! The number of entries has fallen in recent years and it is likely that under the present 'management' there will be only one more event in its present form. Therefore we are extending an early invitation to participate next year – it may well be your last chance. You never know that a bumper entry might encourage a change of mind, although it would have to involve a new organising committee – several of the current one have given close on 25 years of service to the event.

Martyn's thoughts now follow:

“To complete any endurance event is an achievement in itself, but some ‘ultras’, whether it be due to the distance, weather, or one’s personal fitness always have a special significance. To me, the Surrey Summits will always be one of those events which has kept my appetite and desire alive to come back each year. This year, I was relieved that the weather forecast was good; the thought of 100km in the cold and rain would prove a test of character, and one that I would not relish.

After an hour helping on the car parking, a cup of coffee, and the usual trip to the loo, nine thirty had arrived and we were away. The opportunity to talk to friends only seen occasionally was welcomed, and the first checkpoint soon arrived. It was here that I met up with Chris, Bobbie and their dog Parsley, and as the event was to unfold, we would finish together. I was amazed by Parsley - his energy, obedience and ability never to get under your feet impressed me – a truly amazing dog.

There were stunning views along the ridge of Colley Hill, and with the good conditions underfoot, Headley Common was soon reached. I was pleased that I had decided to wear shorts, but as so often was the case, my rucksack was laden with too many spare clothes. The undulating route to Box Hill checkpoint was familiar to me and we passed many people enjoying a leisurely walk in the sunshine. I knew that it was important to take on as much fluid as possible and to consume food little and often. This was hard in view of the fact that there was such a varied selection of food on offer – it would have been easy to over-indulge!

Leaving the inspiring views of Box hill behind, I felt high spirited and in good shape, and cautiously increased my pace – perhaps heartened that it was only 10km to the next checkpoint and a third of the route nearly achieved. Thank you London Group for a great aid station in the barn.

I feel that the next section to Leith Hill and over to Holmbury is probably the hardest of the route and a test of one’s character. I kept motivated by the scenery and even

trying to sing and watching Parsley carry a log for some four miles. It was an uplifting feeling to get to the checkpoint at the School with the sun beginning to set, and to be refreshed by tea and goodies. The time had gone so quickly.

Onwards to Pitch Hill and down to Jelley's Hollow. Chris, Bobbie and Parsley caught me up again, together with two other walkers whose names forsake me. The pace seemed to quicken and excellent progress was made to Hascombe Hill, before putting torches on. The descent off the hill to the checkpoint was rewarded with warm food and tea and the opportunity to put on some extra layers.

Will power motivated me not to stop too long. With my legs stiffening and 24 miles to go, I knew that it was in my interest. The thought of this year's hundred seemed very daunting. I joined Mike, a running friend of mine and made steady progress to Blackheath Common to be joined (you've guessed it!) by Chris, Bobbie and Parsley. Good navigation and teamwork ensured a safe arrival at Albury Cricket pavilion.

It was to be a brief stay for me, after enjoying some sustenance, as I knew that it was going to be a slow limp before loosening up into at least third gear. My companions were far better walkers than myself, and I knew they would soon catch me up and encourage me along. The traverse of the North Downs and onto Ranmore came quickly, now inspired with less than 10 miles to go. The pre-ultimate checkpoint is in the open, with tented shelter, but with hot drinks and some food boosted our morale. Appreciation was given to John, Olive, Les, Roy and Dave for their 'help and being there', which was surely going to be a long cold night for them.

The 250 yards downhill from the checkpoint seemed like a mile at my snail's pace, but to my relief the legs began to stretch again. The climb up to Mickleham Down went better than I thought it would be, and on to Stane Street where the noise of the M25 could be heard. It seemed ages before we crossed the bridge. Parsley was still keeping the pace going and looked in the best shape of all of us! The finish was reached with relief and reward, and the self satisfaction showed on all our faces. A hearty breakfast and shower were welcome.

Thank you Surrey Group and all helpers for all the effort and hard work in ensuring a successful Surrey Summits. Congratulations to all who finished, especially to those who had to endure the unexpected heavy rain on Sunday morning. I'm sure that the 25th event will be something special and not to be missed."

Summits (streamlined) Committee

Louise Cartwright Chairperson & Event Controller
Tony Cartwright Route Description, Results, Emergency Phone
Dave Challenger Route Description, Entries, Event Controller
Janet Chapman Publicity, Tee-shirts, CPs
Reg Chapman Equipment, Emergency Driver
John Lay Marshals, CPs, Emergency Driver

Once again our grateful thanks to all those who gave their time to marshal this year's Surrey Summits. Without all of you the event could not happen. A special thanks to John Lay who did a magnificent (and unenviable) job in assembling the small army of marshals. Thanks also to the two pairs of timekeepers (a new arrangement for this year) Jon Moore & Dave Green, Pat Challenger & Mike Mardle. Like yourselves, they worked almost constantly throughout the event!!!

I am sure I speak for all the walkers when the Summit's Committee says a very big and sincere THANK YOU to all those who helped in both big and small ways. If I have failed to include you in the following list I do apologise most sincerely – even so I hope we can call upon your services next year!!

Tony Cartwright

- START:** Tony Cartwright, Louise Cartwright, Dave Challenger, Pat Challenger, Reg Chapman, Martyn Greaves, Mike Mardle, Peter Waterhouse, Molly Groundsell, John Lay
- CP1:** Louise Cartwright, Sue Boyman, Peter Clark, Chris Butterfield, Dave Challenger, Tony Cartwright, Dave Challenger, Louise Cartwright
- CP2:** Janet Chapman, Robin Cobb, Ken Styan, John Lawson, Rob Hanson
- CP3:** Paul Lawrence, Vala West, Chris Dent, Lawrence Foe, Jim Palmer, Chris Philpot, Martin Tringham
- CP4:** John Lay, Sylvia Nagarkar, Les Maple, Molly Groundsell
- CP5:** Richard Ireson, Kate Chapman, Ashley Saunders, Caroline Saunders, Mervyn Harvey, Peter Bull, Margaret Robinson, Janet Chapman

CP6: Brian Haigh, Ann Sayer, Jim Dunster, Derek Bowdell, Audrey Stein

CP7: John Westcott, Olive Barnsley, Roy Barnsley, Les Rose

FINISH: Varla West, Ketherine Hallgarten, Derek Bowdell, Audrey Stein, Ken Fancett, Janet Chapman, Alison Newman, Dawn Bishop, Joan Wren, Phil Green

Event Controllers: Dave Challenger, Louise Cartwright

Time keepers: Jon Moore, Dave Green, Pat Challenger, Mike Mardle

Emergency drivers: Ray Jolly, John Lay, Keith Chesterton, Reg Chapman

Emergency phone: Peter Waterhouse, Tony Cartwright

Lost Property

Two fleeces and a sweatshirt were left at the finish. To claim, contact Dave Challenger on 01372 277138

Note:- If not claimed by the end of June the articles will be disposed of.