

Surrey Summits 2002 Walk Report

0930 and after a few words from Tony Cartwright we are on the 25th and last Surrey Summits. The weather forecast and ground conditions are goo, no real mud will be seen!

A steady early pace, lots of talk about what is to come and we are soon skirting Epsom race course, up to Walton on the Hill and on to CP1. Some of you may have seen a navy blue flash by now, fear not, it was only Ken Falconer. I think he was back at Downsends before some had finished their stew.

Onto Colley Hill with the grand views, carefully down to join the Pilgrims Way, very good going to Headley Heath, ups and downs to Box Hill CP2 including Juniper Top, more grand views - if you have had time to stop and savour. Slowly down to the stepping stones, some still prefer the bridge, up to Ranmore and looking across Denbies you could almost imagine sitting down with a glass of their wine. But no, we must press on and across the fields to CP3, a draughty barn with excellent quiche salad. Next its into Redlands, a disaster area when wet, later passing the Plough Inn and down on clear paths, more views, to control point X. Discussion about left or right but I think we were meant to answer East, or was it West? Into the woods with the bluebell haze and now commences the long slog to the top of Leith Hill, Its over a mile and I bet the seat at the top was used by many walkers. We now have the familiar route to Pitch Hill which includes the short, sharp shock onto Holmbury. A comfortable stop at Peake Hall, around the hillside we go, down the infamous Jelleys Hollow and across to Smithwood Common and Rowley Drive. From here until Hacombe seemed to cause walkers most problems, I've never seen so many torch beams going in so many different directions – given we were all on the same walk! I think all eventually made it to CP5 in the new village hall at Hascombe. Over half way and its stew-time.

This is when all must resist the temptation to relax and let the eyelids drop as concentration is necessary on the 8 miles to the temporary CP6, a see-through tent! At Albury. The route description now says “ pass seat to RD. Cross Rd 1/2R”. I managed to fall into the road and end up in a heap in the middle, none the worse I'm glad to say. What's next? Its Shere and Abinger and strange noises are heard. Have the organisers laid on a gig? Approaching Park Farm it was fair booming out, a possible answer was the ravers were dancing round Dunley Wood reservoir. Luckily it faded and all peaceful on the steady climb to Ranmore and on to Crabtree and the Final CP. The jelly went down a treat and the now expected blaze from John Robinson's fire a real treat. For those of us with a little time in hand, which was most everybody I think, it was just a case of putting your legs in gear, low for me, and on to the finish.

Reminiscing for a bit...

The first running of the Summits, May 1976, was started in style in Guildford, walking two miles to the start(!) to Tunsgate in Guildford High street, answering questions from curious shoppers like “how far are you going? How long will it take? Where do you sleep?” The look of sheer amazement when you explain. They thought we were mad, we were and maybe still are!! Onto Pewley Down for a group photo. I thought it was CP1, but no, we were grouped, fast, medium and slow. I would walking at 6KpH said Keith Chesterton and off we went as fast group.

Included in the photograph were Martyn Greaves, Keith Hewitt and myself – we have coming back on a regular, Martyn more regular than ourselves (he has all 25 Summits under his belt). The problem now is what to do next April.

Over many routes, rarely the same, I think of Chris and Alan, forever to be remembered by Steers Field, Blatchford Down and the Pitch Hill toposcope.

I have a good memory as far as route finding is concerned and this year walked the route again without looking at the route description. The trouble on occasions has been that I find myself wandering off onto previous year's routes!! I remember earlier route descriptions "bash on into the undergrowth" we were not trespassing, arrive at a CP which was a 40 seater coach parked in a lay-by. Pass a swimming pool near Boundless Copse, try and find it now... Footpaths were far more difficult to follow then, narrower, more overgrown, it was tough in those days!

Buts that's enough of that.

Finally though I must thank the organisers, marshals and CP staff for all their hard work which, over the years, has made the Summits the great event it is/was. Fear not Summitteers something will be back in 2004.

Bill Grace 1023

A personal preface to the 2002 and final results

It is with a tinge of sadness that these, the last of the Surrey Summits results are put together and sent to you. In Strider 25 (December 1979) Alan Blatchford, our founder member, wrote "*Long Distance Walking in all its various forms may not be achieving the mushroom growth that is currently being experienced by jogging...*" That might have been the case but many of the walking events have outlived their running counterparts and the Surrey Summits is one of them! Devised by Alan as a 'social' event in 1975, a handful of hardy individuals set out on a self-supported walk around the 'major hills' of western Surrey. The following year it ran as a challenge event and has done annually since then - excepting for two years, one due to a 'heavy' Surrey calendar and the other, foot and mouth.

Alan's enthusiasm was so very infectious and some of us became involved in its organisation in the very early years. I often wonder what Alan would have predicted for the future of the event. Would he have expected it to last for all these years, traversing many of the same hills – and by several of the same people!!

Over the years the event has grown, both in participants and organisation. It awarded two trophies, one, the Gibbitt Hill rose bowl trophy for the fastest group of Surrey members. 1978, C Steer, J Westcott, A Youngs; 1980, R Paul, A Youngs, Steer, 1982, B & S Alden, J Robinson. We dropped the trophies many years ago to try to discourage racing!

At its peak we were typically attracting 250 entrants but over recent years, like so many events, numbers have dropped. We have strived to maintain the high level of support to which Summiteers have grown accustomed. This has demanded a large number of marshals – in the order of 1 marshal to 3 walkers over the 26hrs of the event. Many of our marshals come back to help us year after year and whilst we can, and do, get some new marshals, try as the Surrey Group might, we can find no-one to take over 'making the event happen' i.e. its organisation. Several of us would simply like to take a rest. The 25th anniversary seemed like a good number to do it on.

Tony Cartwright

Our thanks...

Once again we are immensely grateful to those who gave their time, effort and expertise to make this event happen. We speak of course of our marshals without whom the Surrey Summits, and indeed all challenge events in the LDWAs calendar, simply would not happen. We are sure we speak for all the walkers when the Summit's organisers say a collective and sincere THANK YOU to all those who helped us both on this event and those over the previous 24 years. They must number literally hundreds. If we have failed to include your name in the following list for this year's event then we do most sincerely apologise - it is not that we did not appreciate your support but simply so many people help in so many ways that some simply slip through the net!!

- START:** Louise Cartwright, Dave Challenger, Pat Challenger, Reg Chapman, Martyn Greaves, Mike Mardle, John Lay, Glenys Kirkpatric, Mike Mardle, Peter Waterhouse, Tony Cartwright,
- CP1:** Peter Clarke, Chris Butterfield, Tom Sinclair, Janet Chapman, Martyn Greaves
- CP2:** Janet Chapman, Deek Bowdell, Audrey Stein, Rob Hansen, John Lawrton
- CP3:** Paul Lawrence, Peter Saw, James palmer, Bill Thompson, Ketherine Hallgarten
- CP4:** John Lay, Les Maple, Elaine Edwards, Peter Edwards, Gillian Bull
- CP5:** Richard Ireson, Kate Chapman, Glenys Kirkpatric, Hilary Brown, Margaret Robinson, Edith Sykes, Lillian Sykes
- CP6:** Brian Haigh, Dan Hadfield, Derek Bowdell, Audrey Stein,
- CP7:** John Westcott, Olive Barnsley, Roy Barnsley, John Robinson
- FINISH:** Vala West, Ken Fancett, Cindy Mcleod, Janet Chapman, Alison Newman, Dawn Bishop
- Mechandise** Janet Chapman
- Equipment** Reg Chapman
- Event Controllers** Louise Cartwright, Dave Challenger
- Timekeepers** Pat Challenger, Mike Mardle, Dave Green, Jon Moore
- Drivers** Reg Chapman, Ann Sayer, Time Dawe
- Route Description** Dave Challenger, Tony Cartwright
- Results:** Tony Cartwright