

## 5th Surrey Tops (2017) Report



Ann, Frank & Adrian ready for the off

The event took place over the weekend of 23/24 Sept with the marshals walk 3 weeks earlier. Amazingly, conditions on both events were near ideal (although may be have been a tad warm on the event itself?). Quite the opposite from 2011 when the event affectionately became known as the Surrey Slops. Most apt as many of you will, I'm sure, recall.

This year we had 194 entrants with 158 starters. 14 people advised me before the event that they were unable to take part with 22 no-shows on the days (a total of 36 DNS). There were 15 retirements, some at each of the 4 CPs. Four walkers were out of time and as such were not awarded certificates.

We were lucky to have had little rain in the days preceding the event resulting in (relatively speaking) almost no mud with the dry conditions resulting in a fast moving field with times ranging from 10hr 24min to 21hr 20min. Although the CP opening times were exactly the same as in 2014 (except for the adjusted time of the newly located CP2) some fast walkers and runners reached CP3 at Abinger Common and CP4 at Smithbrook Kilns before their official opening times. I take full responsibility if you were held up at these CPs, timing marshals had been told not to allow early arrivals through. In hindsight, with the dry conditions, maybe we should have anticipated this. My apologies to all that were affected. Its always a balancing act of trying to get the CPs open in time whilst not having marshals on duty for longer than is necessary. For 2020 the opening times for these two CPs will be adjusted for to prevent a repeat.



the walkers start at 1000



shortly followed by the runners at 1300

The flexible start times which had crept in over the past events were beginning to become unmanageable in that were needing timing marshals over the 1000 to 1300+ period and eyes in all directions trying to spot people leaving from one of the several doors at Witley. This year we reverted to two mass starts and although I know this did not suit all, most seemed to understand the reasoning. Certainly in terms of PACER recording it worked extremely well and no 'slipped past' so to speak.

I did a bulk email after the event seeking comments with regard to the route description. The overwhelming feedback was very positive. Many thanks if you responded. We will look again at the instructions for getting of Hydons Ball!!!

Someone did comment that we had rather to many "WITH CARE" inserts in the RD. I had felt the same but suffice it to say that a walker was clipped by a car when walking in the dark along the road towards CP3 at Smithbrook Kilns. Fortunately the walker

was not hurt although the car failed to stop. But it does highlight the need for care when on, or crossing, roads and to ensure reflective strips on rucksacks or even a small, rear light at night. After that I think we'll be leaving the 'WITH CARE' inserts where they are.

We are reviewing our policy with regard to issuing a GPX track of the route. Two drivers I think. The first is that times have moved on and many more people are using digital mapping and GPS devices. The second is that I know 'unofficial' GPX files of the route get posted. My personal view is that it would be better to issue an 'official' GPX which we ourselves had created. So watch this space.



Many reported the irate householder at Holmbury St Mary. Before the event we deliver information letters to all residences we pass at night. Over 50 of them. Those we actually meet are both grateful and usually quite interested in what we are doing. But there is always one. The man in question berated me on the phone after the letter drop in 2014 but said nothing this year deciding instead to harass walkers as they passed. I have just written to him pointing that the path past his house is a PRW and maybe he could help himself by subduing his security lights, putting rubber on the gate or maybe going down the pub for the evening!

As many of you also remarked, the dogs down Jellys Hollow are menacing. I had spoken to the owner. Fortunately they did at least stay behind the fence.

The Surrey Tops is a qualifier for the LDWA's 100 miler and also for the **KSS triple Challenge** (together with Kent's White Cliffs Challenge and Sussex's Sussex Stride).

Following this years event Richard Allison, Ed Barnes, Martin Bingle, Christopher Blackwell, Jim Catchpole, Sammy Dawkins, David Findel-Hawkins, Richard Haynes, Neal O'Rourke, Edward Short & Lisa Walbridge all qualified for the Triple Challenge whilst David Giles & Elaine Oddie qualified for the silver (6 consecutive completions). Congratulation to all. I understand from Shirley Greenwood, who administers the KSS on behalf of the 3 groups, that all have now been sent their certificates.

Since its inception in 2007 there have been 111 Triple awards, 15 Silvers and 4 Golds. The first four Gold medals were awarded in 2016 to Andrew Boulden, Chris Pitt, David Whitehead and Francis Thomason. They have now completed all ten events from the beginning in 2008. So very well done!

I'm sure I speak for everyone in thanking all the marshals for their efforts without whom the event would simply not take place. So many thanks to you all.



Registration	Mary Dee
Kitchen	Ray & Rosemary Rowe
Start - Witley	Tony Cartwright Roger Sage
CP1 Elstead	<b>Graham Smith</b> & Kent Group, John Lay Timekeeper Mary Dee
CP2 Ship Inn	<b>Ruth &amp; Andy Coleman</b> , Keith Chesterton, Joan Wrenn Timekeeper Fiona Cameron
CP3 Abinger Common	<b>Chris Baines-Holmes</b> & Sussex Group, Janet Chapman Timekeeper Avril Stapleton, Ertan Ali-Faik
CP4 Smithbrook Kilns	<b>Ted Swift</b> , Alastair & Sue Charlesworth Timekeeper Tony Davis
Finish - Witley	Tony Cartwright, Roger Sage, Juliet Eberle Kitchen: Glenys Kirkpatrick, Vala West, Jackie Griffin, Elizabeth Bryan
Sweepers	Elton Ellis, Merv Nutburn
Route marshals	Peter Short, Jackie Barker
Car Parking	Ted Swift
Close Down marshals	Mary Dee, Fiona Cameron
Cars Drivers (retirements)	Andy Fogall, Gordon Roots

Finally a few of the email, Facebook and Twitter comments:-

*...It was a brilliant event. Not a drop of rain, great autumnal views....Thank you to everybody concerned with the organisation of the Surrey Tops 50*

*...Many thanks for organising. I found the route description pretty accurate most of the time, but had a few moments along the way. As this was my first challenge event that went into the night I'm sure that my inexperience was a contributing factor!!*

*...Once again I've been extremely grateful to the hospitality and kindness of the Surrey Group that mean you share the hills with people from further afield. Saturday was another excellent challenge and we got round thanks to the support from the aid stations - generous food and great patience. Plus thanks to everyone who stayed up all night for us, the cooked breakfast in the early hours was a treat.*

*...The support was wonderful, with delightfully cheerful helpers at all the CPs. I thought the food offered was good, with sweet things (lemon meringue pie - first time on an event!) as well as some very welcome salty, savoury food (quiches, crisps, etc.). We each have our own preferences so there is no universal 'ideal' menu. Many thanks to both of you for*

*all your efforts. I know a great deal of work goes into the preparation and running of these events and much of it happens behind the scenes.*

*...Just a quick note to say thank you for putting on such a marvellous event this weekend. It was my first 50 mile event and was hard work but so rewarding. All the marshals and volunteers at checkpoints were wonderful. Especially the team at the finish!*

*...Many thanks to you and the Surrey Group for a great event!*

*...Great event, well organised, well done!*

*...Much appreciation for all the organisation and volunteers throughout, including the hot food at CP3*

*...Thank you! A wonderful event!*

*...Many thanks Mary to all the organisers & marshals who made this such an enjoyable experience.*

Thanks - and for taking the trouble to send them.

Hopefully see you in 2020 - if not before!!!!

Tony Cartwright  
Surrey Tops Organiser