

Surrey Group, Long Distance Walkers Association Winter Tanners 2017 Report



Sunday 15th
January saw 341 entrants set off from Leatherhead on the 39th Annual Winter Tanners. There had been light snow on the previous days but this was turning to rain (with icy patches remaining on the paths and roads first thing). The rain then remained for the rest of the day



and became heavier after lunch. The perception of bad weather seemed off-putting to some entrants. The mud was freshened up though some entrants thought last year's mud was worse (or, perhaps, better, depending on your point of view!). Nevertheless returning entrants seemed well covered in the brown stuff! Hopefully those expecting a tough winter event were not disappointed.



John Westcott, who has initially designed all recent Tanners routes, at CP1

Several entrants commented very favourably on the choice of route (and it's description). The short route went south from Leatherhead onto Fetcham Downs and then west past Polesden Lacy and into Effingham Forest and the first checkpoint, then south dropping from the North Downs to Gomshall, then east and back up the North Downs to the last checkpoint at Steer's Field. Then north across Ranmore and past Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel and back into Leatherhead. The longer route used the same route to CP1 then south down to Shere, into Winterfold Forest and east into Hurtwood. CP2 was by Holmbury Hill and then further east to Leith Hill/Tower and then a northbound trek up to CP3 at Steers Field and back along the short route. The route was again devised by John Westcott and developed and checked by Mary Dee (both had to put considerable effort into this!).

The event was fully booked much earlier than usual (by the beginning of December) and the proportion entering the long route increased, again, from 69% to 73%. Of the 450 possible entrants 341 started and 109 did not show, almost all (103) of those 'did not shows' having entered the long route only 8 of

121 did not show for the short route. This year more effort was made to operate an effective waiting list and all entrants were emailed on Boxing Day to query whether they wished to withdraw. The withdrawal deadline was the Friday of that week (as 10 days, or so, are needed to offer/accept the further places and to allow time prepare entry tokens/lists).



This produced significantly more withdrawals and 32 potential entrants were subsequently offered places from the waiting list (so that all on the waiting list were offered a place). Nevertheless, by the time of the event, perceptions of the weather and seasonal bugs appeared to particularly strike those on the long route!. Thus overall 24.2% did not show compared with 20% in 2015, 29% in 2015 and 33% in 2014; the previous emerging trend of greater participation was reversed.

Summary of event entry and completion

	Total	Long	Short
Entrants	450	329	121
Did not start	109	103	8
Started	341	225*	116*
Retired	13	11*	2*
Finished	328	214*	114*
<i>Switched after entry</i>			
Long to Short		-44	+44
Short to long		+4	-4

**split based on the route finished*

Thus there were 2 more actually starting the short route than in 2016 but 17 less started the long route than the previous year. Last year 30 switched from the long to the short route, this year 44 did (though 4 also switched the other way from the short to the long). Retirements were higher on the long route and relatively low on the short. The entry/finishing statistics are summarised above.



Times for the 30 route were, on average, about 50 minutes longer than last two years year (though the route was a mile longer) and average speeds dropped by 0.2-0.3 mph to 3.7 mph. Those on the short route were quicker than last year and finished about 22 minutes earlier than the previous year but not with the times/speeds of 2015. On the 20 route the fastest had comparable speeds to the 30 but were still significantly slower than the previous two years.

Summary of event timing and speed

	2017	2016	2015	2017	2016	2015
<i>hours/minutes</i>	30 mile route			20 mile route		
Average	8:31	7:40	7:43	6:22	6:48	5:45
Median	8:28	7:35		6:32	6:53	
Max	12:52	10:54	11:43	9:04	10:32	9:42
Min	5:21	5:10	5:01	3:29	2:56	2:53
Mileage	31.4	30.4	30.4	20.9	20.9	20.6
Average mph	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.3	3.1	3.6
Fastest mph	5.9	5.9	6.1	6.0	7.1	7.1

The full results are at www.ldwa.org.uk/results/full_results.php?event_id=47 or https://www.ldwa.org.uk/lgt/downloads/Surrey/WT_Docs/WT17_results.pdf (19 pages)

The event passed Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel which has been celebrating its 70th anniversary with the YHA launching a £240,000 appeal for a major refurbishment of the hostel (the picture below shows the hostel when the marshals walked by on 8th January; the seat on the left is the memorial to Alan Blatchford, co-founder of the LDWA). The hostel was the home of the Tanners Marathon which ran for 47 years until 2010 (when there ceased to be a viable organising committee). The Winter Tanners was an upstart spin-off started by John Westcott (to test out the Tanners Marathon route in winter conditions) and next year will be the 40th Winter Tanners and so will be a special celebration. Tanners entrants are invited to make a voluntary donation, usually to the National Trust; this year £419 was donated but Surrey Group decided to split this between the Tanners Hostel appeal and the NT (who are the freeholders of the hostel anyway); thus this event is directly benefiting 'Tanners' itself.



The event was only possible because 35 marshals turned out to run checkpoints and otherwise support entrants; there was a ratio of one marshal to every 10 entrants!. Without these volunteers there could be no event and we are immensely grateful to those who offered their time (and were prepared to stand about in very cold temperatures). The names of our marshals are recorded below. Whilst I am the organiser I must acknowledge the major contributions of Tony Cartwright (who helped develop, implement the PACER computer system and managed it for this event) and Mary Dee who spent days checking/finalising the route and description and also was close-down marshal. Our marshals are getting older and there is a need for younger/more active marshals; could you or a partner/friend help? Do let me know? If we do not get some new marshals the Winter Tanners could go the way of the Tanners Marathon.



This year we used a new computer system developed by the LDWA nationally. PACER (**P**articipant **A**ctivity **C**ontrol for **E**vents and **R**esults) uses internet based software communicating over 3/4G mobile data to track entrants. Checkpoints use a simple tablet with a Bluetooth barcode gun reader to identify/record entrants. PACER is just past beta testing and this was the largest event it had been used on. We think it performed excellently and the organiser/close down marshal had unsurpassed real time information (there were no interruptions to the comms). Unlike last year everyone got a certificate with virtually no wait (thank you Elton Ellis), the results were available instantly on-line at <https://www.ldwa.org.uk/results/> (which also enabled supporters at home or on the smart phone in in their car to see the same progress information as the organiser). This report has also been produced a lot more quickly thanks to PACER. Tony Cartwright put a lot of work into ensuring PACER was robust for the event and we were delighted that the LDWA National Executive member for PACER (Adam Dawson) ran/tested the system at CP1 where event's cold/wet/windy conditions had no relationship to testing it in an office environment! We will now regularly use PACER and look forward to its further development.

We also had a new base for the event, the offices of MatOrtho on Mole Valley Business Park (you can see it in the background to the picture on page 2). It's just

around the corner from our former home, the dilapidated football hut at Leatherhead Leisure Centre. MatOrtho is a pioneering trendsetter in the field of orthopaedic implant devices (such as replacement hips). Its Chairman, Mike Tuke, who regularly walks with Surrey LDWA, walked the 30 mile route. Their modern offices and very large car park provided excellent base facilities (including kitchen, that adjacent car park and high speed internet). We were delighted with the facilities and, for the first time, Winter Tanners entrants were given refreshments at the end! We look forward to being there again (and will not want to return to our first base, the open air car park!).



MatOrtho did not charge us for the premises for the WT. However Mike (and daughters) are undertaking the '*Race the Sun Brecon Beacons 2017*' in June (cycling 45 miles, climbing Pen y Fan and canoeing Pontsticill Reservoir) in aid of Action Medical Research. This charity supports research for: sick and vulnerable babies (eg stillbirths, pre-eclampsia); disabled children (eg meningitis, cerebral palsy); and rare diseases in children (eg leukaemia, nerve cell cancer). Could you show your appreciation for Mike by supporting him? see:

www.action.org.uk/sponsor/tukesofhazard

The Winter Tanners/Surrey Group have always tried to keep event entry fees as low as possible and the majority of 2017 WT entrants paid a fee of £7, this is minimal compared to entry fees on many semi-commercial running events. The group expects next year's fee to be somewhat higher (though nothing like the events just referred to). We are spending considerable amounts on computer hardware, we hired an equipment van for the first time this year, we provided refreshments at the end and we have to be ready to pay much higher access fees (we were asked for a £600 fee for use of one of our CP car parks which we successfully challenged to about a third of that level – we have not previously paid for CPs though we do make small donations). We have to recognise that we will be paying higher costs (not all of which are predictable) and we need to increase our financial resilience.

Overall this was another great Tanners albeit that the rain looked intimidating. We thank entrants for their very positive feedback. We hope you enjoyed your event and we look forward to offering an even better 40th Winter Tanners **on Sunday 21st January 2018**. Put it in your diary (entries usually open 1st October); we hope to see you there.

Richard Ireson, surrey.wt@ldwa.org.uk
For Surrey LDWA, 17th January, 2017
www.ldwa.org.uk/surrey

Thanks to the Marshals:

Check in/card issue: Mary Dee, Mark Pickard

Computer check out/start: Tony Cartwright

Car Park: Peter Waterhouse Nigel Barraclough

Checkpoint 1 Leader: Dave and Pat Challenger (who also helped with route checking)

Olive & Roy Barnslely, Nigel Barraclough

PACER: Adam Dawson, Gordon Roots

Checking point (to check split of 20/30):
Ted Swift

Checkpoint 2 Leader: Fiona Cameron
Alan Shons, Glenys Kirkpatrick, Chris Hayward, Erik Falck-Therkelsen, Christopher Woodward, Alastair and Sue Charlesworth

PACER: Avril Stapleton, Mark Pickard

Checkpoint 3 Leader: Janet Chapman
Ray Rowe, Ertan Ali Faik, Liz Bryan, Tony Davis, Keith Chesterton, John Lay, Ian Statter

PACER: Vicky Bell, Francis Eberle,

Finish: Henri du Bossart, Juliet Eberle, Avril Stapleton

PACER: Tony Cartwright

Certificates: Elton Ellis

Close down marshal: Mary Dee

Pick up Marshal: Gordon Roots

Logistics: Roger Sage

Equipment: Andy Fogell

