

"WINTER TANNERS WALK" Sunday 11 Jan.1976

As those who read the pre event information know, the "Winter Tanners" was to be a preview of the seventeenth Tanners Marathon route. Whereas the "summer Tanners" is held in July when the daylight is at a maximum and the ground firm and dry this new walk was expected to provide some testing conditions for even the strongest of walkers but as it happened conditions were only a little inferior to those of the mid year. Indeed, so mild was the weather that many of us were still sweating even in shirt sleeve order, right until after dark. The times recorded by walkers who completed the full thirty miles were considerably shorter than anticipated and such was the general progress that the two refreshment stops had to be moved down route and opened up early.

The expected attendance was in the order of 25 to 30 and so when over sixty (62 counted) appeared at dawn at Leatherhead the proceedings were not quite as orderly as they might have been. My apologies to those who did not get a copy of the route sketch map (had you written in you would have done) and to anyone not recorded in the finishing list. Although we have had a thousand walkers at the Tanners Marathon in July I am still amazed that so many were enthusiastic enough to tramp around the Surrey countryside over a thirty miles route in Winter, and I must thank those who came from outside the county to support this new venture.

As was inevitable with such a sizeable party we soon split into groups according to pace and it was not long before the leading walkers(?) were several miles ahead of the back markers. Although I was supposed to be leading the walk I seemed to be near the rear, of the what I came to call the main party, for much of the time. It was interesting to see how the planned route was interpreted. When the pathfinders occasionally went adrift it was a case of "the last shall be first and the first shall be last". At one point the leaders apparently found a new route to reach Honeysuckle Bottom. After an unproductive sortie into a small wood near Albury Heath we discovered the true way and headed across Blackheath to reach the soup stop at Farley Heath. Here we learnt that about fifteen walkers had already passed through with about an equal number behind, although it was reported that four of these had retired near Shere. After a twenty minutes stop we left the 11½ miles point just after our planned arrival time there.

The next section consisted of several undulating tracks through wooded areas with seldom the sight of a house. The notorious long straight path from Wickets Well seemed shorter and easier as we strode along at the continued good pace and it wasn't long before the sight of Leith Hill greeted us ahead. At Upfolds Farm we paused awhile at the Croydon R.A. support point and then began the long ascent of Surreys highest hill (965'). From the summit with barely a cursory glance at the tower we quickly pressed on down through Broadmoor hamlet and just before three o'clock we checked in at the tea stop near Wotton Hatch.

By now sore feet and tired limbs were troubling a few but with just the climb to Ranmore Common and the gentle descent to Leatherhead the end was withing striking distance. Somehow the climb seemed shorter as the light began to fade. Near Tanners Hatch from which the walk derives its name we met a few people leaving the youth hostel after taking part in an orienteering event and at the hostel the old man of the woods met us. By now even the main party had split into many small groups as we continued on through the darkness. Finally at Leatherhead (at 5.27) we met a few of the recent finishers, most of whom were noted for the record. Many of those who took part said how much they had enjoyed the walk, especially as there is a lack of similar walks at this time of year, and so the Winter Tanners may well become an annual.

Alan Blatchford

Those who walked and supported.

On behalf of the walkers I thank the following for helping with the arrangements:

Soup Stop at Farley Heath: Barbara Blatchford, Ian and Erica,  
Merle Marsden.

Tea Stop at Wotton : Margaret Steer, Judith and Jane,  
Merle Marsden

Recording names and collecting subs.: Merle Marsden.

also members of Dorking R.A. who offered drinks to the party at various points en route.

LIST OF THOSE WHO COMPLETED THE ROUTE(30 miles)

As mentioned in the report there were rather more people walking than expected and consequently it was not possible to be 100% accurate with the finishing list. However the list below includes all those recorded at the finish plus a few others who later confirmed their completion of the marathon.

MIKE POWELL DAVIES	Witham	7.06	TASHA CLARIDGE	Dorking	8.55
BRIAN GRAVES	Milton Kn.	7.06	D.R. CHALLENGER	Ewell	8.55
JOHN SCRIVENER	Aldershot	7.06	T.S. BALM	Hampton	8.55
ALAN HOARE	Coventry	7.20	BILL RADCLIFFE	Teddington	8.55
JOHN HARRISON	Chesham	7.20	JEFF ELLINGHAM	Milford	8.55
JOHN GRAY	Bookham	7.20	DON COOPER	Maidenhead	8.55
BRIAN ELLIS	Portsmouth	7.30	CHRIS STEER	Chobham	8.55
JOHN ANNETT	Croydon	7.30	DAVE PAGE	Brith	8.55
FRANK THOMAS	Chelmsford	7.30	KEITH PEEL	Wembley	9.05
MARTYN GREAVES	Pulbora.	7.30	VALERIE PEEL	Wembley	9.05
KEITH WILKINSON	Coulsdon	7.45	GEOFF DUMPER	Bromley	9.10
COLIN MORSE	Coulsdon	7.45	DAVID YOUNG	Coulsdon	9.10
ANDREW FOSTER	Walingham	8.00	FRANCIS THOMASON	Tottenham	9.10
KEITH ARNOLD	Aldershot	8.01	JOHN MUNDAY	Wallington	9.12
LOUISE BATES	Aldershot	8.16	JOHN FROST	Stanwell	9.12
B.J. BICKLE	Woodley	8.55	KEITH CHESTERTON	Guildford	9.15
THOMAS HARDING(sen)	Pinner	8.55	ALAN BLATCHFORD	Guildford	9.15
THOMAS HARDING(Jun)	Pinner	8.55	DAVID LUCAS	Streatham	9.15
MAXIE CLARKE	Epsom	8.55	IAN McLEOD	Fetcham	9.15
JOHN LAING	Luton	8.55	BOB POTTER	Fareham	10.00
ROSALIND PAUL	Elstree	8.55	KEITH SMALL	Southsea	10.00
TON ANDERSON	Ashford	8.55	JOHN WESTCOTT	Chobham	10.25
JIM GILLARD	Iver	8.55	JOHN PROBERT	Oxted	10.25

known retired:Jenny Temple(Dorking),Lionel Hardman(Sanderstead).

whereabouts not known:K.Davis(Croydon),Miss.C.Constance(Coulsdon), Nigel Swift(S.Croydon),M.Freeston(Purley),S.Bott(Pinner),S.Neal(Farncombe),R.Moore(Warlingham),Jonathan Evans(S.Croydon),F.Gerrish(London), K.Hewitt(Northolt),Mike Burton(Upper Norwood),John Creasey(W.Wimbledon).

Total accounted for:60. Number counted by K.Chesterton en route:62.

Lost: wristwatch at soup stop(?). Owner Mike Powell Davies

OTHER EVENTS IN THIS AREA

March 21:SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR 30M

March 27:Tanners to Hindhead 27M

April 11 ACADEMIC KANTER 12M & 22 M, June 6 PUNCHBOWL MARATHON 30M

July 4 TANNERS MARATHONS 10M,30M,& 50M.

plus many other walks organised by Surrey Group of LDWA.

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