

## Southern 50 Challenge Hike Report

13<sup>th</sup> February 2010

### A Winter's Walk

It started to snow. Then it started to rain. Then it started to hammer it down. Then the sun came out for a while. Then it got cold and dark. All in a day's work for nearly 400 participants involved in this year's annual **Southern 50 Challenge Hike**.

This year's event saw an almost even number of young people and adults making up 75 teams of four from almost twenty different counties across the UK, from Cumbria in the north, from Devon in the west, from Dorset in the south and Essex in the east. Plus a load from the host county, Greater London North, responsible for putting the event on for the 31<sup>st</sup> consecutive year. As usual, the challenge presented three routes from 30 km, 50 km plus the blue riband 50 mile event, all providing more than its fair share of adventure in the Chiltern Hills.

The winning 30 km team, in a time of 4-34, was set by four Explorer Scouts from Inner City London. The Phoenix Flyers Too, from 201<sup>st</sup> Islington consisted of Gemma, Gemma, Kelly and the sole male team member, Giacomo, who all finished in the gold medal position for the second year in succession, finishing over an hour faster than last year. Explorer Scout teams entering the 30 km event next year will be relieved to learn that by then, the three girls will have become Network members and will be having a crack at the 50 km event for the first time. Silver medal position was awarded to a Devon Explorer Scout team from Plympton & Ivybridge, where members have been regularly travelling up for the event since its inception. West Country Wonderers completed their mission just 17 minutes behind the winners. In turn, they were 29 minutes in front of Gauntlett Explorer Scouts from Weymouth & Portland, from yet another part of UK Scouting who have regularly been supporting the Southern 50. Special mentions to the 8<sup>th</sup> Holborn Explorer Scouts, also from inner-city London, who picked up a new trophy on offer for the first novice team. Also to a team of Guides from Plympton with the quaint name of 3 Ducks and a Hostage, as their commendable time of 5-46 put them in 4<sup>th</sup> place, much improved from last year's debut. Also to Majendie-Steeple Girls, four female Explorer Scouts from Halstead & Colne Valley in Essex who for the second year running saw off the boys team. And also to the Anomalous team from Amphil & Woburn in Bedfordshire, Southern 50 first timers, using the event to be sponsored to the tune of £450, with all proceeds going to Keech Cottage Children's Hospice in Luton.

The 50 km top two teams saw a repetition of last year, but with slightly different personnel. The winners, in a time of 6-17, was a Scout Network team from 20<sup>th</sup> Torbay, finishing an hour faster than last year. They were 27 minutes in front of The Phoenix Flyers, a team of Leaders from 201<sup>st</sup> Islington. A whole two hours later came the 3<sup>rd</sup> placed team of Leaders from 1<sup>st</sup> Runwell in Billericay & Wickford, Essex. There were many outstanding performances in the 50 km event from young and old alike, and well worthy of a mention were the Hornsey Veterans, who with three Leaders in their 60s and one in his 50s, a combined total age of 248, skipped round in 7-14 and shaving an hour and a half off last year's time.

Finally, for those who wanted to stretch out with a pleasant 50 mile walk, saw a most encouraging increase in teams wanting to take part in the main event. However, nobody could match the superb performance from the oddly named Late Finishers, a male quartet made up of the Greater London North Mountaineering Team, who clocked 11-26, half an hour in front of 1<sup>st</sup> Chesham Bois in Buckinghamshire. Both these teams have an impeccable record in this event, constantly setting and raising the standard for others. Bronze medal position was occupied by The Devonshire Cream, a team of Explorer Scouts from 20<sup>th</sup> Torbay, a whole two hours faster than last year, and they must be considered to be in with a good chance of seeing their names on the trophy next year. Two hours behind them came yet another Explorer Scout team from the 20<sup>th</sup> Torbay known as Dartmoor Devils. Whatever they put in the water at the 20<sup>th</sup> Torbay, I'd like a pint of it, please. The youngest participant in the 50 mile event was Ollie, an Explorer Scout just turned 16, part of a GLN team with the strange name of To Be Advised, completing in 15-36 and by doing so he raised over £500 for his school's charity week. The last team home in just under 20 hours, a valiant effort in the cold and wet, was a Network team from 5<sup>th</sup> Beckenham South in GLSE.

This year's event saw more female participants than ever before, comprising a quarter of the total. What's more, we had a record number of finishers this year, making up 94% of the starters. About 100 volunteers staffed the event, staying around until the Sunday, Valentine's Day, as they certainly love the Southern 50 as much as the walkers. Everybody adored the checkpoint staff, the crew at the finish, the Eastbourne District Scout First Aid Team, the food, the presentation on the Sunday morning, the presence and wise words from Wayne Bulpitt, our UK Chief Commissioner, and finally the event itself.

The organising committee wishes you all a good summer season of Scouting and we look forward to seeing you all again next year.

Fozzy alias Chris Foster  
Walk Secretary