

“CHILTERN 20” REPORT

Yet another highly successful annual event was made even better by the last decent weather of the year. A total of 32 teams from GLN and beyond came in their droves (along with a few minibuses but no trek carts), 11 up on last year's Challenge. We told you that there would be changes and improvements this year, and you weren't let down. The 2002 "Chiltern 20 Challenge" needed to be (Steve) Taylor-made to fit in with the requirements of The New Programme. The organisers also allowed teams to be accompanied by an appropriate adult.

We are delighted to report that every Scout who dared to enter The Challenge was presented with not only their own achievement certificate, but also the Fitness Challenge Badge (one of four Challenge Badges which along with a personal challenge goes toward The Chief Scout's Gold Award). And for those of you who aren't sure where it goes, these Challenge Badges are positioned on the uniform on the right breast pocket.

We are forever grateful to the large contingent of adult helpers who offer their services and expertise to make this both an enjoyable and a safe event for all participants. Special thanks go to our loyal and dedicated band of checkpoint marshalls and to our catering team who worked wonders to produce over 200 hot meals. It was also a pleasure to have the skills of the County Mountaineering Team who were at several checkpoints giving practical sessions on aspects of navigation. Our own County Commissioner was very much in evidence, again leading from the front. He was first seen popping out of the jungle to man Checkpoint 4. He was there again at the finish reception booking in the weary teams and assessing for any bodily damage. Finally he was there once more at the end presenting certificates and badges to every Scout. There was concern at one time amongst the organisers whether we could afford the 11 hours overtime rate for a CC, but after a whip-round we were able to produce the necessary 10p and the show carried on. Thank you Steve, for your continued and enthusiastic support.

This report must contain a mention about our Chiltern 20 & Southern 50 Committee Chairman, John Hall. Still recovering from a serious and lengthy illness, John was restored to the action and was on scene from the very start until the lights went out at the end. He kept out of the limelight throughout the day by keeping a calm and steady hand on all matters from within Central Control. It was John who produced all the results, times and certificates at very short notice, and it was great to have you back, mate.

Finally, the stars of the show were the Young People themselves. If you were a Scout, you were eligible to take part. Congratulations to the 16th Wood Green for winning The Challenge with 10 minutes to spare on their rivals. However, this event was more about teamwork, leadership, endurance, navigation and orienteering. Plotting map references and finding a way to the next checkpoint along a route which took in the delights of Ivinghoe Beacon and Pitstone Hill. The finishing times were unexpectedly fast. Last year only 3 teams ducked inside 6 hours, this time nearly half of all the teams managed it.

The course was a bit shorter this year to accommodate the younger age groups, but don't tell that to one particular team. The 20 minutes stroll to Checkpoint 1 took this team 2 hours and 20 minutes as they turned right instead of left at the start. Despite their 5 miles detour they possessed the stickability to finish and still didn't come last.

All this bodes well for the rosy future of "The Chiltern 20 Challenge". And definitely a good curtain raiser for "The Southern 50 Challenge" on 22nd February 2003. So start planning now. Don't forget that it's going to be 3 Challenges in one, a new 30 km walk for Explorer Scouts, plus the 50 kms and the blue riband event, The 50 miles.

Chris Foster
Chiltern 20 Committee

P.S. I have in my possession a load of found property which includes a couple of coats, sweatshirt, hats and socks. Please give me a ring on 8886-5992 if you want to put in a claim.