

Report on Chiltern 20 Challenge Hike, Saturday 13th October 2007

Scouts walk on water

Nearly 200 Scouts, aged 10-14, took part in last Saturday's Chiltern 20 Challenge. Another record entry of almost 50 teams of four, used their hiking and orienteering skills to good effect, navigating their way through 13 checkpoints in order, walking somewhere between 25 kms and 20 miles. Collectively, that's the equivalent of walking all the way from London to New York, only these Scouts never got wet.

This popular event is organised every year by the same team of adults responsible for putting on the prestigious Southern 50 Challenge in February. Most of the teams taking part in the Chiltern 20 are from Greater London North, although teams from outside the county are warmly welcomed. This year saw four new teams from Torbay, Devon, along with a local Hertfordshire team making their debut.

The adventure started bright and early at a new venue in the historic market town of Berkhamsted with two teams setting off every three minutes. It turned out to be a delightful day's walking in the Chiltern Hills, with some teams enjoying themselves so much that they were on their feet for over 9 hours.

The first three teams to finish could not have come from more diverse backgrounds. The winning team were from the 20th Torbay, making it a hat-trick of wins for this Group. A team of unaccompanied 11 and 12 year olds, calling themselves The Western Wombats, completing in their first ever Chiltern 20, trained for their success in more bleak conditions across Dartmoor. Runners-up, just 7 minutes later, was another young team, Ridgeway Scout Group, just up the road at Tring, Hertfordshire. Their team comprised of four Scouts who brought along their Leader and a CRB'd Dad (adults are banned from "leading" the team to ensure the safety of the young people, and to make certain they don't end up half way to Birmingham). Third to finish was a GLN inner city Group, The Phoenix Flyers from 201st Islington, having great fun copying their Southern 50 winning elders by flying across the countryside in exactly 5 hours.

All the participants went home clutching their well earned Fitness Challenge Badge and an individual certificate for completing the event, presented by County Commissioner Barry Manley. Everybody was reminded that next year will be the Chiltern 20's silver anniversary, with a promise that it will be a rather special occasion to celebrate 25 years.

Further information about both Chiltern 20 and Southern 50 events can be found on www.scouts-gln-southern50.org.uk

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Chiltern 20 Committee