

## **Report on Chiltern 20 Challenge Hike, Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

### **Chiltern 20 smashes all records**

Everywhere you looked at this year's Chiltern 20 Challenge Hike, there were records being smashed all over the place. If this sounds like something like a bull in a record shop, then you will not be too far away from the truth of what really happened on an amazing day for GLN Scouting.

A record number of 55 teams of Scouts, aged 10-14, from every District in GLN, plus seven teams from Devon and four from Hertfordshire, enjoyed a superb day of adventure. A new record number of 250 Scouts used their hiking and orienteering skills to good effect by navigating their way through 11 checkpoints in order, walking somewhere between 20 kms and 15 miles, a collective distance from London to Johannesburg.

This popular event is organised every year by the same team of adults responsible for putting on the prestigious Southern 50 Challenge in February for Explorer Scouts and adults. These younger walkers started off bright and early from Stokenchurch Community Centre with two teams setting off every three minutes. It turned out to be a delightful day's walking in the Chiltern Hills, with the winning team from 20<sup>th</sup> Torbay, aptly known as The Devon Rockets, roared home in a minute over 2½ hours. No team has ever managed to get anywhere near this time in the 30 years of the event. In fact their winning time was faster than many folk take to run a half marathon.

The winning team consisted of a participant who had recently won the national schools' orienteering championships, so this team knew what it was all about. They finished 35 minutes in front of Ridgeway Scout Group, from Hertfordshire. This was Ridgeway's third appearance in The Chiltern 20, and the third time they have finished in the runners-up position. What's more, they could not have done any more as they finished over 1½ hours faster than last year.

In third place, 14 minutes later, came another 20<sup>th</sup> Torbay team, making one of nine teams who remarkably finished inside 4 hours, a feat that no teams could manage last year. They were soon followed by two Southgate teams, and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Southgate a special award for being the first team home without an adult with them. This team also comprised of two girls who were part of another record entry of female participants who made up a third of the total number of the Scouts walking.

All the participants went home clutching their well earned Fitness Challenge Badge along with individual certificates for completing the event. Their Leaders, who gave up another day to Scouting, were beaming with pride. One Hertfordshire Leader said "It was a great event, challenging course and perfect weather. Our four teams thoroughly enjoyed themselves". Ian Wright, who entered six teams from 11<sup>th</sup> Finchley added "A big thanks for putting on a great event as ever. It really is one of the highlights of our annual programme. One of my new Scouts summed up the success of it all for me by saying that he wanted to do the Chiltern 20 every year and aspires to go out in a team alone like the older Scouts and win which says it all.

Lottie, a 14 year old Hertfordshire Scout said "This is the third time we have entered and once again we really enjoyed ourselves. It's great fun meeting up with other Scouts from all over London and some teams came all the way from Devon to take part, amazing! I love the event because you get to work as a team, encouraging each other when it gets tough and it gives you great confidence in using your map reading skills. The route was challenging, with lots of cakes at the checkpoints to keep you going. A big thanks for a great event from all the Scouts at Ridgeway, see you next year. Oops, forgot, I will be an Explorer next year so Southern 50 here I come."

Loads of people came along to support this year's event. Special thanks to the caterers who produced 300 meals in a short space of time, the registration desk, the checkpoint staff, the central control staff, the route controllers, and last but not least the County Mountaineering Team who provided the navigation training half way round the route.

The spotlight is soon to turn towards The Southern 50 Challenge Hike on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2010. Further information can be found on [www.scouts-gln-southern50.org.uk](http://www.scouts-gln-southern50.org.uk)

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Hon Secretary