

Report on Chiltern 20 Challenge Hike, Saturday 19th October 2013

A Record Breaking Day in The Chiltern Hills

A record number of 70 teams registered for this year's Chiltern 20. A record number of 64 teams started, and a record number of complete teams finished. And just to prove that Scouting For Girls is really taking off, a record number of girls took part, 110 out of 310 participants, that's over 35%. It doesn't get much better than that.

We had teams from every District in GLN, plus our friends from the Isle of Dogs in GLNE, Tring in Hertfordshire, Misbourne Valley in Buckinghamshire, Torbay in Devon and for the first time a team from Romsey in Hampshire and a team from Bournemouth in Dorset.

It was a return to our largest start and finish venue in Stokenchurch for this year's event in order to accommodate the huge entry. Amazing how the Chiltern 20 has grown, doubling in size in recent years. The 10-14 year olds perfected their teamwork and leadership skills by hiking and navigating their way through ten checkpoints, all walking in excess of 15 miles. This year's course was a real challenge with more ups and downs than the roller coaster at the end of the pier. One team enjoyed themselves so much that they spent 10 hours completing the event, whilst the first team home breezed round in 4-43, none other than Ridgeway Tring winning the event for the third consecutive year. I wonder what they feed them in Tring? In hot pursuit were 6th Friern Barnet, just seven minutes behind, and they were closely followed two minutes later by 20th Torbay with 20th Southgate closing in. All these four teams broke the five hour barrier.

This annual event was organised by a County team from Greater London North supported on the day by 100 adults who enjoyed a day in the countryside as much as the young people. Fitness Challenge Badges were presented to the Scouts who had been working towards this award.

An emotional event chairman, John Hall, in his last Chiltern 20 at the helm, paid tribute to the young people. He also said "This event has been taking place for over 30 years and we have had over 5,000 participants walking a total of 75,000 miles. That's over three times around the world".

Maddie, aged 13, from Barnet said "What a brilliant day, and so well organised. I have never walked so far in my life before and I can take home a certificate and Fitness Challenge Badge to prove it".

The event organisers will now turn their attention to The Southern 50, designed for Explorer Scouts and adults in Scouting, taking place on Saturday 15th February 2013. Further information can be found on www.scouts-gln-southern50.org.uk

Fozzy
(Chris Foster, Hon Sec, Chiltern 20 Challenge)