

## **Green Belt Relay – 16/17<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

### **Race Directors' Report (Peter Kennedy & Sean Davis)**

The 19th Green Belt Relay took place over the weekend. Thirty teams of 11 competed most of Saturday and Sunday over the 220 miles, 22 stage course around London's green lung. Weather was good, with no rain, and the only minor issue being very heavy rain a couple of days before washing away some course markings.

It all started at 8.30am on the Saturday from Hampton Court Palace and finished on the Thames Path at Ham on Sunday at 6.00pm.

After day one and 110 miles only 55 seconds separated London Frontrunners and Serpentine, with Stock Exchange just 15 minutes back in third. The start of day two saw things get even closer between the first three teams. However, after another 100 miles, Serpentine went on to take the Green Belt, in just under 24 hours and by 9 minutes from Frontrunners with Stock Exchange another 8 minutes back in third.

The ladies' race (the silver salver) was also won by Serpentine who finished 8th overall in a time of 27 hours and 20 minutes. The "walking stick" (veteran's team) was won Sandhurst Joggers, 5th overall in 27 hours and 12 minutes. Loughborough University lifted the Corporate Shield, finishing 15th overall in a time of 28 hours and 37 minutes. The "toilet seat" (last team to complete full course) was won by Havering 90 in 33 hours and 47 minutes.

There were many great individual performances and stage winner t-shirts were as follows:

#### Men Stage Wins:

- 10 Serpentine
- 5 Clapham Chasers
- 4 Stock Exchange AC
- 1 London Frontrunners
- 1 British Airways AC

#### Ladies' Stage Wins:

- 12 Serpentine
- 5 Stock Exchange AC
- 1 Clapham Chasers
- 2 Stragglers
- 1 Sandhurst Joggers
- 1 Elmbridge

Within the relay there were many races for individual team position. Sandhurst 2 just pipped Sandhurst 1 to 5th, as did Serpentine 4 to Serpentine 3 for 21st, Burgess Hill 1 just managed to overhaul Burgess Hill 2 on the last stage for 27th, and Stragglers, Dulwich Runners, Clapham 2, Loughborough and Beckenham 1 took it to the wire for 12th, with Stragglers just coming out on top.

A huge thanks to all teams and their captains for organising, running, marshalling, providing water and generally supporting each other.

Please take a bit of time to send us your thought on what went well, and even more importantly on what way you think we can improve the event.

We look forward to seeing you all back in 2016 for what should be a very special the 20th Green Belt Relay.

## Credits:

The following people are to be thanked:

Alan Mawdsley (all the permissions and licences)

Allan Barrie (results)

David Clarke (UKA race adjudicator who also cycled and supported much of the race)

Nigel Rothwell (who took well over a thousand photos along the way)

Conor and Liam (the first aiders), plus their drivers John Dixon, Sarah Boyle and her mate Liz

Evan Bond (graphics for publications, tshirts and prizes)

Roy Reeder (tshirts and also a timekeeper)

Alan and Liz Pemberton (marshalling the marshals), plus Peter Wedderburn, Jim and Merran Sell and others (marshalling)

Pat and Alan Short (logistics and also timekeepers)

Bob and Jane Wheller, Andrew Wallace, David Griffiths, Keith Haworth, Mike Mabin, Sue Waters, Carol Golsby (all timekeepers)

Mike Bangham, Tim Wood, Rob Teer and the Thurrock Nomads (course marking)

Mrs (Dr) Kennedy, for ruthless organising and even more ruthless driving. And to our six children for putting up with quite a few weekends without us and for helping us bag all the t-shirts.

And to my dog Monty for marking stage 7, in his own special way.

Then to all the parish councils, landowners, National Trusts, pub owners, councils, and local residents who allow us to organise these mad flashmob races in their quiet villages.

And finally, to our team captains and teams, whose smiling enthusiasm, helpful efficiency and manic competitiveness makes it all worthwhile.

## Organisation - Main Observations:

We have asked team captains for feedback, and will receive race report from David Clarke – the comments here do not yet reflect that, but we will respond to them all.

From my point of view, the race was a success. We had some first-aid challenges, with a runner cutting his head on a branch on stage 16, and a runner collapsing at the end of stage 21. First-aiders were on hand for both these. We believe that we managed to cover all high-risk safety points, although we had navigation errors which we believe caused erring runners to cross an unmarshalled railway line on stage 3.

The following is a list of our main activities, good/bad comments, and whether we need to make any changes next time.

## Before The Race:

Area	What we did	Good and bad	Next time
Date	3 <sup>rd</sup> weekend in May.	Seemed OK. Some comments about clash with Richmond Half Marathon.	Same again (to be discussed).

Team recruiting	<p>Emailed previous team captains and chased</p> <p>Advertised in Southern Running Guide</p> <p>Plugged on Facebook throughout the preparations.</p>	<p>Worked OK, and attracted all the same teams apart from Golden Joggers, who promise to be back next year</p> <p>Stronger interest from existing clubs than previously, and two new teams, and strong interest from six more new ones.</p> <p>However, smaller eventual turnout. Had a high dropout rate in the month before from fairly firm bookings.</p> <p>Only one ladies' team entered.</p>	<p>Need to get teams to pay up earlier to minimise dropouts</p> <p>Need to focus more and not get married in the middle of recruiting (!)</p> <p>Will ask Loughborough to spread the word with universities. Would be good to get competition there and perhaps a new category.</p> <p>Will follow up with recent near-misses.</p> <p>Get a Stragglers ladies team!</p>
Permissions	<p>Usual list of parish councils, urban councils, pubs, national trusts etc.</p> <p>Got Alan Mawdsley to do them all.</p>	<p>Worked well, with no problems (once we accepted that starting inside Hampton Court is not worth £3,000).</p>	<p>Do the same!</p> <p>Not aware of any altercations with residents, pubs, cricketers or councils, but would welcome feedback.</p>
T-shirts	<p>Evan designed graphic – single-sided. Roy ordered in April, assumed 2 x small, 6 x m, 3 x l for each team, plus an additional 40 for helpers.</p> <p>Ordered 46 stage winner shirts (s for ladies, m for men)</p> <p>Alex picked up and bagged for captains' meeting</p>	<p>Design was great, suppliers were good, delivery good, quality good.</p> <p>Distributing at captains' meeting worked well and saved a lot of fuss on race day (for captains as well as us).</p> <p>Ran out of small sizes, as ladies tend to prefer them, even though we ordered for 35 teams.</p> <p>Teams generally like having 2 extras for drivers.</p>	<p>Let's assume:</p> <p>4 x small, 6 x medium, 2 x large per team 60 extras.</p> <p>Plus the same stage winners</p>
Leaflets	<p>Evan amended graphic from last time</p> <p>Printed 600 prior to captains' meeting, and shared out on race day too.</p>	<p>Lots of very good feedback about the map summary and the detail table especially</p> <p>Have lots left over, but they are undated so can use next year</p>	<p>Same, but get 450 next time</p> <p>Print further in advance to get cheaper</p>
Race numbers	<p>Assigned in sets of 19 to each team and distributed in binders at captains' meeting (removing the 0 in each range!)</p>	<p>Worked well</p>	<p>Same</p>
Captains' information and meeting	<p>Got binders with driving instructions, summary race maps, leaflets, race numbers, team registration logon</p>	<p>Worked well</p>	<p>Need to book the date well in advance with the HC and with captains (at least a month).</p>
Team registrations	<p>Distributed logons in captains' binders</p>	<p>Worked brilliantly – we had all runners registered by the race start</p>	<p>Same</p>

Hotel bookings	<p>Booked in three separate bookings, as Premier Inn refused to do a group for one night</p> <p>Booked dinner for 9pm.</p>	<p>Dinner was good.</p> <p>Bookings caused a bit of a mess and delay.</p>	Possible hotel change
Finish arrangements	Usual barbecue, finish banner, awards etc.	Great. All worked well.	Same
Route	Amended stage 16 to avoid Chevening. Small amendments to 6 and 17.	Worked OK, although am concerned about the sheer toughness of stage 16, and may look at shortening by finishing 15 in Otford.	Possible route/changeover change for 15/16 – to be discussed.
Course preparation	<p>Pre-marked road turns with stickers, and Day 1 woods on Friday</p> <p>Mike B marked stage 3 and 21, Tim marked Epping Forest, Alex and I did the rest (mostly before the race).</p> <p>Amended route of stage 11 the night before due to crops.</p>	<p>Worked OK – pre-race markings were generally good enough that even if I hadn't been able to mark on the day, we'd have mostly been OK.</p> <p>Some runner problems on stage 3 and 9, suspect from removed markings. Stage 11 worked well in the end with Alex and me marshalling in the field at Paslow.</p> <p>As noted above, there's no avoiding the need to sawdust heavily on the NDW.</p>	<p>Need to get rain-resistant stickers. The previous year's ones seemed better from that point of view.</p> <p>Need to check Enfield Lock (stage 9) on the day, as problems here before</p> <p>Propose to get Tim to do all of stage 10 next time, and 19. That will allow me to be more available on the later stages.</p>

## During The Race:

Area	What we did	Good and bad	Next time
Timekeeping	<p>Had 6 teams, with at least 5-stage gap between each.</p> <p>Prepared biscuits and water for each.</p> <p>Reduced the volume of points in the briefing. They were all quite valid, but if you have more than three major ones, you can't expect runners to remember them. Briefing needs to be mainly "don't run across roads without looking".</p>	<p>Late arrivals from Frontrunners – let them self-time.</p> <p>Stage 2 team didn't reach finish in time. Filled in well from watch and were able to synchronise times, and even provide water.</p> <p>Discrepancy of 3 minutes between start times on one of Andrew's stages between leaflet and instructions.</p>	<p>Seemed to work well.</p> <p>Need to clarify exactly what we do if finish timekeepers don't arrive – next stage start must not leave. Not a problem here, but could have been.</p> <p>Need to clarify process for stopping a stage if marshals aren't in place.</p> <p>Need to add expected earliest finisher time (i.e. course record) to the instructions.</p>
First aid	<p>Two dedicated cars for first aiders, leap-frogging between stages with a detailed plan and timeline</p> <p>Dished out some water mid-stage as well as attending finishes</p>	<p>Worked much better than previously. Professional, knowledgeable and very well equipped.</p> <p>Needed for injury on stage 16 and collapse on stage 21</p> <p>Needed to increase payment, which seems fair given the huge time commitment.</p>	<p>Excellent.</p>
Marshalling	<p>Alan co-ordinated with captains, and drove ahead (with Peter W) to check major road crossings</p> <p>Some dedicated marshals too.</p>	<p>Worked well generally.</p> <p>Alan struggled to reach assigned team contacts on the phone.</p> <p>Struggled to reach road points on stage 10 in Epping Forest.</p>	<p>Need to clarify process for delaying a start if people not in place – not sure we'd have done this on stage 10</p> <p>Need team captains to assign someone who is specifically responsible for this</p> <p>Could use two more teams of dedicated marshals / water stations.</p>
Water stations	<p>Assigned a list of "must-have" points.</p> <p>Got first-aid cars to carry large quantities, to provide to teams if they were missing at key mid-points.</p>	<p>Worked OK. One query about whether there was one on Stage 22, but have checked and it was on Hampton Court Bridge.</p> <p>Main challenge is that first-aiders can obviously have higher priorities.</p>	<p>Need a dedicated car to check and if necessary cover mid-points (to be discussed).</p>
Results	<p>Allan stayed at home to process timekeepers' input, then came to finish and added as runners finished.</p>	<p>Brilliant – no problems at all.</p> <p>Did not take results boards, as HC was locked up when went to collect.</p>	<p>Same again!</p> <p>Travelling results boards are a waste of a car that could be checking road crossings. It was a nice point but everyone was using the online ones.</p>

Awards	<p>Got the results out immediately after the finish</p> <p>Awarded printed water bottles to category winners, as well as trophies.</p>	<p>Didn't have the Ladies' Plate (need to recover from Dulwich) or the Wissahickon Trophy (which I have at home).</p> <p>Some disappointment about the corporate prize. Need to decide before the race which ones are in contention, as the definition is vague.</p> <p>Point from some runners about the award for the oldest competitor – need to work that out.</p>	<p>Follow up prior to race to remind people to bring permanent trophies.</p> <p>Assign categories before the start and publish. If we manage to build up a university base, then get a new category.</p> <p>Perhaps check beforehand whether the Toilet Seat winner actually wants it. Some people like it, some don't.</p>
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