

Southern 50 2009

Team Report – 20th Torbay Scouts

It would appear the 20th have started quite a tradition, as 13 Devonshire teams drove up the M5 and along the M4 to Watlington this year. (We came in minibuses, not tractors, Fozzie!) Fortunately we didn't get a repeat of last year, where one bus broke down near Bristol. The hire bus that turned up to save them said they could drive them back to Torquay, to which came a chorus of "Reading's closer!!"

I have already read Fozzie's report so this one will be completely clear of Valentine's gags. However, we did all notice that Icknield Community College is in Love Lane, but this was second to noting the location of the local watering hole!

We entered three 50mile teams, all of them 16 or 17, three 50k teams, all of them 15 or 16, and, so we were told, a fourth 50mile team aged 19, 20, 21 and 22. So convinced were we that this team were doing 50mile, the 50k teams agreed to a bet to see which team would come in first.

Eventually we settled down for a good night's shuteye in the sports hall, but only after finding the trampoline, crash mats, football and piano! Well, we had to bring a little Devon madness to Oxfordshire!

It was only the next morning, as our 50mile teams began to leave, we noticed that team X-treme had yet to remove their carcasses from their sleeping bags. Anxious that they might miss their start time, we checked the list up by registration. Lo and behold, team X-treme were set to leave at 7:44, on the 50k route!

Off we (Guns 'n' Stoneses) set at 7:30, hair waxed, kit checked and heartily breakfasted. Our first checkpoint was a simple affair, down the road and up the hill, but all four of us almost slipped over on the treacherous ice so we kept a fairly low pace and concentrated on staying upright. Meanwhile we tuned up to a few good hiking songs, not least the school anthem, Jerusalem.

On the way to checkpoint 2 we found our first downhill, which was greeted by more signing and some heavy jogging. Having passed a few teams already we were feeling fired up, when it became our turn to watch quicker walkers pass us by, as Team X-treme

loomed atop the hill. They chased after us, but we held our ground and kept running. Age and stamina eventually told and they passed us amid laughs insults and the cry “Can’t stop, Phoenix Flyers behind us!” and carried on off out of sight. A little later we passed another of our teams, the Three Leg Bandits, and so went in pursuit of the fourth; If Carlsberg Did Teams...

We carried on jogging and skipping and signing Hakuna Matata loudly through checkpoints 3 and 4 but it was only when we reached checkpoint five and mapped out some more of the route (I’d come armed with a highlighter) that we began to realise it was a lot bigger than the 30k event we’d won last year, and slowed down.

All this time we’d noticed another team, two members of which would overtake us every now and then only to stop and wait for the other two. At first we thought they were just two strong walkers who’d dragged along two friends and we nicknamed them ‘Two-Man Team’. After a while, however, we noticed it wasn’t the same two members that walked off in front! We saw them countless times so it became our goal to beat ‘Two-Man Team’ rather than the 10-hour mark. Incidentally they nicknamed us ‘Team Rave’.

Still chasing after If Carlsberg Did Teams... and keeping up with Two-Man Team we approached one checkpoint by the side of the road to see The Three Leg Bandits just leaving. We just couldn’t believe they were beating us as we’d left them well behind about three hours ago. As we walked past them they announced with a smile they’d missed two checkpoints and disappeared back off into the forest, not to be seen again for a long time.

On leaving the checkpoint we were greeted by another surprise, If Carlsberg Did Teams... were just arriving! We’d somehow managed to pass them without seeing them in the woods so we exchanged a few hugs and carried on through the muddy part back to Watlington.

At this point I’d like to point out that mud just doesn’t come like that in Devon and it’s a good job too!

The last 10k or so were the hardest, but we were well-motivated by the straggling 30kers we were leaving behind us and the fact that we had recently seen Two-Man team heading in a very strange direction. I was the only one to have avoided blisters with the trusty

two-sock method, but all of us were getting a good biology lesson as bits of us we didn't know we had were hurting.

Finally back in Watlington, boots twice as heavy as when we started and surging down the main street, our leaders Paul and Dan and Team X-treme took 30 seconds out from watching the rugby to yell "Run you lazy lot!" out of the pub door. So run we did, down Love Lane (which seems so short when you drive it) and round the school three times (we still don't know why the finish is NEVER just the front door). Two-Man Team were nowhere to be seen, but we'd had a six minute head start on them.

Five minutes later they collapsed through the door.

After severe ablution we stayed up to watch our teams come in, and manage to nip to the pub in time for the last ten minutes of the rugby. In fact, we had to stay up until half past midnight to two of our teams in but they all made it.

All in all, it was a very successful day for the 20th. We drove up with 3 trophies and back with 6½, but a well done goes to all the teams that completed, and we will certainly remember this Southern 50 for a long time. Mostly for the right reasons but it wouldn't be the same without the pain (ask Jack).

Well done all 20th teams;

Devonshire Cream – Matt, Jack, Henry & Rob (50mile 13.52)
Weazle Wonderers – Tamsin, Charlie, Ben & Dan (50mile 18.27)
Team Testosterone – Joyce, Noo, Harry & Ahmed (50mile 18.27)
Team X-treme – Wheeler, Stu, Mikey & Sam (50k 7.22)
Guns 'n' Stoneses – Luke, Ben, Ollie & Yours Truly (50k 8.59)
If Carlsberg Did Teams... - Barclay, Nick & Jacob (50k 9.57)
Three Leg Bandits – Dan, James, Adam & Charles (50k 13.07)

And a special mention for Two-Man Team (aka 4th Southgate Rejects)

See you all next year!

Paul

Guns 'n' Stoneses Nav/guy who gets blamed when we get lost