



SOUTH WALES GROUP



"LEEKIE'S BLETHON"

DECEMBER 2021

A NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH WALES LDWA GROUP MEMBERS WRITTEN
BY SOUTH WALES LDWA GROUP MEMBERS.



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Chair's Update

So the year is drawing to a close and I really want to say thank you to our members, leaders and committee for keeping the club running throughout the year, for what has been an extraordinary time.

The AGM was excellent and we had a good turnout, discussed some interesting topics, and thank you to Karen for her interesting talk on assisting clubs with getting back on their feet again.

Its great to see Jamie lead the way by taking on the challenge walk coordinators role; there's a lot of enthusiasm in the club to start getting us back to normal again.

I'm sure there will be other challenges ahead of us, but we have proven to be strong and resilient through some really tough times. I'd like to finish by saying thank you for everything you have done and achieved over the year, and I look forward to our Christmas walk and walking with you all in 2022.

P.S let's finish with a bang - Don't forget to register for the Christmas walk !! 😊

Jason (Chair)



Walk Secretary's Update

I can't quite believe this year is almost over; at times it's gone too slowly and at other times too fast (usually the fun stuff is gone in a flash and the difficult stages feel like you're walking through glue, but such is life). However, as the year draws to a close, it feels like our plans are really coming together for the walks programme and challenge events. We've had such a good mix of walks in the programme recently; I've really enjoyed the variety of longer and shorter and hilly and more leisurely walks. I'm so grateful to everyone who has stepped forward to lead, a heartfelt thank you to each of you. Things are looking promising for the New Year too and I for one am relying on Jason's pudding puncher to cleanse me of the Christmas over indulgence.

I managed to tick off another bucket list destination in October, visiting Hadrian's Wall. I know many of you will have done the Hadrian 100 or have walked the whole route, end to end, but we did a small and very beautiful section between Halt Whistle and Housesteads, returning via Vindolanda (which I nicknamed Vinaloo, as it's the only way I could remember the name). We'd had torrential rain for most of the week up to the day of this walk and then, for one day only, the skies cleared, the sun came out, everything dried up and we had the most perfect walking day, with spectacular views. I had no idea what to expect and thought I might be walking beside an oversized dry stone wall. How wrong I was! I was so impressed with the Roman engineering and the turrets and mile castles. I felt I had a whole history lesson condensed into 16 miles of landscape. I'll leave you with a picture of me and the wall and the sunshine.

Finally I just want to say thank you, to everyone who walks with us. It's been such a tough year on so many levels and I have cherished my walking days, the companionship that you all bring and the laughter and conversation that we share every time we go out.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.
Sara



MERCHANDISE

Beat the "Covid Blues" with Leekie merchandise.

Replace that faded, ripped,
snagged and much loved T-Shirt!
Wear "Leekie" with pride!

Our items include:

- T-Shirts (large badge)
- T-Shirts (small badge on left chest) out of stock
- Multi Functional Head Tube
- South Wales LDWA Oval Badge
- Rhondda Rollercoaster Badge
- Leekie Mugs (too expensive to post so only available in person from Judith)

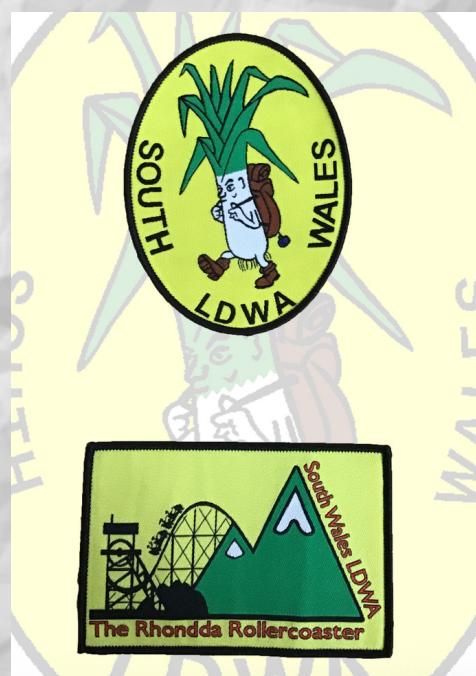
Prices

T-Shirts £12.00 (+£1.64 P&P)

Head Tubes £6.00 (+£1.64 P&P)

Badges £2.00 (+76p P&P)

To place your order, email Judith Fox (treasurer@southwalesldwa.org) and she'll provide details on how to pay.



"GO AND GET YOUR MEDAL - THE MONTANE LAKELAND 100"

By Rod Hollands



'Go and get your medal', said the lovely lady checkpoint marshal as I left Chapel Stile checkpoint in the glorious pre-sunrise soft light and frigid air, with 95 miles done and just 10.5 miles to go. So I did!

If someone had told me, at the pass known as Barrow Door, (separating the Wainwrights of Barrow and Outerside) that I would finish I would have told them; 'no chance whatsoever'. Braithwaite village, hosting checkpoint five, was 1.5 miles away; the checkpoint closed at 06:00 and it was gone 05:00 when I reached Barrow Door.

I arrived in Coniston on Monday, four days before the event started, allowing plenty of time to relax and do some local walks. I camped at Coniston Hall, about a mile from the town.

I walked the 16 mile circuit around Coniston Water on Tuesday. It was uncomfortably warm and this bothered me, with the event imminent.

I used Wednesday to purchase new water bottles as my (flexible) bottles made the water non-potable. A pretty vital purchase, with what the weather ultimately did. A short walk to Tilberthwaite on Thursday enabled me to recce the last 3.5 miles of the event. The heat was unpleasant, not abating until nightfall.

Friday was burning hot throughout the day and this probably played a part in the issues many runners had during the event. I registered early on and spent the rest of the time up until the start of the 100 trying to keep cool (literally and metaphorically).

The event started at 18:00. It was still stiflingly hot and the first 8 miles to checkpoint one at Seathwaite were on a rocky path and road in full sun. I was gradually cooking although unaware of this at the time.



I was feeling good and made fast progress (as a walker in a fell running ultra) to checkpoint two at Boot. On leaving this checkpoint, a runner suffering from heat exhaustion was being carried back, he was unable to walk, his legs dragging along the ground. Certainly an unnerving sight and I took notice (hoping, of course, that he would be ok).

I continued making good progress to

Wasdale Head, arriving almost an hour before the cut off time of 00:30 Saturday. A brief stop and then it was time to tackle the significant pass known as Black Sail. I climbed this strongly and started the descent into Ennerdale Valley.

Here is where things started going wrong. It is hard to describe but I knew my stomach was in a mess. I felt sick, but not as one normally does. The energy literally went from me in an instant and I was reduced to a shuffle.

I resisted the (massive) temptation to rest on the outside benches at Black Sail YH, knowing that I now faced a very real possibility of being timed out at Buttermere or Braithwaite, the next two checkpoints respectively.

The ascent out of Ennerdale to Scarth Gap was purgatory; I struggled to get up it and knew I was in real trouble. It didn't help that, at the top of the pass, my (rechargeable) head torch suddenly died, and, to further compound the problem, the second (identical) head torch didn't work at all. I was down to my final (hand) torch with part used batteries already in, and a spare set of new lithium batteries.



The descent down to Buttermere gave me some respite but the flat walk of a mile and a half to the checkpoint did little to help. All my stomach could manage at the checkpoint was a strawberry milk shake.

I left for Braithwaite at around 02:30. This beautiful path contours around Whiteless Pike and Crag Hill before leaving the Sail Beck Valley, crossing between Sail and Causey Pike to then contour around Outerside, before finally crossing the pass known as Barrow Door and descending to Braithwaite.

Ten minutes into this stretch, my torch batteries died. I was now relying on my spare batteries to get me through the rest of the night and the whole of the following night. I became paranoid over conserving these batteries (fortunately they were lithium) and turned the torch off at 04:00 as there was by then just enough light to see the path.



Barrow Door was my low point. My stomach was still non functioning and I was totally up against it time wise and with an unreliable lighting situation to boot. On the descent I decided to abandon the walk at Braithwaite.

I was all in.

I then remembered Spine Race 2020 and how I felt after some recovery, but then I had had to stop. I had been ill then so had no other option. Nevertheless, I was gutted for ages.

I was not out of this event.

I decided that I would not quit but would continue until either being timed out, or reaching the finish.

All I could consume at Braithwaite was a small bowl of rice pudding and a drink of cola. I find cola utterly vile but am aware that it can help settle a dodgy stomach.

I had just 30 minutes in hand on leaving Braithwaite, but, hey, those are bonus minutes. I was talking myself up. Little changed in the 8.5 miles to Blencathra and all I could eat there was a small piece of cake. I tried to eat a second piece but had to throw it away.

I left for Dockray, 7.7 miles away with again around half an hour in hand. This leg involves a stiff ascent onto Threlkeld Common and the Old Coach Road to Dockray. The sun was now panning down again although a fresh cool breeze was helping to cool me down. The climb was hard, however the coach road was fairly flat so I made reasonable progress. It was interesting seeing the course of the road; three years ago, the first time I did the event, the clog reduced visibility to 40 yards.

Dockray, checkpoint seven, was located in a beautiful rural setting above the village. It had leek and potato soup, and ham sandwiches amongst other fare. I was hungry. I scoffed several sandwiches and two large mugs of soup. My stomach (unbeknown to me until this moment) had sorted itself out at last. It was the first 'proper' food I had eaten on the event and thus, in 49 miles.

Dockray, for me, was the most important checkpoint on the entire event. It was the turning point. It had the right food and, from then, I never doubted that I would finish; my lighting situation now became my prime concern.

I made excellent progress to Dalmain, arriving with two hours in hand. Here, I wolfed down two bowls of beef stew. I was eating like a horse, but I guess I was severely depleted energy wise, so it was Calorie Replacement Therapy (acknowledgement to Mr David Morgan) whilst out on the course as such.

The 7.1 miles to Howtown were done in the heat of the day. I only stopped briefly here as I had stayed at Dalmain for over an hour, way too long.

The stretch to Mardale Head involved ascending the Fusedale Valley to then cross High Street and finally, a four mile slog along the rock-strewn path flanking Haweswater Reservoir. It would require at least 3.5 hours to cover and I did fret over this as I crossed High Street, the result being a fast walk along the Haweswater path.



Mardale Head checkpoint was midge infested. There were clouds of the pests and I fled to tackle Gatescarth Pass after quickly wolfing down a mug of the same delicious leek and potato soup that was at Dockray. Respect to the checkpoint staff for tolerating the midges, it must have been unpleasant for them.

Gatescarth Pass is, in my view, second only to Sail Pass in difficulty. It is one brutal climb. Certainly, earlier in the event, when so depleted of energy, this would have posed a significant challenge; as it was I climbed it well; to escape the midges I guess.



It was now 22:00 and getting dark. I quickly descended into the Longsleddale Valley so as to refrain from using my torch until absolutely necessary. The walk along the flat ground was safer to traverse in the deep gloaming than the descent.

I reached Sadgill at 22:30 and only then did I have to use the torch.

Kentmere checkpoint provided some delicious pasta and I scoffed two full bowls of it. I could easily have eaten

more. I left at 00:30 for the tricky, rock-strewn footpath known as Garburn Pass. Not really a footpath but more like a boulder field! I was anxious to at least get this difficult stretch out of the way whilst I had a functioning torch; I was prepared, if the situation dictated, to use my phone's light to navigate by and had brought my second external battery (from my bag taken to Dalnain) with me in case this emergency arose. I would have done anything to get to the finish line and that medal.

Ironically, at the start of Robin Lane (out of Troutbeck between Kentmere and Ambleside) I passed a runner whose torch had stopped working. He recharged the battery whilst walking with me and using the light from my torch to navigate. If ever there is camaraderie it is on an event like this.

Ambleside was reached at 02:50. An outside checkpoint so a brief stop and then on to Chapel Stile. I tagged on to a runner who knew the route and we made rapid progress, arriving at Chapel Stile at 05:00. I had two bowls of vegetable soup here before leaving at 05:30 for Tilberthwaite.

Throughout the event I had not worn a second layer over my tee shirt. Whilst this would be obvious during the day, it was a different situation in the wee hours. It was bitterly cold when I left Chapel Stile, but my core heat was so high that I warmed up immediately even though I only had a tee shirt on as my top layer.

It was now light and my torch had not let me down. My attention turned now to getting back to Coniston inside 40 hours. The route was getting busy now with 50 mile entrants (who had more time to finish) and I was anxious to keep a clear path, especially the one skirting Blea Moss. As I knew this path from 2018, I passed a dozen 50 mile entrants before reaching it and had a good traverse of it as a result.

At Tilberthwaite I enjoyed a cheese toastie before tackling the last 3.5 miles to the finish. I hammered the last mile, collecting other 100 mile entrants on the way (telling them we could beat 39 hours) and I finished at 08:53. 38 hours, 53 minutes.

It was announced on my arrival that I had walked the entire route.



Answers To October's Leekie's Brain Teaser



Safe Fodky = Offa's Dyke
foresight sharpen = Three Rings of Shap
List Wand Soon Teal Air = Snowdonia Slate Trail
Eup Who Ayes Oh = Hope House Way
She Firewall Alteration = Heart Of Wales Line Trail
Anstice Icy War = Cistercian Way
Allard Bladders Nonstriker = Landsker Borderlands Trail
Wager Yow = Gower Way
Peaty Wyn = Epynt Way
Intrascrotal Wealthless = North Wales Castles Trail

One South Wales LDWA member entered the competition.
Congratulations to Paul Thomas for sending the first correct set of answers!



The presentation of a highly coveted Leekie Mug
by secretary, Simon Pickering to winner Paul!



The South Wales LDWA Group has an active WhatsApp community page.
Here members share their walking experiences, post inspiring photos
and keep up to date with South Wales LDWA news. Want to join? Please
contact Simon Pickering at: sec@southwalesldwa.org.uk

"HEDGELAYING"

By Hugh Woodford



As walkers we are all used to seeing hedges, but how often do we give any thought as to how they get to look as they are?

During the time I studied forestry at Coleg Gwent, Usk, between 2002-04, the most enjoyable of the varied practical work I did was hedgelaying. Always done as part of a group, some of my handiwork can be seen as you walk along the Usk Valley Walk between the College Campus and Prioress Mill.

It is a country skill practised mainly in the UK & Ireland, with many regional variations in style and technique, and is the only hedgerow maintenance method currently available which promotes regrowth from ground level and which will ensure the health and longevity of the hedgerow. With more than 30 UK styles, hedgelaying is the process of bending and partially cutting (pleaching) through stems of a line of shrubs or small trees near ground level and arching the stems, without breaking them, so they can grow horizontally and be intertwined. The main reason for laying hedges is to make fields stockproof, ensuring livestock is kept in the right place, whilst also providing shelter for livestock and a haven for wildlife. The time for laying is between October and the end of March (start of bird nesting season), while the sap is down.



The main tree species that are laid are hawthorn, blackthorn and hazel. On sloping ground, hedges should be laid uphill as the sap travels upwards, commencing at the top of the slope and working downhill.

It is hard work, with the risk of getting painful thorns in hands, so a thick pair of gloves is essential. The main tool used is a billhook, while saw, axe, slasher, maul are also required. A chainsaw is often used these days, but should only be used while wearing correct PPE.

The first task is to clear rubbish, weeds and ivy from the base of the hedge. Next, select which pleachers to keep, then cut out what is not wanted, as low to the ground as possible. The hedge is then laid by cutting (one at a time) pleachers part way through (about 80%) as near to the ground as possible, forming a hinge, so they can be bent over at an angle of between 30-35 degrees.



They are laid on top of one another and usually need to be pressed down to maintain the required height of the hedge (usually 4' or so). As the work proceeds, pre-cut stakes, approximately 2x2" and up to 5' long, should be knocked into the ground at 2-3 ' intervals using the maul, and angled uphill, to ensure the hedge remains firm. The remaining stubs at the base of the pleachers should be cut off, thereby eliminating crevices which may trap rainwater and cause rotting.



There are always a few gaps, and these need to be filled with some of the unwanted pieces that were cut out at the start. Pre-cut hazel bindings/heatherings, approximately 1.5" diameter and up to 12' long, are then interwoven between the

stakes at the top of the hedge to keep the pleachers from springing up. The maul is used to tamp down the heatherings so that the height of the hedge is uniform along its length. A chainsaw can then be used to cut the tops of the stakes so they are all the same height, making the finished hedgerow look neat and tidy. The pile or row of unused brash then needs to be disposed of, either by burning, chipping, or removal.



Since I left Coleg Gwent, I have only done hedgelaying on 2 occasions, the second being in February 2020 on a 1 day course at Kate Humble's farm between Monmouth and Trellech. It's not cheap (over £100) but, as my Christmas present, it was thoroughly enjoyable.

Being able to look at the finished article always gives me a great sense of pride and satisfaction and I look forward to being able to do more hedgelaying in the years to come.



The National Hedgelaying Society was established in the early 1970's and holds Autumnal competitions across the UK. Its patron is HRH Prince Charles. I have been to a couple of competitions in the Cotswolds as a spectator, and saw Jeremy Clarkson at one of them!

This newsletter can only be published because South Wales LDWA Group members write articles and submit them for publication. So, a big thank-you to the members who have contributed to date. Nobody will ever have an article turned away, so do please consider getting in touch in order to share your walking related experiences!

Offa's Twisted Wye Kanteer



A Date For Your Diaries!

Sunday 24th April 2022

Thanks so much to the South Wales LDWA Group volunteers who will be hosting the event! Now that we have enough people to 'run' the day, all other South Wales LDWA Group members are welcome to enter!

Ang	Nisha
Norma	Guido
Enrique	Stuart
Andrew	Ferne
Simon	Jason
Tony	David
Jamie	

For more information visit our [website](#)

To enter the event, click [here!](#) 

Leekie's Brain Teazer

UK Challenge Events

Entries to be sent to **southwalesldwa@live.co.uk** by 28.02.22. The first correct entry drawn from a well worn Tilley Hat will win either a Leekie Buff, a Leekie mug or a Leekie badge.

Clue: Some (but not all) of the challenge events are no longer being held.

1. **asymmetric uphills**
2. **foresight sharpen**
3. **adderley lawn weens**
4. **ardour overborne suit**
5. **arnhem hurt odor**
6. **aggy cathyleen lovell**
7. **northern thalamic**
8. **alaska lows screw**
9. **bitchy mell shikoku**
10. **afghan alcott firm**



"IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY - A"

By Shirley Hume



**If you go down to the woods today
You'd better not go alone.
It's lovely down in the woods today
But safer to stay at home.
For every hazard known to man
Is going there, as fast as it can
Today's the day the walkers will start their 100**

[With due apologies to the author of 'The Teddy Bears Picnic']

Never one to voluntarily read, prepare, or in any other way endorse a ‘risk assessment’ I viewed the 2012 Games 100 route description with a slightly apprehensive eye, when all 39 pages spewed out of the printer. To be fair, [although I’m not quite sure why I should be], 4 pages of this contained the glossary of terms - instructions on how to cross stiles, roads etc so that anyone who has somehow managed to enter, having completed a 50 mile qualifying event, but hasn’t yet mastered the complicated art of perambulation should be fully briefed.

18th July 2012

Main Event

Version 4b

2012 Games Hundred Route Description

Emergency Tel. Nr. 07775 296585

Abbreviations

ahd = (cont) ahead ignoring crossing tracks and paths to left and right

Ave = Avenue	B = bear	btw = between
BW = bridleway	BY = byway	cont = continue
CP = check point	CR = central reservation	encl = enclosed
F = fork	FP = footpath	
GCW = Green Chain Walk	immed = immediately	GR = O.S. Explorer grid ref (<u>not GPS</u>)
GW = Greensand Way	L = left	junc = junction
KG = kissing gate	M = miles	LHS = left hand (side)
LL = London Loop	PLX = Pelican crossing	NDW = North Downs Way
opp = opposite		R = Right

RWNP = Walk on right hand side of road when there is no pavement but well before sharp right hand bends cross with care to **LHS** and after the bend re-cross with care to **RHS**.

RH(S) = right hand (side)	RD = road	Rd = Road (in names)
ST = stile	St = Street (in names)	T= turn
thru=through	T-junc = a T junction	TK = track
TL = turn left	TP = Thames Path	TR = turn right
WM = waymark(ed)	X = crossing)	
(xxx°) = magnetic compass bearing (initial path direction)		
yds = yards	Y-junc = a Y junction	ZBX = zebra crossing

!!! = beware (of named hazard(s)) defined in the event's risk assessment

Place Names and Notices

CAPITALS = name appears on OS Explorer Map

Italics = Street name, house name or notice that can be seen on route

[Road Name] = Road name (or Explorer place name) not visible, included as location data

Interpretation of Text

The phrase 'pass xxx on L' is to be interpreted as 'cont ahd to pass xxx on your L'.

Use of the Abbreviation WM

In this route description the abbreviation **WM** (waymark) is used to refer to:

- a) posts with directional signs for footpaths and/or bridleways;
- b) posts with directional signs for named locations;

In a few dull moments at work I decided to count the number of hazards listed in the RD, (excluding road crossings, which on their own would tax the mathematical skills of an eminent Maths professor north of the border), and lost the will to live at around 125!!

Now to fill space in this newsletter I could list them all, but instead I offer you a sample of the perils that awaited the intrepid band of SW members who entered the 2012 Games 100.

In the first 25 miles your main problem will be deciding how to cross the road – should it be:
With extreme care

With extreme care

With extreme care

[note the subtle]

With great care

With great

OR, in the absence of any instruction, should you just wander across without looking and take your chances?? You are, however, reminded to be careful as there might be cars on the road and they might be coming from either direction!! Would you believe it – how inconsiderate can these motorists be?

From then on in you will be lucky to escape with your life as you move into that remote area beyond mapping, locally known as the Surrey hills [There be dragons!]. Run for your life, with golfers to the left of you, golfers to the right of you [all, amazingly, playing golf], half crazed golf buggies [with or without the golfers on board] and mis-hit golf balls flying from all directions. Diving into the woods you might expect a respite from these terrors, but no – they are to be replaced by a hazard too terrible to have its name spoken in public - !!! roots !!! These terrifying creatures are at times accompanied by rocks or ruts [and occasionally both] but the most horrific of them all is when the roots and the rocks team up with [wait for it] sand. Now I admit I might not be the most risk aware person on the planet, but can anyone enlighten me as to how sand can be a hazard in rural Surrey? We are not talking the Sahara desert [unless you are seriously lost of course] and I for one am at a loss to imagine how this natural phenomenon is going to do more than annoy me mightily if it is very soft.



The author with Chris at the start of the Games 100 in 2012

Other than that you will have to evade the marauding road humps, the sinister raised water hatches and drain covers, crawl on your stomach to avoid the overhanging branches and pole vault over the fallen trees. Stumps, steps, holes, boggy patches, electric fences, barbed wire, wonky stiles, collapsed fences, rails, uneven ground, potholes, drainage channels, low flying aircraft, dogs, cattle, horses [and their boxes] and even deer all get a mention – but my favourite is the

multiple warning when you are walking on a cycle path [shared use] – ‘Beware cyclists’. Who would have thought it? There was I anticipating herds of rhino charging along the cycle paths of southern England and all we get are MAMIL **

Could the intrepid team survive this life-threatening challenge? Will they last be heard of being chased down a deep rut by a gang of roots, while trying to fight off the challenge of a herd of cattle on golf buggies armed with a selection of malignant road humps? All will be revealed in the next edition of Leekies Blether, provided the author has not been trapped in a drainage channel or kidnapped by a golf buggy in the intervening hazard strewn selection of group walks. Sleep well fellow walkers – please don’t have nightmares [small prize to the first person who recognises where this last phrase originated].

** A hazard known in cycling circles as ‘middle aged men in lycra’



Leekie Meets

Kathryn Gordon



1 How long have you been an active member of the South Wales LDWA Group?

I joined in October 2018 so I've been a member for 3 years.

2 Where did you hear about the Group?

I previously walked with the Ramblers and met Gwyn, creator of the infamous Rhondda Rollercoaster. He suggested that as I was keen to participate in more strenuous walks to consider joining the LDWA. I took his advice and haven't looked back!

3 What do like best about the Group?

It's not just the fantastic walks but the amazing people I have met. Everyone has been so supportive. The group has inspired me to keep pushing myself to achieve that little bit more than what I thought I could.

4 Where is your favourite walking area in the South Wales LDWA Group area?

One of my favourite walks is the Llanbedr Horseshoe in the Black Mountains so predominately around that area. When the weather is fine the views are amazing. I also enjoy coastal walks and living in South Wales you get the best of both!

5 How many LDWA 100 mile walks have you completed?

None to date but I have qualified for the next one so possibly one pending.

6 What is your favourite challenge event?

I haven't participated in many challenge events but I did enjoy the Cotswold Ring as it's such a lovely area, great route and my first 50.

7 You arrive at a checkpoint and you're offered pasta or chips. What will you choose?

It would have to be pasta, preferably spag bol.

8 Do you wear shoes or boots?

I have always worn shoes. I'm currently into wearing trail shoes for the summer but as winter is approaching, I'll have to resort back to my waterproof walking shoes.

9 What is your favourite sandwich filling on a walk?

Sandwich filling would have to be egg mayo.

10 What's your ideal walking distance?

This time of year it would have to be about 20 miles with an early start so you get a full day's walking in and get back in time to watch Strictly!