

Taking the long route home



Surrey's top police officer, Chief Constable Mark Rowley, again set the pace during the Surrey Care Trust's sponsored walk of marathon proportions through the picturesque Surrey Hills.

STEPS Across Surrey, now in its 6th year and sponsored by Fidelity International, followed a 26-mile route through the Surrey Hills from Guildford and back again. Around 50 people took part this year and more than half of them took on the challenge of the marathon length, with the others choosing the "gentler" 10, 13 and 20 mile options.

Mr Rowley and his walking partner, Surrey's former Chief Constable Denis O'Connor, who is now Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (they are pictured top left) were among the first past the finishing post, arriving back in Guildford well before tea time, improving on last year's performance by almost an hour.

The last of the triumphant marathoners clocked in around 8p.m. after 12 long hours of trekking along the North Downs Way and Greensand Way, enjoying spectacular views, discovering some of Surrey's hidden

pastoral corners and 'conquering' south east England's highest point, Leith Hill.

The first walker over the finishing line in an excellent time of 7 hours and 45 minutes was Nick Oliver (pictured left, second from top) from Twickenham.

Nick, who has scaled plenty of heights in his time, thinks that the STEPS walk is on a par with even the Yorkshire 3 Peaks: "This is the second year I've been part of it, and I'd forgotten just how energy sapping the constant ups and downs are. It's up there with some of the toughest walks I've done, without a doubt."

Funds from STEPS Across Surrey go specifically to the Surrey Care Trust's education programmes for young people, in particular its Learning Centres which offer an alternative education to teenagers who struggle to fit into mainstream school. The Trust has Learning Centres in Redhill, Staines and Woking.

The Surrey Care Trust will raise at least £9,000 from the walk and has already set a date for the STEPS Across Trek 2010 which will

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