



# CHAGFORD CHALLENGE

**If you're looking for an event to train for this summer then why not sign up for our latest 'Big Tick' the Chagford Challenge, which has moved to a new autumn date this year?**

**T**he well-established and popular Chagford Challenge, organized by the Cornwall & Devon Long Distance Walking Association (LDWA), is primarily a walking event although entries are accepted from runners. There are thirty, twenty-one and seventeen mile options and the event starts and finishes at the Jubilee Hall in Chagford. The first Chagford Challenge in April 1990 was organized by Peter

Cooper and ably assisted by his wife Betty, who organized the catering at the Jubilee Hall and at the various checkpoints around the routes.

Peter and Betty, were early members of the LDWA who had previously organized walks in Shropshire and Yorkshire. When they moved to Chagford and joined the Cornwall & Devon LDWA they suggested a moorland challenge event based at Chagford.

For the last three years

organization of the event has passed to Barry and Rosemary Olver, assisted by approximately thirty members of the Cornwall & Devon LDWA marshalling the event in various roles.

"The most challenging part of organising an event like this is the catering, supplying enough food and drinks at the base and for the outdoor checkpoints, as none of them have cooking facilities," says Barry. "The admin, though not an easy task, is a lot easier than it would have been in Peter's



## KEY FACTS

**Date:** Sunday 20 September 2015

**Entries open:** The beginning of May

**Maximum number of entries:** 200

**Distances:** 30 miles, 21 miles, 17 miles

**Fastest times:** 30 miles – 6 hours (average 9.25)  
21 miles – 6 hours (average 7.75)  
16 miles – 3.5 hours (average 6.75)

**Further Information:**

[www.ldwa.org.uk/CornwallAndDevon](http://www.ldwa.org.uk/CornwallAndDevon)

time because we're able to use computers, email and the internet."

Each of the last three events has been memorable in its own way. In 2012 it was a wet and windy day making it difficult for the walkers and runners but even more challenging for the marshals staffing the outdoor checkpoints. There was also a visit from the fire brigade to deal with smoke coming from under the warming cabinet in the kitchen of the Jubilee Hall.

In 2013 the event took place during a very cold spell and the temperature never rose above -2 all day. Again this was very difficult for the walkers and runners, but even more challenging for the marshals staffing the outdoor checkpoints in the very low temperatures. However, last year, which was the 25th anniversary of the event, saw perfect walking conditions, if anything a little on the hot side.

The routes used today are still loosely based on the route Peter devised in 1990, with changes being made by the different organizers through the years. The entrants are supplied with a route description: in Peter's day that would consist of just a list of grid references and you would have had to work out your own route. Today the route description is a detailed list of instructions enabling the walker/runner to navigate their way around the route.

The Chagford Challenge is not a race: it is a personal challenge for the individual to complete the route they have chosen within the eleven-hour time limit. Because of this results are not published, however the fastest and average times for the distances are recorded.

For the past three years the Chagford Challenge has been held at the end of March, the same weekend that the clocks change. The entry list opened at the beginning of November and all the two hundred places were normally taken by the end of December.

Over the years the thirty mile route has proved the most popular and attracted the greatest number of entrants. Walkers and runners of different ages, abilities and experience enter the event. For some it is their first challenge walk, while other more experienced walkers/runners use the thirty mile route as a training walk for the LDWA's "100" that takes place in May. There are also a number of schools that enter teams, using the Chagford Challenge as part of their training for Ten Tors.

This year the date of the event has changed from March to the end of September to avoid the lambing and bird nesting season. The organizers feel that this change will give them more scope for routes on the open moor and hopefully better weather. It also means that readers still have a chance to enter! ■