

Ten Tors 45b Mile Challenge report Lottie Humpris

Team: Lottie Humpris, Lucy Murphy, Alice Haworth, Tia Smye, Tom Owens, Maddie Fryer-Watson

The atmosphere on arrival at Okehampton Camp on Friday afternoon, was already incredible, even without all the teams present. The camp at first glance didn't seem to have the capacity to fit the 400 teams who were competing in, let alone the supporters, team managers and the military – but somehow it did. It was packed with nervous energy and eager anticipation for the next day and we all felt it. My team included Tia Smye, Alice Haworth, Lucy Murphy, Tom Owen and Maddy Fryer Watson.

We had the opportunity to look round the Engagement Village on the Friday – where there was equipment on display like the Parachute display stand and representatives from organisations such as the St John Ambulance and Royal British Legion, where we received a few freebies (which was of course a bonus). Then we went back to our base for pasta, cooked by the staff and an early night.

We woke up the next day at 5am to the sound of *Chariots of Fire* playing over the speakers. We were prepared and ready at the start line, before the start at 7 am. There were prayers, a pep talk from Colonel Professor Sir Jonathan Van Tam and artillery guns (instead of a starting pistol) and we were off. Nothing can prepare you for that rush of nerves and chaos as all 2,400 participants charged forward and we were engulfed in a mass of giant rucksacks, in the midst of the thick fog.

We made good time following the track up to Dinger Tor and reached the first checkpoint at 08:08. We met many different teams throughout the challenge and got talking to many like-minded people, all giving words of encouragement and motivation to each other. We continued to make good time but unfortunately at checkpoint 3, Maddy had to pull out due to a shoulder injury. Sad to see Maddy go, we kept going and got through the next checkpoints; we battled with difficult terrain and very boggy conditions on the moor but saw some amazing views on the way. We all felt reassured seeing the other 45-mile team on the way along, and on the occasion when we hit roads, people honked their cars in support. Unluckily however, Tom began to suffer with his feet, which led to him falling out at checkpoint 6, at Peat Cot. Again, sad to see another team member go, and with the light fading, we knew we needed to keep going and try and make camp at Two Bridges. The fog set in, but we all put in a great effort and reached Two Bridges; putting up tents around 22:30 in torch light. After what felt like a long night, we got going in the morning, getting up at 04:45 am and passed Longaford Tor, after some difficult navigating.

After an eventful river crossing in which I fell in (more swam than crossed), we navigated our way to Holming Beam but missed out on the 9 am crash time by just 10 minutes. We were gutted. Alice had suffered with a sore ankle throughout but had impressively carried on and after reaching Holming Beam had it checked out – we were all amazed at her ability to have persevered through the pain.

Overall, on reflecting on the challenge we covered 37 miles and it was an amazing experience. It has given me a taste for hiking and I hope to do more events like it in the future. Although very disappointing not to finish, we all got on well as a team and felt proud to represent school. Finally, a big thank you to Capt. Holt, Mr Sustek and Mr Kirby – we really couldn't have had this experience without them.