

## Youngsters break a hill-climbing record!

Hiking long-distance is a challenge for most people so it was an impressive sight to see over 700 boy and girl Scouts aged 8 to 17 finishing hikes of up to 80km/50 miles this March. The youngsters were taking part in the 'Endurance' event which is organized every year by Buckinghamshire Scouts volunteers.

This year was particularly special because, coinciding with The Ridgeway's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a National Trail, the event record was broken for the fastest team climbing Coombe Hill, near Wendover!

Coombe Hill is a special hill because it is where The Ridgeway was officially opened as a National Trail 50 years ago in 1973.

It took just 22 minutes and 2 seconds for a group of teenage Scouts Explorers (photo opposite) to climb Coombe Hill as part of their 60km hike. The summit of Coombe Hill is 260m above sea level, second only to Haddington Hill nearby which is Buckinghamshire's county high point standing at 267m. There are great views to enjoy after a hard climb - over the Prime Minister's house at Chequers and much further away, on a clear day, to the Berkshire Downs along The Ridgeway.



Another impressive time by Scout Explorers was 17 hours and 43 minutes to complete 80km by a team from Chesham Bois. The fastest out of county team was from Halesowen in the West Midlands (photo below), finishing in 20 hours and 50 minutes. Luca, aged 17,



who had travelled down from the West Midlands very early that morning said, "I did the hike because a friend asked me to do it with him. I'm using it as part of my Duke of Edinburgh Award. I've never been on The Ridgeway before, and there are some great views."

Many of the Cubs hadn't previously walked 10km and were very proud to get their Hikes Away badge. Several Explorer Scouts were using the hike to fundraise for their trip to Korea for the World Scout Jamboree later this year.

All the winning teams were awarded prizes donated by the charity Friends of the Ridgeway to mark The Ridgeway's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The older Scouts were given a mapbook showing the full 140km/87 miles of The Ridgeway route to inspire future adventures, whilst the younger Scouts were awarded a Ridgeway badge. A new visitor leaflet about the Trail, which includes a large illustrated map of The Ridgeway route, was also given out as a souvenir from the day.