

Long Distance Walkers Association

ESSEX & HERTS GROUP



NEWSLETTER No. 137 **February 2021**

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Front cover: Suzina, Liz and Jane on Steve's Ingatestone Christmas Extravaganza walk.
Photo credits: Steve, Gill, Rob. Laurie, Dennis, Dee, Peter T, Peter A., Ian

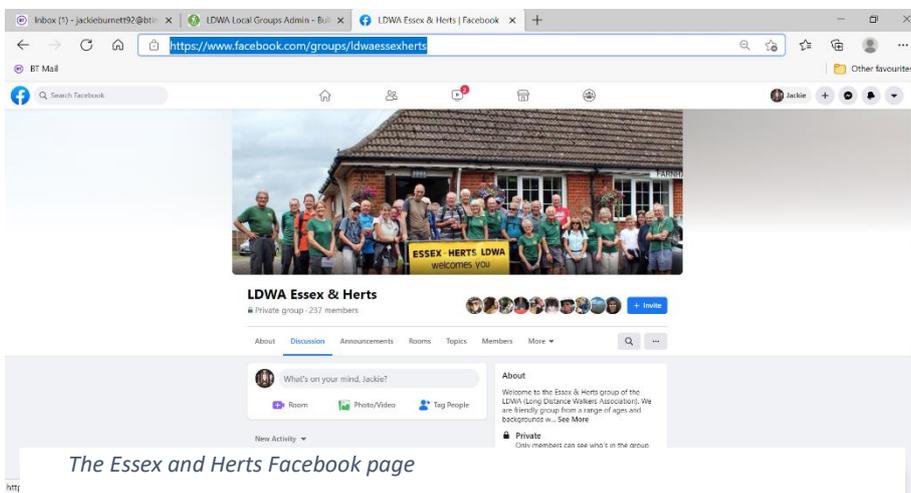
Chair's Report

Your Committee – myself, Jackie, Elaine, Peter, Peter, Brian, Rita, Ginny and Richard – met formally over Zoom five times during the year, both for planned committee meetings and extras as and when the situation required it. I would like to thank them all for their excellent work in such difficult and uncertain times. The Committee agreed it was still necessary to meet and we started to use the Zoom video conferencing system. This proved invaluable and enabled us to take decisions as things evolved over the summer.

Unfortunately, a lot of our plans couldn't come to fruition because of the Covid-19 pandemic. When we sat at the AGM last year, little did we know how things were to play out. We were discussing how to spend the additional funds from challenge events (including for the LDWA website) without knowing that this was not going to be an issue! With the Government's full lockdown starting on 23 March for three months, many of us thought it would all be over by the summer and things could return to normal, but here we are nearly a year later, and we're still not able to meet up. We were able, for a brief spell, to meet in groups of 6, but it was short-lived. Thanks to the committee, Walks Day went ahead (albeit virtually) and many of us were able to share our experiences that day over social media. In addition, many of the group have been meeting up to walk in pairs and small groups to keep the walking flame alive! It's lovely to see the photos that pop up from time to time on the Facebook page.

Many other functions have continued as normal. Jackie has continued to provide members with information and news through the newsletter and the monthly updates. How she has continued to manage to find content throughout the period is testament to her ability to collate stories, and also encourage a few of you into adding your own submission!

Myself and Ginny have kept the Facebook account going, trying to ensure that there is always content on there weekly, if not more. We have also had a few new members join us during this period, probably in the hope that they can join us once we return to normal life! Certainly the first part of the pandemic, many people found a new love of walking and the countryside, and our hope is that these people become our new members. Ginny has continued to induct new members throughout.



Social Walks – Rita had done a marvellous job ensuring we had the usual full programme of Wednesday and Sunday Social Walks, with a good number of walk leaders stepping forward to support this. From 19 June we were legally able to hold Group walks with up to six people but there wasn't much appetite for this; most members seemed happy in their own company or walking informally with friends. However, even as things changed, again, people stepped up and offered to lead walks as part of the 'maximum six' restrictions despite the fact the organization and admin around this was more challenging. But eventually, even this became impossible. However, that doesn't mean we won't be looking for more walk leaders once the world opens up again, so please see Rita!

Elaine has had a very different job this year, in that there was little to do in terms of managing the finances! However we do need to be aware that there has been no income this year for the group, so we need to keep this in mind when making any purchases.

Challenge Events – despite the fabulous planning, it really wasn't to be this year. So much goes into the planning of the events, and it is testament to the committee, and particularly Peter T, that the Stagger has been able to continue (albeit virtually). It was inevitable that the LDWA's 100-mile Sir Fynwy challenge didn't take place but there was a 'virtual 100 event' organised over the same weekend by members of the NEC. There have also been Trig Point Challenges to get involved with also over the lockdown period.

Other Group activities – a Xmas Zoom call went ahead and was well received by a number of the attendees who I have spoken to, and there have been requests for a quiz in the future, so watch this space!

Finally, I'd like to thank the committee, and everyone who has taken an active part in the Group this year in any way. I look forward to the time when we can return to some semblance of normality and meet to socialise and walk together again.

Deb Garfield

Walk Secretary

As seen in my reports for last May and October, the year of 2020 has been very much like the traffic lights – stop, go and something in between. This continued throughout the last third of the year. Entering October we were still on 'green' and beginning to get back to some sort of normality with two social walks per month.

Our Away Weekend to HF Abingworth Hall in Sussex at the end of October/beginning of November was enjoyed by 18 members – despite efforts by the wind to blow us off the South Downs while tormenting us with needle sharp sleet rain. Hot chocolate can work wonders! Sunday's walk brought (slightly) better weather and we were able to enjoy a picnic lunch in Cissbury Ring, while Richard bagged another Trig Point on his early start to the LDWA Trig Point Challenge. Many thanks to Mike who sorted out and led the walks for us.

Just a few days after our return we were again stuck on 'red'. Richard's proposed walk on the 15th November was cancelled, but Garry was quick off the mark in bringing forward his walk from the 8th November to the 4th, just squeezing it in before the second lockdown.



The start of Garry's November Walk

Plans for our Christmas Extravaganza were in jeopardy for a while until social walks were again permitted early in December. The weekend of 12th/13th December saw over 40 members walking in Essex, Herts and even Suffolk thanks to the efforts of our Walk Leaders. Despite the rain (and mud) in places, the walks were enjoyed and appreciated by the participants who also donned Santa hats as seen in the many photos on Facebook. The following week was very much an 'amber' week as Essex and Herts moved up rapidly through the Tiers. Would we be able to complete the 2nd part of our Christmas Extravaganza? Yes, should be ok, maybe not and finally – NO. Frustrating for those who had planned to lead walks and also for those who had looked forward to their turn of strutting some festive Santa attire.

So as we move into 2021 we are still in lockdown – 'red' again! During these difficult times many members have continued to walk either alone or (when permitted) with just a few friends: searching out new routes, revisiting favourites, exploring their own locality, and taking part in LDWA on-line challenges (you still have to do some walking!). Others may have let their walking habit slip and be looking forward to future social walks to get 'in gear' again.

While 2020 has been frustrating, irritating and annoying for walkers, we must remember that for many others it has proved tragic. We might miss our longer walks and the time spent chatting with friends, but we can still walk and enjoy the (local) outdoors. The 'red' will turn to 'amber' and then to 'green' again – we already have plans for our Challenge Walks and a date set for our Walks Day in July. We just have to be patient and sensible, keeping both ourselves and others safe.

Happy walking.

Rita Williams (Walk Secretary)

A Note From A Very Small Island

I was amazed to see me and Jim on the front cover of the Essex & Herts newsletter. This came about because at the end of September, Gill and Rob Struthers came to stay with us on the Isle of Wight to walk The Vectis Trail. They arrived the day before the walk started so that we could take them on a local walk for some fresh air after their journey from Essex. It was such a nice day on that Sunday that we ended up walking over 13 miles and enjoying ice cream on Sandown seafront. It was so nice to have them to stay and this only happened as their planned trip to Australia was cancelled. The Vectis Trail is 72 miles over four days and with other friends from the island joining us we were able to leave cars at each end of every stage.

Gill and Rob also had a free day at the end and I thought they may like to visit Carisbrooke Castle or Osborne House but in the event they spent the day chasing up flu jabs for us. Gill had cleverly organised appointments for us using her smartphone but on arrival at Boots in Sandown we were informed they had run out of vaccine and had no pharmacist in store. A quick phone call to Ventnor Boots confirmed Jim would fare no better as they had vaccine for him but no one to administer it! I was very amused to hear Gill say to the store manager- "These two old vulnerable people are going to the mainland tomorrow - there must be somewhere on the Island to give them their flu jabs". Thanks to her tenacity and a few phone calls we got a joint appointment in Ryde later that afternoon. So, that happy old vulnerable couple you saw eating ice cream are safe from the flu! Very lucky Gill and Rob came when they did.

I then went off to Wales for four days walking and finished the walk just as Wales went off limits - this has been such a strange year. However Jim and I have really enjoyed walking many trails and having lots of adventures along the way.

When Gill and Rob were staying with us, Rob presented himself to help me with things. I found him to be very proficient with the Hoover but on the second occasion this did seem to be a waste of his skills.

I have always kept a record of the mileage I have walked on LDWA charts. The first one was given to me by Gillian Bull in 1985 and I've been recording mileage ever since. I made my own rules! I decided it has to be a walk but not necessarily an event. Going to the shops doesn't count but a dedicated walk does.

The circumference of the world is 24,901 miles around the equator and by 21st February 2020 I had circumnavigated the world four times having clocked up 99,604 miles. On 5th April 2020 I achieved my target of One Hundred Thousand Miles!



Jim and Rob enjoying the Isle of Wight sunshine

Thank you Rob for working this out for me.

**Jill
Green**

WHAT.....The long awaited annual Essex and Herts **WALKING WEEKEND**. For most it was particularly **WELCOME**, coming near the end of a year when most folk had seen their holidays and walking events severely curtailed.

WHEN.....30th October to 2nd November 2020. Better remembered as the year of the Covid pandemic, the weekend Boris announced Lockdown 2 in England.

WHERE.....Abingworth Hall, HF Holidays House, Thakeham, West Sussex. Base for good food, a little **WINE** and social distance, socialising with like-minded fellow walkers.

WHAT.....A long **WEEKEND** where members, friends and family of Essex and Herts LDWA stayed in a Holiday Fellowship hotel, enjoying the excellent facilities of an establishment **WELL** adapted to catering for the needs and **WISHES** of **WALKERS**. Following an afternoon 7.5 mile circular **WALK** from our hotel around **WEST** Chiltington, booking into our rooms and coming to grips with the 'Covid rules' (which allowed the weekend to take place) we enjoyed a hearty 'bubble' evening meal along with pre and après dinner drinks.

Saturday's breakfast and packed lunch was excellent, sadly the **WEATHER** was not. We split into 2 groups, a fast A and 'not quite so fast' B group, the plan being to both follow the same route....namely onto the SDW and **WALKING WESTWARDS** to Amberley, returning via Parham Park. Aply lead by Peter, the 6 members of group A doggedly stuck to the original plan and continued, in sheet heavy rain and very strong gusty **WINDS**, to remain on top of the ridge for 7 or 8 miles, not coming down until Amberley. Some limited shelter was offered for a lunch break by an open front barn filled with hay bales. The need for shelter overcame any worries about climbing a high fence for access.



A sheltered spot for lunch

Under the equally great guidance of Mike, group B chose to cut out a very steep ascent before reaching the ridge and heading for Amberley. The promise of a coffee shop in the village may have been instrumental in both group's course of actions. All were rewarded! B were enjoying their well-earned drinks (hot chocolate with marshmallows being a firm favourite) when A walked in! Following happy exchanges of their mornings experiences, during which it stopped raining, group A set off back to Thakeham. B followed 15 minutes later and both enjoyed the same lovely route through Parham Park.

Everyone appreciated their **WARM** rooms and hot showers or baths whilst the clothes drying room was, not surprisingly, **WELL** used. Another excellent meal and more drinks with "**WALK** talk" completed a memorable day.

On Sunday everyone **WALKED** together. **WEATHER** was better than the day before with lighter intermittent showers and the feeling of being blown off one's feet not part of the overall experience. Mike led us back to the SDW ridge, where we headed east, following Rita on a

lovely loop including Chactonbury and Cissbury Rings. Afternoon drinks were enjoyed in an open gazebo in a local pub en route back.
Sunday night's activities mirrored those of the night before.

Feelings were mixed as goodbyes were exchanged before our after breakfast departures. Reflections of a very enjoyable **WEEKEND** doing what we all enjoy with friends, but thoughts moving to the 2nd 4 week lockdown which Boris had announced during the weekend, starting in three days' time.

My thanks go to Rita for all her considerable time and efforts spent booking and organising the **WHOLE WONDERFUL** event, to Mike, Peter and Rita for leading our **WALKS** and to everyone **WHO** attended for jolly good company in these strange times.

Isle of Wight next year, can't **WAIT**.

Dee Brockway

DEAR ESSEX AND HERTS WALKING BUDDIES

Some 20 hardy souls braved the very inclement weather on the 2020 Club weekend at the HF Abingworth House from 31 October to 2nd November. Many thanks to Rita Williams for all the arrangements and to Mike and Peter our two voluntary leaders

For those who could not come to Abingworth and for those walkers who did not notice the Sanctuary Shelter on our right. I have '**googled**' for information. Plus some extra text as in commentary from me.

The **Sanctuary**, near **Storrington** in West Sussex, England, was a utopian (where is that?) community which was founded in 1923 and lasted about a decade. But is in **Washington Parish** (The Frankland Arms. Thank you for the marquee shelter on 1st November).

The founder and central figure of The **Sanctuary** community was **Vera Pragnell** (1897-1968), the daughter of a textile manufacturer. Using her inheritance, she purchased 50 acres of land at Heath Common and proceeded to give away plots of land free of charge to anyone who was willing to settle there. She lived in a house she named **Sanctuary Cottage**, (next to the telephone box with the pot plant but no phone) part of which was kept open for any passing stranger who needed shelter or refreshment. Pity I say as the weather was not good on 31st October or 1st November 2020 as we proceeded to Chactonbury Ring on the South Downs Way.

Vera Pragnell was inspired both by Christianity (in particular by William E. Orchard and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, (Because of World War I?)) as well as the principles of pioneering socialist Edward Carpenter. She imposed no conditions or rules on prospective settlers and insisted that The Sanctuary was open to everyone. Initially, all who came to live there were given a half-acre plot on which they would park a caravan or build a simple house. Eventually communal facilities were created such as a shop, a school and a building used for theatre and dancing.

Lacking any political or spiritual focus, The Sanctuary attracted a wide range of individuals as residents or visitors (including E and H Members!), often with unorthodox and radical views. These included pagans such as the occultist, poet and publisher Victor Neuberg and Dion Byngham, ex-leading light of the Woodcraft Chivalry. Other residents included anarchist W. C. Owen as well as Communist Party members. Artists were also

attracted to the community, such as the landscape artist William Heaton Cooper and the Shakespearean actor Wilfred Walter (Did Boris Johnson name his son after this Wilfred?)

A number of the residents and visitors were friends and associates of Edward Carpenter, who was a supporter and inspiration to the community. In 1928, Vera Pragnell published her book "The Story of the Sanctuary" and dedicated it to the "splendid pioneer" Edward Carpenter with a poem by Victor Neuburg praising Carpenter as "our Youth's doyen". Vera had a personal connection with Carpenter, as in 1927 she had married the painter Dennis Earle, who had previously been known as Ted Earle when he was Carpenter's lover. A very popular but illegal pastime amongst the literati in the 1920s.

The unconventional lifestyles of some members of the community began to generate scandal in the popular press, with stories featuring nudism and 'free love' and allegations that they encouraged a girl to run away from home and live at the Sanctuary¹

By the early 1930s, Vera Pragnell's original inspiration had been lost amid disputes and disillusionment. Sanctuary residents began to register formal ownership of their own properties and from 1934 onwards the area was developed by Earle as a residential estate known as Longbury Hill.

During World War II, the Kenyan independence leader **Jomo Kenyatta** lived in the area whilst working on a local farm. Not many people know that! Communist Party youth camps continued to be held there until the 1960s.

Today, the history of the area is remembered in the street names Vera's Walk and Sanctuary Lane and the houses known as **Sanctuary Cottages**. A **memorial shelter** remains, erected and decorated by Dennis Earle, containing boards telling the story of The Sanctuary.



The area known as The Sanctuary was in the parish of **Washington**, West Sussex (not **Storrington**). Vera Pragnell and Dennis Earle are buried in the graveyard at Washington Parish Church.

A play entitled Sanctuary, featuring Vera Pragnell and Victor Neuburg, written by Chris Green, was presented at the 2012 Brighton Fringe Festival.

But, what came first? The Bloomsbury Set or The Sanctuary? Similar groups in parts but very different in others. I am sure that money as it always does had something to do with it.

Well folks, we are able to walk in beautiful parts of the UK countryside **BUT** very few of us ever know anything about the strange but true 'history' of where we are.

Taking 'sanctuary' before the rain and wind descended upon our group

(Photo: Lizzie Bridge)

Nigel Schofield 3 November 2020 (Still drying out)

An Early Stagger Anytime Challenge



Graham and Gill at the start (and finish point) at The Memorial in Stansted

Graham Smith, erstwhile chair of Kent LDWA and current editor of Strider, has been a long-time friend to Essex & Herts group and had hoped to walk one more Stansted Stagger before his 'emigration' north of the border to Tain in the Scottish Highlands. At first it seemed that his move would be delayed until January but then suddenly, as is often the case with these things, it was happening well before Christmas. With entries for the Anytime Stagger not opening until 28 December, special permission was granted for Graham to blaze the trail in advance - and of course give the route one last recce before it's general release!

Without giving too much away for those still planning to walk it, Peter Tremain's route offers a few surprises as well as a beautifully diverse range of countryside - and no, I'm not talking about the possibility of the odd patch of flooding or watching your packet of cheese & onion crisps get snatched out of your hand and sail down the river! With close to 2000 feet of ascent, lovely views and some interesting terrain, the Anytime Stagger is a (mainly) Essex based challenge with a capital C. Plenty of rigorous exercise for those who choose walk it.

In view of the short daylight hours, Graham was gently persuaded to start early (which meant a 5.30 am start from Deal in Kent) and some 8 hours later we returned to the carpark just as we were losing daylight. Graham says that in his view this is the best Stagger route he's ever walked - and he's walked a few!

Gill Struthers

The Stagger Anytime Challenge

Just a reminder that we are running the Stagger as an anytime challenge this year. The end date has been extended to Sunday 30th May 2021. Fingers crossed that restrictions will be eased in time for us to walk it.

The start and finish is The War Memorial, St. John's Church Memorial Gardens, Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfichet CM24 8AG. (GR TL 512 249)

It is a challenging scenic route (25.7 miles) on bridleways and footpaths in and above the valleys of the Stort, Ash, and Rib. The route is covered by O.S. Explorer 194 and 195.

Online entries only: https://www.sientries.co.uk/event.php?elid=Y&event_id=7837

Entries close Sunday 30th May 2021. Entry fee £5

Once entered you will be able to download a route description and gpx file, and then complete the challenge on any day of your choosing, until Sunday 30th May - subject to the Government's Covid restrictions and guidance at the time. There will be no support. Car parks (free on Sundays) are at either end of Chapel Hill 200yds and 300yds from start, but unfortunately no toilets. Train Station 250yds from start (with toilets).

All entrants will be sent a certificate on completion. Results will be available on the Essex & Herts Group website.

And now for some phone box photo fun

After about 15 miles, the Stagger route goes through Standon where there is an unusual phone box. If you are able to walk the Stagger, please share a picture of you at the phone box. Or take a snap of any repurposed phone boxes you come across on one of your walks - I know there are a few phone box book exchanges and defibrillator points around in Essex and Herts.



Graham and Ginny at the Standon phone box, and Jill found an interesting example on the Isle of Wight

Pre(r)ambles and Wainwright's Outlying Fells

Every year since I retired in 2012, I have planned, and fortunately been able to do, at least one long walk, and/or one long cycle. In January last year the long walk I had planned for 2020 was the 3rd and final leg of a 2000K walk across Northern Spain. I was inspired by the book "Clear Waters Rising" by Nicolas Crane, and have partly based the walk on the first part of his epic 17 month journey along 'Europe's continental divide' (nothing to do with Brexit); as well as on the Spanish GR1 (Sendero Histórico).



My walk follows the Cantabrian Mountains and the Pyrenees from the Atlantic to the Greek, then Roman, city of Empúries on the Mediterranean. I had set off in 2017 from Cape Finisterre – where, when the world was considered flat, the sun on the horizon went down over the edge of the world - and walked for 24 days, covering 711K, and finished the first leg in Bulnes; a mountain village perched above the Cares Gorge and underneath Naranjo de Bulnes, a 2,519 metre limestone spike in the heart of the Picos de Europa.

In 2019 I was back in the Picos, and headed out along the spectacular Cares Gorge. In the 1940s hydro engineers blasted a 12K ledge into the wall of the gorge, wide enough for two walkers to pass, carefully, as there is no handrail, and could be a 1000ft drop to the river below. 20 days and 562K later, I finished in a village east of Pamplona. The walk had been incredible so far, and the last 700k+ looked to be no less so. So, with the route of the final leg planned, refugios pinpointed, and a flight booked for May 19th to Pamplona...

Path cut into the wall of Cares Gorge

In 2020 I was also looking forward to visiting my Cousin Philippa in Crete, who had left Essex at 17 to go 'travelling' around Europe and beyond, and almost 40 years later had still not returned, apart from a few short visits. During her time in Crete, Philippa had been a mountain guide, and had promised to take me on her favourite walk in the White Mountains on the southern Cretan coast. When she was over here at Christmas 2019, we agreed to meet in the Spring to do the five-day trek. I checked on my tent, and booked a Ryanair flight for the 30th March to Chania...

Despite those disappointments, I consider myself extremely fortunate that I took advantage of the easing of Covid restrictions, and found safe, sanitised, face-covered, permitted, opportunities in the Summer. We took a chance and booked a flight and a car, for an 8-day family holiday in Norway in late July, which gave us some memorable walking – climbing with my son David 1200 metres straight up from the fjordside to the ice on the

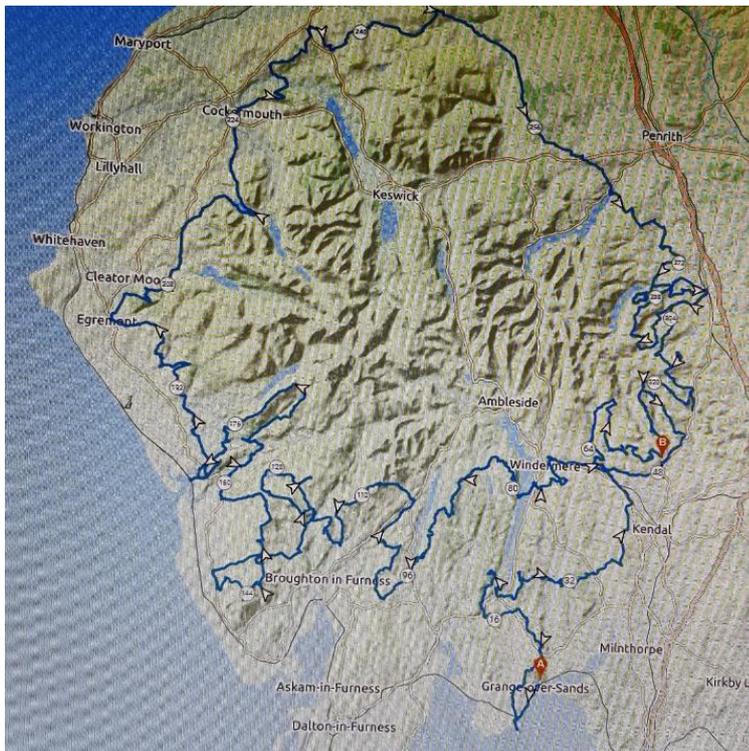
1296 metre summit of Reinanuten, and the edge of the Folgefonna glacier. Soon after our return from Norway, we enjoyed a week amongst the midges on the north west coast of Scotland (not the best time to go). Apparently, Boris Johnson was about, and (allegedly) upset a farmer at nearby Applecross by climbing fences and camping in the irate Farmer's field. Fortunately, we did not spot him.

Now, Wainwright's Outlying Fells!

My friend John had died as a result of a cycling accident while freewheeling downhill on a beautiful Summer's day in August 2018. After the funeral John's wife Juliet asked me if I would like to have John's collection of walking books and maps. As well as a keen cyclist, John was also a keen fell/mountain walker, and had a large collection of walking books, mostly on the Lake District, and in particular complete sets of Wainwright's guides. Amongst the Wainwright books were early editions of the 'Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells' published by Henry Marshall of Kentmere (60's, with round edges); revised editions published by The Westmorland Gazette; and early Lakeland Sketchbooks. Over the years John had used these books and maps to walk all of the 214 fells in the 'Pictorial Guides'. The night before the accident John had booked himself in the Youth Hostel in Wasdale for a forthcoming trip.

During the first lockdown I was browsing through one of John's books, 'The Outlying Fells of Lakeland' (1974), and to use Wainwright's words, "being a Pictorial Guide to the lesser fells around Lakeland written primarily for old age pensioners and others who can no longer climb high fells but can still, within reason, potter about on the short and easy slopes and summits of the foothills". I noticed that John - an extremely fit 66 year old, who thought nothing of going out for an early morning cycle of a hundred miles, and be back for lunch - had put dates by some of the 116 summits listed in the book. It gave me the idea that I would finish what he had started, and walk over the summits that he did not get the chance to tick off.

I had been going to the Lakes on a regular basis since the early 80's, and during that time, like John, I had also climbed all of the 214 'Wainwright Fells', but, although I had climbed many of the Outlying Fells, I had not climbed them all. So, with too much time on my hands, I found myself trying to plot a circular walking route taking in all of the 116 summits of Wainwright's Outlying Fells. This was not an easy task, but poring over maps is what I enjoy doing. Firstly I needed to gather all the co-ordinates of the Wainwright tops, and of the summits, if different from Wainwright's, as well as a description (all on the internet, and many have cairns or trig points), and pinpoint them on the map. I wanted to keep off road as much as possible and find the best approach to the fell. If given a choice, I would always take the more interesting or more scenic route even if it meant more mileage. Putting the fells in order was a problem: to connect each one without losing too much height; not too much of going over the same ground; and where to end the day. Finally, lockdown was over, and I had a route to start with.



On the map it looked like a 272 mile partially deflated balloon with a 46 mile string attached. Starting at Grange-over-Sands (bottom of the string) to Garnett Bridge (attached to the balloon), then a clockwise circuit back (with many loops attached to the balloon) to Garnett Bridge. A walk of 318 miles (including a ½ mile ferry ride across Lake Windermere) and 50,689 feet of ascent. I clicked on save, and waited for a safe period of at least 3 weeks to become free.

2.06 pm Monday 7th September, I was standing in mizzle by the trig point of Humphreys Head (no.116), by far the lowest of the Wainwright's fells, and not really a fell. The trig point is not on the highest ground, that is 150 metres north, which I was to visit next. I had driven up in the morning and started the walk from Grange at 1.00pm.

I only visited one more fell that afternoon, the Hospice on top of Hampsfell, a substantial stone shelter with steps up to the viewfinder on the roof (the destination). I had no view as the mizzle was giving me visibility of about 20 metres. I did not see what was on Wainwright's list of "As seen from the Hospice" (The Howgills; The Pennines; the broad expanse of Morecambe Bay and the Irish Sea) or any from the list of 44 fells. But this was a great spot, very atmospheric in the mist. I was on my own; I had been all day. The Hospice was on a bed of limestone pavement, and could shelter about ten people. Inside there is a fireplace, and panels of poetry on the wall dating from 1846, and a notice requesting all persons "to respect this property, and not by acts of wanton mischief and destruction show that they possess more muscle than brain." And goes on to say, "I have no hope that this request will be attended to".

Tuesday was a fine morning, and I was out early, but by 1pm the rain came, and at 4pm I was still sloshing about in the forested Finsthwaite Heights. By 10am Thursday morning I had reached the partially deflated balloon, with a circuit of Lakeland ahead, bringing me back here to this spot at Garnett Bridge. With only 12 fells done, and 8 planned for the day, I was aware that, although I had plenty of days set aside to complete the 116, the Covid situation and restrictions could change. During the afternoon on High Knott, I came to a high stone wall, topped with barbed wire with an unpolite notice attached. A monument standing on the summit was less than 100metres away. I found the highest allowed ground and took a photo of the monument, and hoped this would suffice. I was forewarned, but it was disappointing.

I am a bit of a luddite, insofar as I don't use a Garmin on walks, only the basic Edge on my bike. I enjoy navigating by map and compass. With a map all is spread out in front of you, like carrying a viewfinder. The challenge of finding a single stone that denotes the summit on a featureless moor in mist, for me makes up for the lack of a view when you get there. When reaching the summit I check the co-ordinates and altitude with a GPS Altimeter App on my phone, so I know I am in the right place on the right fell; then take a photo of the top, which records the time. It would be easy to climb to the wrong top in the Lakes, especially in the Shap Fells. So, I check with map and compass which top I'm aiming for, if it's not obvious, before descending from the previous one. I also have the O.S app with the route downloaded for backup.

On the Friday it started raining at 1pm again, and still raining in early evening as I squelched in to Hawkshead. The sun came out on Saturday morning and for two glorious weeks the waterproofs stayed in my rucksack. Monday (day 8) was one of the highlights



My trusty stick on Caw

of the walk. A gentle climb from Torver up to the cairn on a grassy knoll on Walna Scar (no.1) at 2,037ft - the highest of the Wainwright's Outlying Fells, but not the highest point of the walk (I pass over Selside Pike at 2,149ft on day 19). Some early morning cloud on top, but you still can see down to the Duddon Valley through the cloud. I then headed down to Green Pikes, Pikes, then Caw (1736ft), probably my favourite top of the Outliers. I had been here before, but not on such a good day as this. Views back to the mountains were splendid: all the big ones were close by; there were extensive views along the coast; and I could make out Ingleborough in the distance! Next Raven's Crag (Stickle Pike), then The Knott, and down to Broughton Mills to finish a great day's walk.

The 14 and a bit mile walk from Ulpha to Bootle on day 11 was hard going. it was hot, and I had picked the wrong route. Climbing up to Stoupdale Head should have been easy, being that most of it was road. But, after leaving the road at the summit, the ground was very wet. I was making no headway trying to skirt around the worst of the bog, and was continually sinking in over my boots. Even so, the climb was worth it. On White Combe, then Black Combe (1969ft), the views were extensive. Wordsworth said of Black Combe "the amplest range of unobstructed prospect may be seen that British ground commands". Lovely panorama over to the Isle of Man on walking down to Bootle.

Next day, Friday 18th, I was feeling fit, it was a glorious day, and I was walking to Eskdale! The same on the Saturday, bright and clear as I walked briskly along the lovely Miterdale Valley up to Boat How. Later that day I fell on my right knee coming down Whinn Rigg, a fell (and a fall) I did not need. I tended the gash that was just below the knee, and limped off down, and cut the day short after visiting Irton Pike (which was on the way down).

Unfortunately, Sunday was already a long day, and my knee was swollen, and I now had to add Muncaster Fell, also making the day over 20 miles, and nearly 3,000ft of ascent. It was a short easy climb to Muncaster Fell (Hooker Crag), and I had changed into a pair of trail shoes, which seemed easier on my knee. On the top I met three ladies from Plymouth, all members of Devon and Cornwall LDWA group. I was able to point out Bowfell, Scafell, Coniston Old Man, and other tops to them. Fortunately, the pain in my knee eased during the day and there was no problem climbing, and with no steep downs, I managed to finish the day smiling. Despite an anti-inflammatory and a cold flannel, I had an awful night with the knee throbbing and keeping me awake.

With my knee been given the usual 'ignore it' treatment, and my trusty stick, the next day's (15) walk turned out to be thoroughly enjoyable. I had finished the previous evening in Egremont, and today was to be about 23 miles with some road, and two small fells, Dent and Flat Fell to tick off, and the hope of finishing in Cockermouth. It was another lovely day, and I went via beautiful Loweswater, and stopped at to my favourite Lakeland pub, Kirkside Inn. I had two pints of Loweswater Gold, and completely forgot about my knee on the 8 miles to Cockermouth.

On Thursday 24th Day 18, at 5.45pm I staggered into The Staggering Wanderer, the on-site bar at The New Inge Lodge in Shap. Earlier in the afternoon I was looking out over Haweswater from the Naddle High Forest and saw dark clouds were coming in from the west. The first bit of real rain for 13 days. I had downloaded the new NHS app that had been launched that day, and knew that the R number was climbing to 1, and new restrictions were also looming. I was running out of time. So far 87 summits had been completed, with 29 (Shap Fells) to do, which can be, if time was not limited, split in to 5 horseshoes: Swindale; Wet Sleddale; Wasdale; Crookdale; and Bannisdale. I had originally planned to do them in 4 days, but now, weather and restrictions permitting, was hoping to do them in 3.

There was some cloud on the tops as I headed out on Friday morning, but by the time I was on the first fell it was crystal clear, and the wind that blew the clouds away become fiercely cold. It was an enjoyable day's walk with good views down Swindale, and a boggy crossing of Mosedale. Saturday, the penultimate day, was not so inspiring, ticking off 10 scattered summits, with thick heather and boggy ground between, although walking down from Great Yarlside to Crookdale Bridge was quite pleasant. If I were to finish on the Sunday, I would need to do about 20 miles and visit 12 summits. My aim was to start early and push on, but at noon I was on Robin Hood (the 2nd top of the day) chatting to the first walker I had seen out in these hills for 3 days. He was a local, and told me that it was a lovely walk I had in store for that afternoon. Indeed it was, especially looking down on Longsleddale. This was all new to me as I had only looked over these fells from afar before, and I was glad the last three days had been clear.

I arrived on Lamb Pasture at 6.23pm on Sunday 27th September. All of the 116 summits in Wainwright's Outlying Fells had been completed (apart from standing by Williamson's Monument on the summit of High Knott), plus Illgill Head, Whinn Rigg, and Selside Pike. I was standing on Garnett Bridge at 7.30 pm having walked at least 335 miles (my actual route was plotted, as it differed in places from the planned route) connecting the summits, and climbed 52.782ft. I was happy to have done my long walk for 2020.

Peter Tremain



The sun going down from Lamb Pasture

A thank you from the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance

Subject: You are Amazing!

Dear all at Essex & Herts LDWA,

THANK YOU!

We are very grateful to receive your kind donation through our website of £250.00!

On behalf of all the people who we have assisted, we would like to say a big and heartfelt thank you – your support is very much appreciated.

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance, unlike NHS emergency services, is a Charity providing a free life-saving Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) for the critically ill and injured of Essex, Hertfordshire and surrounding areas. It costs in excess of £750,000 per month for EHAAT to remain operational and cover all charitable costs. Without access to National Lottery funding and with only limited support from the Government, we rely upon the generosity and goodwill of the people and businesses of Essex and Hertfordshire to remain operational and keep us saving lives.

For all our latest news, please visit www.ehaat.org - it's a great way to keep in touch and to find out about our new and exciting plans for the future.

Once again, on behalf of us all, a very sincere thank you. We hope that you will continue to support us in the future.

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance have kindly invited our members on a virtual visit – follow this link for more details:

[GROUPS & SOCIETIES WEBINAR - Essex & Herts Air Ambulance - EHAAT](#)

Steve in the Peak District



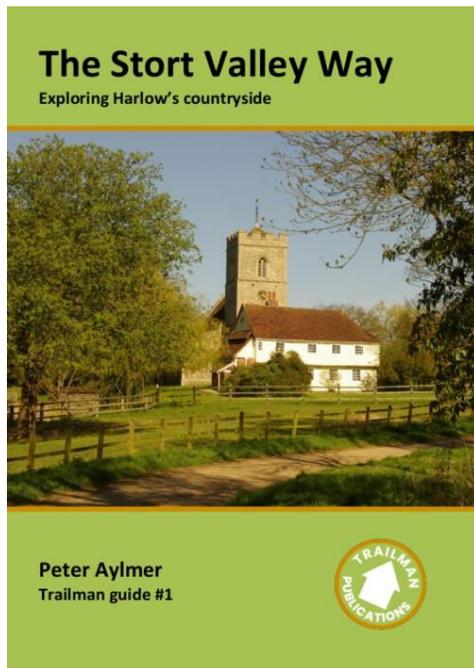
A decision was made to get away from Essex to the peace and quiet of the Peak District National Park for a couple of days.

Kinder Scout (The highest of the Peaks) I hiked on the first day from Edale. Jacobs Ladder was a long climb up the many steps which eventually took me from dark clouds to mist, drizzle and fog as I reached the Trig point at the top. There was a very eerie feel with very few people around. With the cold air that was circulating around me I decided to make the descent back via some beautiful scenery and waterfalls to Edale.

Bleaklow Head (The 2nd highest of the Peaks) I walked on the second day from Glossop. On a very slightly better weather day the route upwards took me past the debris of an aeroplane that had crashed in 1948 whilst in thick cloud, many bogs of peat, heather in abundance and the famous Snake Pass (The road that is often shut off in the winter due to the poor weather conditions). The Trig point was a welcome sight. My journey down took me through some lovely late autumn colours on the hills and back to the charming old mill town of Glossop.



New guides to local trails



As I mentioned in the October newsletter, I've used lockdown to prepare guidebooks to some of our local long distance paths. The first of these, to the Stort Valley Way, is out now, under my new imprint Trailman Publications.

I've had to learn about many new things, from ISBN numbers to Ordnance Survey licensing, and dust off desk-top publishing skills which hadn't been used in many years. My existing website was out-of-date and insecure, so that had to be upgraded too.

Happily my fellow guidebook author Colin Saunders gave me a whole load of hints and tips, including putting me in touch with his own web designer.

Photographs I was happy to handle myself but maps were a different matter. I decided to commission Glyn Kuhn, who has drawn many walkers' maps for the Hundred Parishes website, to prepare them for me.

I've even taken the opportunity to correct a couple of things the Ordnance Survey gets wrong (yes really), such as the track out of High Beach on the Forest Way and Three Forests Way. And I've put in one or two alternatives to stretches that could benefit from them.

The Stort Valley Way guide is available now through my website www.trailman.co.uk at £6 with free postage. Once local book shops reopen, hopefully they will stock it too. The Forest Way guide should be out by the end of February, and the Three Forests Way by Easter. I have plans for at least one more later in 2021.

At 30 miles the Stort Valley Way is a good day out for many in the LDWA - or at least it will be when the mud eases. I hope the guides prove useful and encourage more walkers to try out our wonderful local trails.

Peter Aylmer
[Trailman](#)



The Essex Walker

Due to the situation as it stands with the pandemic, the Essex Walker Challenge event for 2021 has been cancelled. With other Essex and Herts challenge events in the pipeline for this Summer and Autumn, we have decided to wait and hope to run the event in April 2022 back in it's normal bi annual cycle.

Beach of Dreams

Ever fancied walking the Essex coast? All of it, in one go? Plus Suffolk as well? That's the ambitious, 500-mile plan from Ali Pretty, chair of London LDWA, for this summer.

You may remember Ali's 2017 project Silk River, which married a Thames walk from Richmond to Southend with a parallel walk along the River Hooghly in West Bengal. A highlight of Silk River was the beautiful silk banners Ali's Thurrock-based arts company Kinetika produced with the aid of communities on each river.

This year's project, Beach of Dreams, will see 500 silk pennants produced, one for each mile of the walk, and linked to a specific mile of the coast (and a few inland diversions). It starts at dawn on Sunday 20 June at Euroscope in Lowestoft, England's most easterly point, and finishes at the Tilbury Carnival on Saturday 24 July. Covid-19 willing of course.

I'm working on the mapping for the route which should be ready by the end of February. Later, every mile will need to be reced of course, and we'd love to see volunteers from Essex & Herts LDWA for this essential task. And maybe you'd like to 'adopt' your favourite coastal mile and help design its pennant. It's easy to get involved - just email ali@kinetika.co.uk, or let me know.

Ali will be walking the whole route alongside Guardian journalist Kevin Rushby (good for LDWA publicity), but each individual day walk (roughly, 10 to 20 miles) will have its own character. When the whole schedule is ready, which should be in early March, I'll post it on the E&H LDWA Facebook page.



Peter Aylmer

Burnham on Crouch

Winter Solstice reminiscences

Christmases occur once a year and the Winter Solstice is not always noticed, until the consequent changes to daylight's opening and closing hours become apparent.

My role in rambling was to support Jessie, just as she supported my orienteering competitions. We both felt a need to celebrate the passing of winter and suggested another of our ideas for programme-growth that disturbed some.

Invitations were sent to all known contacts for **a casual event for fit walkers; not fit for casual walkers** on the last Sunday of Februarys in the next few years.

Essex & Herts LDWA supported them and the sprinkling of ramblers from an assortment of Clubs were impressed by their organisation. It was a great way to spread an understanding of the range of walking activities potentially available.

We used our **Winstree Layer Trail** as the basis for the **1987** Round, counter-clockwise from Tiptree with a lunch pause at Blackheath Cherry Tree involving 44 booted beautiful people. The next year **1988**, the foundation was our **Puddly Mud Crawl**, although it did not acquire that title until 1993. The start was Coggeshall Clocktower for a veering Round via Halstead's Royal Oak for a lunch pause. I noted Mike P brought a small son with him, just two of the 49 folk attending, and the little lad was still happily skipping along whilst grasping his Dad's hand by Marks Hall, with only one mile left to complete twenty.

For **1989** we had thawing snow slides. for another veering Round. This was from Maldon on a **Friars' Round** variation, with the lunch pause at Witham's Red Lion. There we were joined by some casual walkers ignoring the "not fit for casual walkers" invitation, and later wondered why they were left behind in Wickham Bishops. Wick Bish is an easy-to-get-lost-place, so I added a sheep-dog rounding up stray bleeters role to my navigational tasks.

At Great Totham I bundled them onto a bus, then ran freely and hard to Heybridge Basin for the peloton's apple stop. I got there too late; no apples, just cores. The thaw not only caused some to be absent, it caused icy slippery surface for the for the 34 folk who completed.

The weather for **1990** was much better when we departed Sudbury's Gainsborough Statue on a veering Round via Belchamp Walter's Eight Bells. As we approached. The pub I dropped back through the peloton to have a word with John I. He looked at his watch and reminded me I had promised to be at the pub at noon. He went on "Now it is noon and we have a few steps to do; what sort of a navigator are you?"

"My rightful place is at the head of this peloton, which is bang on the Noon button, Boom Boom". Clouds of the heavy black variety soaked us thoroughly throughout the afternoon.

If you do "**Hinckford Path Care Trail**" today you will get an idea of where we were so impolitely washed.

The **1991** Event was a Saturday linear from Ipswich via Brantham/Lawford to Colchester. Perhaps the rail-ride put all but six folk off. Today it is part of the **Alternative Green Corridor Tail**.

In **1992** we did a daily sequence along the snowdrop-strewn Stour Valley Way. Rowley Corner to Little Bradley, to Stoke, to Long Melford to Bures, to Stratford, to Cattawade. In **1993** snow replaced snowdrops for a veering round from Braintree Station via Halstead's Royal Oak lunch pause for 42 folk who slithered through clay-caulking Stisted in the afternoon.

After that, at 60 years of age, Jessie, and I attempted no more.

**Keep Happy Feet
Derek Keeble**

Many of Derek's walks can be found on the [LDWA Long Distance Path Database](#)

The Essex and Herts Playlist

Thank you all for your wonderful suggestions for songs and tunes to add to the Essex and Herts playlist.

My original intention was to include links to all the selections, but in the end there were just too many of them. However, I have made a couple of exceptions right at the end of the local category.

So have a look and see what great musical tastes your Essex and Herts walking buddies have – and I apologise in advance for any unwanted ear worms caused by the following lists!

Walking Songs

There were lots of suggestions for this category, but the four favourites by far were:

- Walk of Life – Dire Straits
- I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles) - The Proclaimers
- You'll Never Walk Alone (a nice tribute to the late Gerry Marsden)
- Walking Back to Happiness – Helen Shapiro

And in no particular order the other suggestions were:

Keep on Walkin' by CeCe Peniston	I Walk the Line - Johnny Cash
Walkin' Home – Eric Bibb	Walk Tall – Val Doonican
Feel Like Going Home - Notting Hillbillies	Walking on Sunshine –Katrina & the Waves
Walk On – Roy Orbison	Walking in Memphis – Mark Cohn/Cher
Walk on the Wild Side – Lou Reed	Walking in the Rain – Ronettes
Born to Run – Emmylou Harris	I Will Run to You – Stevie Nicks
Born to Run – Bruce Springsteen	Rambling Man – The Allman Brothers
Keep on Walking (Till the Sun Comes Up) – Scouting for Girls	The End of the Line - The Travelling Wilburys
Long Way Round – Chicks	Jump – Van Halen
Walk this Way – Run DMC & Aerosmith	Spanish Stroll – Mink Deville
Walk – Foo Fighters	Rambling Rose – Nat King Cole
You Can – Chumbawamba (a musical tribute to the Kinder Scout trespass in 1932)	

Landscape & Countryside

Unsurprisingly, a few of these suggestions were inspired by the weather.

The Heather on the Hill – Chet Baker	Slip Sliding Away- Paul Simon
River Deep, Mountain High – Ike & Tina Turner	The Long and Winding Road – The Beatles
Rocky Mountain Way – Joe Walsh	Hard Road to Travel- Jimmy Cliff
Baby it's Cold Outside- Dean Martin	Solsbury Hill - Peter Gabriel
The Hippopotamus Song (Mud, mud Glorious Mud)- Flanders and Swann	What a Wonderful World – Joey Ramone
Don't Let the Sun go Down on Me – Elton John & George Michael	Why Does it Always Rain on Me – Travis
Fields of Gold - Sting	Country Comfort – Elton John
Castle on the Hill – Ed Sheeran	Fool on the Hill – The Beatles
Blinded by Rainbows – Rolling Stones	I Can't Stand the Rain – Ann Peebles

Inspirational

There were some interesting suggestions for this category including the only two classical choices:

When the Going Gets Tough – Billy Ocean	Serenade in A Minor - Max Bruch
Radetzky March - Johann Strauss Sr	Things Have Changed – Bob Dylan
I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles - (any version sung by West Ham fans)	Don't Give Up - Peter Gabriel & Kate Bush
Won't Back Down - Tom Petty	Harder, Better, Faster – Daft Punk
No Surrender - Bruce Springsteen	I'm Still Standing - Elton John
Take it Easy - Jackson Browne / Eagles	Dancing on the Ceiling – Lionel Richie
Go Your Own Way – Fleetwood Mac	Running on Faith Eric Clapton

Essex and Herts

It seems that Essex has inspired some interesting, edgy (and in some cases a bit rude!) songs, whereas the Hertfordshire tunes are few and far between (unless of course you know better!)

So, for Essex we have:

A13, Trunk Road to the sea – Billy Bragg

Billericay Dickie

Plaistow Patricia

Razzle in my Pocket

Ian Dury (with a bit of geographic licence as

Plaistow and Romford aren't strictly on Essex)

Going back Home – Dr Feelgood

David Essex – his full back catalogue

Get 'em out by Friday

The Battle of Epping Forest

Genesis (Get 'em out by Friday mentions Harlow)

Sometimes our Pier's on Fire

Dave - Missing Andy (mentions Lakeside and comes with this warning 'some lyrics might cause offence to LDWA members!!')

And for Herts

Anyone Who had a He {A}rt - Cilla Black

You can {T}ring my Bell – Anita Ward

Ho, Ho, Ho, He, He, He, who'd be a turkey at Christmas time - Elton John (The last chorus changes to Ho, Ho, Ho, He, He, He, Watford are the team for me).

Finally, on the Long Distance Paths section of the LDWA web site a couple of our local walks have links to YouTube videos with relevant soundtracks.

[Welwyn Garden City Centenary Circular Walk - LDWA Long Distance Paths](#)

Javier Vagabond's video has two tracks:

Welwyn Garden City – Edwyn Collins

Goodbye Welwyn Garden City - SMASH

[Stort Valley Way - LDWA Long Distance Paths](#)

A couple of Javier Vagabond videos again:

Day 1 Essex Rose – The Cordials

Day 2 - Forgetting Essex – Rabidwhelk

Essex and Herts Christmas Extravaganza

So we know how to have a good time in Essex and Herts, especially at Christmas when the festive hats and jumpers come out in force, Secret Santa surprises are wrapped and copious amounts of food (and a drink or two) are consumed. We do manage to fit in a bit of walking too.

As December 2020 approached it was becoming increasingly clear that our usual Secret Santa celebrations at The Shed and Christmas meal just weren't going to happen. So, what to do instead? Rita, our Walks Secretary came up with the Essex and Herts Christmas Extravaganza – a number of walks geographically spread over our two counties and over two weekends.

Things started well (albeit very wet and muddily) with over 40 members out walking over the weekend of 12th -13th December, in Hertfordshire (Therfield, How Green and Bennington) and in Essex (Ingatstone, Great Dunmow and Woodham Walter) and even on the Suffolk /Essex borders. As well as a fine selection of hats, Mr and Mrs Claus pants also put in an appearance on one walk. And those lucky enough to be on Richard's walk were able to sample his very tasty mince pie and vodka Santatiser.

Unfortunately, by the second weekend of our planned Christmas walks, both Herts and Essex had moved up a Tier and all walks had to be cancelled. Very sad for the leaders who had spent time and effort in recce-ing and organising, but unfortunately not leading their walks and for the 14 members who had booked in for those walks.

Many thanks to Rita for organising our Extravaganza and here's looking forward to a traditional Essex and Herts shindig next Christmas.



Pictures from Steve, Brian, Phil & Ginny's Christmas Walks

Winter Walking – mud, flood, snow and ice!



Steve and Fatima Whitbread

It was minus 1 when this picture was taken at Shenfield Common during a lively 22 miles walk at pace, which you would expect when you are in the company of a still very fit Olympic medallist and BBC Sports Personality of the year 1987. Fatima hopes to come on a future Essex & Herts group walk with Steve and Liz.

'Siberia? No, Shenley.' (Dennis)



Nigel heading towards a pot of gold on a walk with Suzina

Peter and Ginny



The Three Horseshoes, Letchmore Green, which would have been the lunch stop on Dennis' cancelled walk in March 2020.



Frosty Sharpenhoe Clappers (Dee)



Gill found some puddles!



Sunshine and snow (Laurie)