

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION – Kent Group

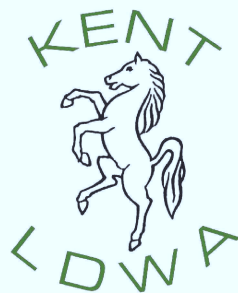
Aim: to further the interests of those who enjoy long distance walking

NEWSLETTER



Mike Ratcliff, Graham Smith and Mike Pursey on the In Pin. *Picture by Mike Lates*

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The two Mikes and Graham on the In Pin and other Cuillin hills, and Mike Pursey on Glamaig.
Pictures by Mike Lates and Graham Smith

KENT GROUP SOCIAL WALKS AUG to DEC 2012

Sun Aug 12. Cream Tea Walk.

c20ml. Meet 09.00 at Grafty Green GR TQ872488 Map: Exp 137. Park on roadside. Pub stop at Stalisfield Green - food available. Ls: Neal & Jan O'Rourke

Sat Aug 25 South Downs Thirty.

c32ml. Meet 08.00 at Eastbourne, western end of promenade (B2103) by South Downs Way marker post GR TV600972. Map: Exp 123. Park near school on left. Lunch stop at Alfriston (c22ml). Food also available at Firle (c17ml) L: MikePursey.

Sun Sep 2. Wealden Waters Wander.

c22ml. Meet 08.30 at Winkhurst Green GR TQ495493 Map: Exp 147. Park on roadside on left below houses before bridge. Possible pub stop. Ls: Neal & Jan O'Rourke

Sat Sep 8. White Cliffs Challenge (52) Marshals' Walk.

For details contact Mike Pursey.

Sat/Sun Sep 22/23. White Cliffs Challenge Main Event.

See Events Diary in Strider.

Sat Sep 29. Hassocks to Brighton.

c24ml. Linear. Meet at Hassocks rlwy stn GR TQ304155 Map: Exp 122 (for meet time contact leader or check website). Lunch stop at Plumpton. Finish at Brighton rlwy stn. Joint walk with London LDWA. L: Mike Ratcliff

Sun Sep 30. Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 1.*

c27ml.(linear). Meet 09.00 at the Timeball Tower on Deal seafront GR TR378534 Maps: Exp 149/150. Finish at Chilham rlwy stn. No refreshments available on route. L: Peter Jull

This is the first of five walks which, in total, cover a 97-mile route between the timeballs at Deal and Greenwich going over 9 hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood.

Sun Oct 14. Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 2.*

c19ml. Meet 09.50 at Chilham rlwy stn GR TR078536 Map: Exp 149. Early pub stop at Perrywood. Finish at Teynham rlwy stn. L: Peter Jull. This is the second of five walks.

Sun Oct 28. Another Minnis Meander.

c18ml. Meet 08.30 at Ivy House, Stelling Minnis GR TR147483 Map: Exp 138. Bring packed lunch. L: Liz Keeler.

Sun Nov 11. Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 3.*

c21ml. Meet 08.55 at Teynham rlwy stn GR TQ957631 Maps: Exp 149/163. Pub stop. Finish at Rochester rlwy stn. L: Peter Jull.

Sun Dec 2. Christmas Lunch.

Preceded by a walk of c7ml. (see article below for details).

Sat Dec 8. Christmas Cruise around Calais.

c14ml. Meet 07.30 by P&O Desk, Dover Eastern Docks for 8.30am sailing (return 9pm local time - 8pm British time). Ring P&O reservations 08716 646464 for foot passenger day return. Don't forget your passport! Please ring Graham for confirmation of times. L: Graham Smith.

Sat Dec 15. Strood to Newington.

c21ml. Linear. Meet at Strood rlwy stn GR TQ740693 Map: Exp 148 (for meet time contact leader or check website). Lunch stop at Upchurch. Finish at Newington rlwy stn. Joint walk with London LDWA. L: Mike Ratcliff.

Tue Jan 1. New Year on the South Downs Again.

c20mls. Meet 09.00 in Eastbourne at western end of promenade (B2103) by South Downs Way marker post, GR 600972. Park near school on left. Pub stop. L: Graham Smith.

* New long distance path - see article below.

COVER STORY - TEAM KENT ON THE IN PIN

IN June Kent Group members Mike Pursey, Mike Ratcliff and Graham Smith completed the most difficult Munro (Scottish hills of at least 3,000 feet) of them all, the Inaccessible Pinnacle on the Isle of Skye.

Mike P and Graham have been going to Scotland to climb Munros, Corbetts (Scottish hills of at least 2,500 feet) and OSHs (Other Scottish Hills) for 22 years. This was the second year they had been joined by Mike R, who has really got the Scotland bug now.

This year's trip first visited the spectacular Torridon area, where the three ascended one of the most difficult Munros, Liathach, 3416 feet at its highest and involving very steep ascents and descents. Its two Munros are linked via a pinnacle ridge or a narrow, exposed path lower down, which was the route the two Mikes and Graham opted for.

They then moved on to the Isle of Skye and some of the Cuillin hills, including the Inaccessible Pinnacle, otherwise known as the In Pin.

There are 11 Munros on the Cuillin Ridge, and they are not like most other Scottish hills - they are very steep, with narrow tops which usually involve some scrambling or in some cases, proper climbing. The Cuillin summits, and the ridges leading to them, are often exposed, which means there's a fair old drop below you.

The In Pin is on top of Sgurr Dearg (pronounced Skoor Jereg). It's 3235 feet high, and is a blade of rock well the best part of 100 feet above the rest of the mountain, and which can only be climbed - it's impossible to just walk up it. Like many people, the three hired a guide to take them up. The guide was Mike Lates (yes, another Mike), who runs Skye Guides. Mike L was excellent. Graham and the other Mikes were all a bit nervous, particularly Graham. But Mike L really put them at their ease and gave them some confidence.

On the approach ascent to the In Pin, the three did a practice climb on a part of the mountain which was not as demanding. Going up, they were treated to the most spectacular views - a vast panorama of nothing but mountains (many of which Graham and Mike P could recognise) stretching one way, and islands (large and small) and the very blue sea stretching the other way. It was a lovely, clear, sunny day, and words just can't describe just how fantastic the view was.

For the climb up the In Pin, they were roped up to Mike L, and had to wear hats. It was quite exciting, and actually pretty enjoyable. Then they had to abseil down, which wasn't quite as enjoyable as the ascent, but again pretty exciting.

After the In Pin, Mike L led Team Kent over two adjacent mountains on the ridge - both Munros, they were Sgurr Mhic Choinnich (3110 feet, and pronounced Skoor Vick Connick) and Sgurr Alasdair (at 3255 feet the highest point on the Cuillins). Both of these involved some scrambling and climbing, although not as difficult as the In Pin.

The following day Graham also hired a guide (not Mike Lates, but a guy from the same firm) to take him up three other Munros on the Cuillin Ridge. Two of these hills - Am Basteir (3064 feet) and Sgurr nan Gilleann (3162 feet) - were not as difficult as the In Pin, but they were still a bit tricky, and there is no way Graham would have contemplated doing them without a guide. The other one - Bruach na Frithe, 3143 feet - was much easier, as it did not involve so much climbing.

They had been were two pretty hard and intense days, so the following day - the last of the holiday - Mike P and Graham had a relatively easy day, walking up a Corbett called Glamaig (2542 feet).

And what did Mike R do on that day? He went to the three Munros Graham had done with a guide the day after the In Pin, and climbed them all - comfortably tackling the scrambling without a guide. Well, he is a bit younger than Graham!

Team Kent's Scotland trip had involved a mixture of Munros, Corbetts and OSHs. They also met another Kent Group member, David Sheldrake, who has been going to Scotland for even longer than Mike P and Graham, and has got about 50 of the 283 Munros still to do (Mike P has done 208, Graham has done 190 and Mike R - who has just started - has done 33).

And in the evenings Team Kent went to the pub and watched football on TV. Now there's a surprise!

Unless you have competent rock climbing skills, hiring a guide to get you up the In Pin is pretty much essential. Mike Lates is highly recommended. He can be contacted via his website <https://skyeguides.co.uk/>

COVER PICTURE: Mike Ratcliff, Graham Smith and Mike Pursey on the In Pin. Picture by Mike Lates.

INSIDE COVER PICTURES: The two Mikes and Graham on the In Pin and other Cuillin hills, and Mike Pursey on Glamaig. Pictures by Mike Lates and Graham Smith.

INSIDE BACK COVER PICTURES: Kent Group members on the Biggin Hill checkpoint on the LDWA Games 100. Pictures by Nick Dockree and Phil Butler.

BACK COVER PICTURE: The trip to Vlissingen in Holland. Pictures by Peter Jull.

FAMILY DINNER

THIS year's annual family dinner will be at the London Beach Hotel, Tenterden, for the fifth successive year. As we all know, it is an excellent venue, where we have always received top class food and service.

The date is Sunday December 2. The dinner will, as usual, be preceded by a walk, again led by Neal O'Rourke. The seven mile (approx.) walk will start at 9.30am, and we will be able to use the hotel's changing rooms on our return.

Lunch will be served at 1.30pm.

The cost of the meal is £25 per person for three courses or £20 per person for two courses, followed by coffee and mince pies.

Jan O'Rourke has kindly agreed to take over the booking arrangements this year. A booking form is included with this newsletter, so please fill it in and return it to Jan, with your cheque, by Saturday November 17.

NEWS OF KENT CHALLENGE WALKS

Sevenoaks Circular

THIS year's event received 278 entries, with 53 on the day, with the new route proving very popular.

The 2013 Sevenoaks Circular will be held at the rugby club again. But we cannot get the date until the club fixtures are issued in September, after which it will go to Strider and, of course, the newsletter. It is likely that there will again be three routes - 30, 20 and 15 miles. Details, including the date of the marshals' walk, will appear in the next newsletter.

Weald challenge walk

ALTHOUGH heavy showers affected entries on our summer challenge walk, the Andredsweald, in July, there was lots of good comments about the route, which visited the Ashdown Forest, which proved very popular. Once again, many thanks are due to Neil Higham for organising such a good event.

Next year our Weald challenge walk will be the Heart of the Weald, which will be based at Wadhurst. More details will appear in the next newsletter.

White Cliffs Challenge

THIS year's WCC is almost upon us. It's our contribution to the LDWA's 40th anniversary, so it's going to be special. Everyone taking part, and the marshals, will be given a commemorative mug, in our colours of red and white, with WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE on one side and LDWA 40th ANNIVERSARY on the other. Also, the names of everyone entering the event, and those of the marshals, will be entered into a prize draw. We've got some pretty good prizes, among them a £100 spending voucher for the Faversham-based Simply Hike Partnership outdoors store, tickets for a P&O Ferries trip and some Harveys beers (kindly donated by Sussex Group). There will also be several smaller prizes. And - there is going to be a birthday cake.

The event, on September 22-23, is 52 miles and 18 miles, and will be based at Deal and Betteshanger Rugby Club. The marshals' walk will be over the weekend of September 8-9.

We're going to need marshals, and plenty of them. If any members have not yet been contacted by Graham Smith and asked about marshalling duties, please contact Graham - details below. And people wishing to take part in the marshals' walk are asked to contact Mike Pursey - details below.

KENT SURREY SUSSEX TRIPLE CHALLENGE

THIS year's WCC is, of course, the next leg of the KSS - three 50-mile walks (the WCC, the Sussex Stride and the Surrey Tops) which must be completed in successive years, which we organise with Surrey and Sussex groups.

Next year's leg of the KSS will be the 50-mile Sussex Stride, which has been earmarked for the weekend of September 21-22, and which is likely to be based at its usual venue of Longhill School, Rottingdean. The marshals' walk will be over the bank holiday weekend of August 24-25. As usual, we will be organising a checkpoint, and some of us are likely to be taking part in the marshals' walk.

And for those members who - like our secretary! - who love the South Downs, next year's South Downs Marathon will be held on April 7. It's 26 miles, and based at East Dean, near Eastbourne.

NO CINQUE PORTS HUNDRED IN 2016 - BUT (WE HOPE) THERE WILL BE IN 2018

AS many Kent Group members may already know, our 'bid' to host the LDWA Hundred in 2016 has been unsuccessful. As reported in previous newsletters, a few of us has put in quite a bit of work on a Cinque Ports Hundred, linking the Cinque Ports of Hastings, New Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich with Cinque Ports Limbs including Tenterden, Lydd, Deal and Folkestone.

There were two 'bids' to host the 2016 Hundred - ourselves and Dorset. Both were considered by the national committee, when it was decided to award the 2016 to Dorset. We have been told that both 'bids' were very impressive but what swayed the national committee was the fact that Dorset Group had never staged a Hundred, whereas we have - and we were also involved with organising this year's Games 100. Dorset, as those members who have completed the Dorset Giant will know, is an excellent walking area. We have sent a note to Dorset Group wishing them well in 2016, and offering to organise a checkpoint on the event. While we are, naturally, a little disappointed, it is good to encourage groups who have not organised Hundreds to do so, and we are sure the 2016 Hundred will be a tremendous event.

It appears that the national committee are trying to switch Hundreds between the south of the country to the north. So, given that the 2017 Hundred is likely to be staged somewhere north of the Midlands, the 2018 Hundred is likely to come south again. So we have offered to host the Hundred that year. Early indications are that our 'bid' will be favourably received.

Obviously, 2018 is a long way off, but the members of Kent Group committee have no doubt that we can put on a first class Hundred. The concept of the Cinque Ports Hundred - which would be based at the Duke of York's Royal Military

School in Dover and start from Hastings Castle - is unique. The route is full of interest, history and heritage, as well as visiting some fine east and south Kent countryside - and a little bit of Sussex. So, assuming our 'bid' for 2018 is successful - and, of course, we shouldn't assume anything - there will be a lot of work involving a lot of members. This newsletter will keep you posted.

CAMEL-TEIGN HUNDRED (Ivor's Dream)

NEXT year's Hundred is being organised by Cornwall and Devon Group. As detailed in Strider, the route - which is linear - looks excellent. It will start from Wadebridge, in North Cornwall, on the weekend of May 25-27. Plans are well advanced, with all the checkpoints allocated. Kent Group has been approached to organise a checkpoint at Callington (44 miles). Anyone wishing to marshal on the event is asked to contact Brian Buttifant (details below). Graham Smith is planning to take part in the marshals' walk - likely to be held on the first bank holiday in May - and anyone who fancies joining him should contact him (details below, also see article below).

TIMEBALL AND TELEGRAPH TRAIL



A NEW long distance path has been added to the LDWA list, created by Kent Group's own Peter Jull, who lives in Deal. The Timeball and Telegraph Trail is 97 miles from Deal to Greenwich, and has been put on our social walks programme in a series of five linear walks - see above.

Prominent on Deal seafront is a tall building with a large black ball on the roof. This is the Timeball Tower. The current building was constructed in 1821 with a semaphore signal on the top that was used by the Coast Blockade for the Suppression of Smuggling to pass information along the coast. In 1855 it was converted to a timeball to signal to shipping in The Downs anchorage offshore which, in the time of sail, was much used by vessels waiting for a favourable wind to continue down the

Channel or round into the Thames. Just before 1pm the ball would be raised to the top of the mast and at 1 o'clock precisely the ball would drop so that ships could set the chronometers they used for determining their longitude position accurately for navigation. The drop was triggered by an electric signal along the telegraph wires of the South Eastern Railway from the Royal Observatory at Greenwich on the roof of which there is a similar timeball that was used to signal to shipping in the Thames below. This walk connects these two timeballs.

It readily breaks down into five sections which can be tackled from railway station to railway station in around 20 miles. Kent Group will tackle the route in a series of group walks from September to February. A route description and more information is downloadable for free from the Walking section of www.dealandwalmerchamber.co.uk/Activities.shtml

Details of the first three stretches of the Timeball And Telegraph Trail are on the current social walks programme listed above. The last two stretches will be on January 13 and February 17 - full details in the social walks programme which will be in the next newsletter and, of course, Strider.

An excellent article about this new trail is in an article written by Peter in the current edition of Strider.



LDWA GAMES 100



THERE was quite an extensive Kent Group involvement with this year's Hundred. We were one of the organising groups for the event, which celebrated the LDWA's 40th anniversary, the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee.

Both the event and the marshals' walk were, unfortunately, hit by rain. By common consent the worst of the weather was on the event, where the entrants had to put up with heavy rain at the worst possible time - during the first night.

Many Kent Group members marshalled, manning our checkpoint at Biggin Hill, and also putting in lengthy (sometimes very lengthy) shifts as sweepers or closing marshals.

Kent Group members and times on the event were as follows:-

Andrew Boulden - 29.35.

Mike Ratcliff - 30.41.

Richard Allison - 36.18.

Nicola Foad - 46.58.

Don Newman - 47.00.

Jane Dicker - 47.10.

Unfortunately Bob Field retired at checkpoint 13, Martin Brice and Allan Stewart retired at checkpoint 15, and Rex Stickland retired CP17. Jill Green, owing to her broken ankle, could not enter.

Also two runners from Deal, Simon Read and Steve Wakeford, both completed the event. It was their first Hundred, and they raised money for the Stroke Association. A story about them, which was carried in the East Kent Mercury, is reproduced below.

Kent Group members who took part in the marshals' walk as follows:-

Wendy Thurrell - 29.09.

Stephanie Le Men/Christophe/Delogne - 36.44.

Graham Smith - 36.57.

Mike Pursey - 44.26.

Keith Warman - 45.57.

Merv Nutburn retired at checkpoint 6, Gordon Harker and Pauline Thrush retired at checkpoint 11.

On the event itself and on the marshals' walk, this was a tremendous effort, particularly considering that on the event, there were 488 starters, with 105 retirements.

DEAL RUNNERS BEAT FATIGUE TO COMPLETE 100 MILES

TWO Deal runners overcame extreme fatigue, blisters and heavy rain to complete 100 miles - and raise money for the Stroke Association.

Simon Read, from Easry, and Steve Wakeford, from Deal, completed the Games 100, organised by the Long Distance Walkers Association.

Both members of Deal Tri, they had planned to run the whole event, which started from near the Olympic stadium at Stratford in east London. But night fell as they were going into a woodland section, so they decided to walk the rest of the route, finally reaching the finish, at Windsor, in 37 hours 10 minutes.

It was Simon's 100th run of at least marathon distance. He said: "I wanted to make my 100th a special event, and 100 miles was magical. We both got blisters, which made the walking pretty slow and painful, but we kept on and we got there."

The Games 100 was organised to mark the LDWA's 40th birthday, the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee.

The route went through London to Surrey with more than 10,000 feet of ascent on the hills, and finished after crossing Windsor Great Park.

Apart from being his 100th marathon, it was also the first 100-mile event for Simon, 52. He said: "It was amazing."

Steve, 53, from Deal, said: "I was getting blisters on my blisters, and afterwards my feet were really swollen. We had to contend with some torrential rain and some very steep hills. We also had to walk through the night. After 44 miles, when it was dark, we just felt it was safer to walk rather than to run."

With money still coming in, the pair are well on the way to hitting their target of raising £2,000 for the Stroke Association. Simon and Steve chose that charity because they both have family and friends who have suffered from strokes.

LDWA GAMES 100 - CHECKPOINT 5 by Brian Buttifant

CHECKPOINT 5 on the 2012 Games 100 was run by Kent Group at the Spitfire Centre in Biggin Hill. At 29.7 miles this was the first major feeding station, so entrants were ready for some hot food, although runners just wanted a cold drink and off again.

We had 16 members working hard during the opening hours of Saturday 3pm to 3.30am on Sunday, but after midnight it was the usual waiting for a few at a time.

During the peak times of 5-9pm members were kept very busy supplying food to the hungry, unfortunately the kitchen was on the small size so the two cooks were busy and also the waiters fulfilling the orders to the main hall, we coped admirably.

In most people's minds, Biggin Hill is linked with the famous World War 2 air base, particularly during the Battle of Britain, so we had posters and Spitfire menu cards to reflect the Biggin Hill theme. We had outside our new banner boldly announcing CP5. Most would agree hard work but well done everybody.

In 2013 the group will be organising CP 7 on the Camel-Teign 100 - Ivor's Dream at the Bowling Club at Callington, between Plymouth and Launceston in Cornwall at a walking distance of 40+ miles from the start in Wadebridge. If you would like to help us between 8pm Saturday to 6.30am Sunday we will be glad of your help.

If travelling there for the event weekend, we may be able to help with travel costs.

A PLOD AROUND THE PARKS by Graham Smith

IT was shame that only five Kent Group members turned up for the above walk, led by Peter Jull, on May 13 (it would have been six, but Mike Pursey - who had completed the LDWA Games 100 marshals' walk the previous weekend, couldn't make it, as he was experiencing a few post-Hundred aches and pains - otherwise known as Hundreditis).

It was a very interesting walk, probably one of the most interesting social walks we have had on our programme for some while. It was advertised as 20 miles, but it ended up 24. Nobody complained apart from Joy Davies (well, come on, there had to be something for Joy to complain about). Everyone loved it, even Joy (well, she did mainly).

Starting from Adisham railway station, Peter's walk linked no fewer than seven parks in the Dover area. These were Goodnestone Park, Knowlton Court, Betteshanger New Park, Waldershare Park, Fredville Park, St Albans Park (at Nonington) and Denne Hill. A theme common to most of these parks was that at some stage, Jane Austen had stayed there. In fact, it was surprising that East Kent and its country parks didn't figure more prominently in her works. As somebody on the walk pointed out, she must have had a fair few friends in pretty high places in East Kent, as she obviously had some lovely places to visit.

We visited the first four parks before lunch, which was at Shepherdsweil, with the other three afterwards. Much of the



walking on the route was nice and open, with good clear views, particularly when we reached the last one, Denne Hill, which offered some fine vistas across the A2 to Kingston and, beyond, the Elham Valley.

Less than a mile from the end, we all had to have a go at limbo dancing, as we had to go right down to get under a stile in chronic need of repair. But we all made it, more or less.

We had also been blessed with fine weather on the walk, and at least one of us (and - no - it wasn't Joy) was sorry it wasn't longer than 24 miles.

It was just a great shame that there were only five of us to enjoy it. All of those who were on the walk were from East Kent. We've got plenty of members from around the county, and they missed a very good day. It is hoped that Peter can put his Plod Around The Parks on our social programme again, when maybe we can get a few more people on it.

THE JOURNEY NOT THE ARRIVAL MATTERS (said T. S. Eliot) by Jill Green

IN a 2011 Kent Group Newsletter, John Goodwin wrote about the Great Glen Way and I wrote about walking the Cleveland Way with some members of the Kent Group, plus other adventures with the Irregulars' Group.

Jim Catchpole and I have now walked the Great Glen Way. We did this on our own with Jim wearing his green Kent Group jumper every day - the large logo proudly proclaiming his allegiance to the LDWA and to Kent in particular. The following is a report of our adventures.

John, who did the walk over five days, said he had a brilliant trip and would recommend it to anyone. He enjoyed the luxury of a bag-carrying service, but we planned to do the walk over three and a half days, carrying all we needed. Fort William to Inverness was John's chosen route; we decided to go the other way and booked our train tickets and accommodation well in advance.



We set off on the March 27 and travelled all the way from London Euston to Inverness for the princely sum of £27 each. We left our caravan home at Chertsey at 8.10 am and arrived in Inverness exactly twelve hours later at 8.10 pm after a very comfortable journey. Also, it was made more enjoyable when we went through Dunkeld Station. This brought back such happy memories of the Heart of Scotland 100. What a pity we could not call in on our wonderful landlady - she allowed three people in the same single bed - not all at once mind! I had booked the room in question for Sue Clements and me. At the finish of the 100 Sue was still busy administering first aid, so I arrived back alone in the wee small hours. I was amazed to find a snuggled lump in the bed and it definitely wasn't Sue. It was an exhausted Kevin Marshall. Then, on the Monday, Jim limped up to collect his car (he was booked in at the Pitlochry Youth Hostel). In my opinion, he was not in a fit state to drive. So Jim became the third person to use the bed - all without the landlady having to change the sheets!

As we travelled further north, we were very happy looking out at the Scottish countryside until a man got on and chatted to us. Our faces fell when he told us that the midges would be out in force as it had been so hot. Oh dear - I did not have a supply of "Skin so Soft", the recommended Avon product that keeps midges at bay.

Inverness is a city in the Highlands and, as this was our first visit, we looked forward to spending a day exploring. Not our best decision - Inverness was shut! The museum was shut. The cathedral was also shut. The castle is modern and holds the law courts etc. so, yes, that was shut to the public. So, instead, we went for a walk of about 14 miles - all very pleasant. We even went up our first Esker. (Who keeps the list of people who have done Eskers?)

On Thursday March 29 we left our basic backpackers' hostel in Inverness and set off to walk the 23 miles to East Lewiston. I am glad to report that the weather was now cool and dry - not a midge to be seen. We walked along an old drovers' road, passing a lairage (the remains of a place where the drovers spent the night). Nothing quite like that now - replaced by small one-man tents with the owners presumably away up in the mountains.

In the afternoon we came across signs for an Eco campsite and café and set off to pay a visit. It was like something you might have seen in the old wild west films - home-built shed and out-buildings, no electricity, a wood burner and a couple leading the "good life". They kindly gave us lunch and a wonderful pot of tea. They took our photograph and

said we could see it on their web site (abriachan campsite Facebook). How, you may ask, with no electricity! Well, the people manning the rescue boat had given them two solar panels, as they are part of their team.

Later that day, we met Jason from Gloucester and told him about the LDWA and Abriachan campsite. Then we chatted with a nice chap from Portsmouth. Sadly, his wife had given up because of painful blisters. Soon we arrived in Nessieland. You just couldn't get away from Nessie - even our hostel had a Nessie painted on the wall.

Wendy, who runs the hostel, was out collecting children from school, but, on her return, she advised us that we were much too old to be walking so far and carrying such big rucksacks. She offered to arrange a bag-carrying service for us, but we declined her kind offer because of the cost. We made a meal and then set off to walk to nearby Urquhart Castle. Historic Scotland calls it the Jewel of Loch Ness. Wendy had told us to disregard the "closed" notices and to climb over the locked gates. Apparently it was free at 7pm and she assured us the law in Scotland was different from England. It was wonderful. Do visit it if you can. It was quite dark by the time we got back, beneath a black sky laden with twinkling bright stars.

On our second day we walked 23 miles to Fort Augustus but we did not meet any other walkers. However, we went off route a bit to find the Glen Rowan Café and Restaurant for a pot of tea. The day was warm, the packs were heavy, and the guide book informed us we were doing 3,000 feet of ascent. So we decided unanimously that we deserved a treat! The people in the café came from Essex so Jim enjoyed chatting with them.

Later, on arriving at Morag's Lodge, we were delighted to be in time for a meal at 6.30pm. The day's walk had taken us a long time and we knew the next day was going to be the longest as we needed to go off route to our bed and breakfast near Spean Bridge - adding extra distance.

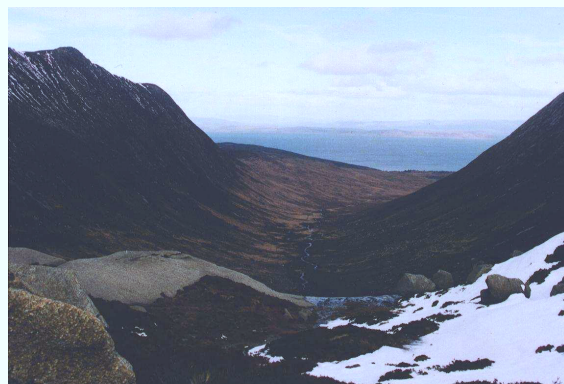
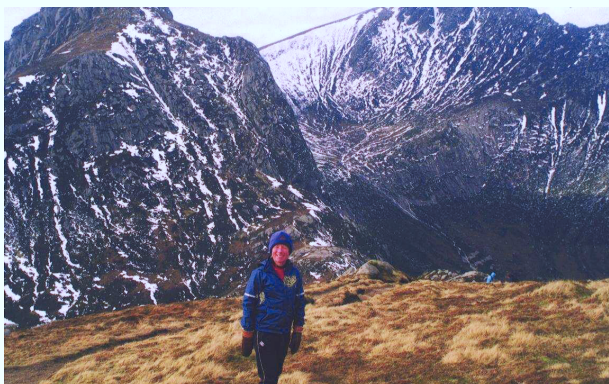
We made an early start and, not expecting to find a tea shop on the way, we were surprised when we saw a notice, "Tea, Coffee" available at a nearby hotel. Unfortunately, the hotel was shut. No wonderful "good life" place with pigs and hens today, or welcoming people from Essex. Oh dear. Then it started to rain. Later, when we were walking past a Highland hostel, we had the cheek to go in. They took pity on our wet bedraggled state and let us use their kitchen. We had our own teabags, milk and sandwiches and thoroughly enjoyed our refreshing respite from the rain. It was very kind of them as the YHA hostels would have been shut until 5pm.

What a good thing we had made an early start as we had a very big and steep diversion. A group coming the other way had warned us of how difficult it was. I thought they were exaggerating, but I was wrong! On our arrival at Dreamweavers (miles from any village or pubs), our landlady said she had another four booked in for an evening meal. These walkers were running late and would not be arriving until 8pm. Clearly, it was better if we all dined together. We welcomed this news as it meant we had time for a relaxing rest.

The next day - our last - we rejoined the route at Gairloch and then had only 11 miles to walk to the finish at Fort William. It was very easy and flat along the canal path. It meant we had the afternoon free to collect our certificates. As often happens on these things, the end was a bit of an anticlimax. However, we enjoyed some time at Inverlochry Castle, which dates from 1280, and learned about the construction of the Caledonian Canal. Ancient Pictish and Gaelic history had been all around us.

If the faster walkers of our Kent Group feel like a challenge, read on: the people who arrived late at Dreamweavers were walking from Inverness to Glasgow (160 miles) - that is the Great Glen Way and the West Highland Way together. They were young and doing it over just five days with a support van. How about that? If there are any takers, please don't include us!

Jim and I then went over to the Isle of Arran for a family celebration. We had a great time walking round the 65 miles of coast path. It was not a bit like walking round the Isle of Wight. For a start, the route goes up Goat Fell. While not a Munro, it is definitely a mountain and not what you would expect on a coast path. I could write a report about our Isle of Arran adventure, but I think I have written enough. Two of our photos - see below - will give you a flavour of the beautiful Great Glen scenery.



CINQUE PORTS CHALLENGE: APRIL 21/22 by Graham Smith

TEN of us started the Cinque Ports Challenge in April, one turned up en route and then disappeared some time after, and seven of us finished. So I suppose that's about an average completion rate for walks of 100k. The one who turned

up and later disappeared was Richard Frost, which is about par for the course (quite an appropriate pun, given the route went past four golf courses) for 'The Captain'.

The walk links the five Cinque Ports (Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, New Romney and Hastings), and also visits the two Antient Towns (Rye and Winchelsea) and three Limbs (Deal, Folkestone, and Lydd). It was the third time I had put the walk on our social walks programme.

For me the day got off to a pretty disastrous start. My plan was to meet at Sandwich station at 9am, and everyone did as requested - apart from me. I had planned on getting a train from Walmer station to travel to Sandwich, but I hadn't reckoned on there being no train services between Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Walmer and Sandwich on Saturday April 21. My train was due to leave Walmer at 8.15am. I got there, and waited 15 minutes before it dawned on me that something was amiss. I had a look on the platform and saw a notice - certainly not clearly displayed - that there would be no trains from Walmer that day. I later found out that a bus service was being operated, but this didn't actually stop at Walmer station - it stopped around the corner. Anyway, I said something like "Bless my soul" (well, that might not be exactly what I said), then walked at challenge pace back to my home in Deal, jumped in my car and sped off to Sandwich. I got there at 9.05 to find the others waiting there. I said hello to everyone and made my apologies for being late, and we set off (and I later found out that I had been in such a rush that I left my mobile phone in my car). Anyway, I think the lesson is that in future, when organising a walk starting from a railway station on a Saturday, make sure there are no weekend engineering works.

We set off through Sandwich and took the Saxon Shore Way across the Royal St George's golf course (where the Open Championship was held last year). We turned south at Sandwich Bay and headed for Deal. Here we were met by Richard 'The Captain' Frost, who lives in North Deal, bearing a placard saying 'Sandwich-Hastings - 65 miles' (which may be the case - the mileage has never been rigorously checked, although it is generally agreed it is approximately 100k). Richard stayed with us, more or less, until Folkestone.

Shortly after Deal, we picked up the White Cliffs Challenge route to join the cliffs at Kingsdown, which we followed to Langdon Cliffs at Dover, where we had our first stop at the visitor centre and café. The weather was then exceptionally clear, in some of the clearest conditions I have ever experienced - so clear that, across the Channel, we could just about make out the tall memorial to the Dover Patrol at Cap Blanc-Nez.

We then kept to the tried and trusted WCC route, dropping down to Dover and following the seafront, then ascending the Western Heights and dropping down to an underpass beneath the A20 and up Shakespeare Cliff - where we saw Richard's 'Sandwich-Hastings - 65 miles' sign on the ground, with Richard some way beyond. We caught up with Richard at the top of Shakespeare Cliff, and told him not to drop litter - whereupon, to his credit, he went straight back and picked it up. On we went, ascending Round Down, and following the clifftop path to Capel, where we dropped down to Folkestone Harbour for another stop. It was here that Richard disappeared, not to be seen again on the walk. We pushed on along Folkestone seafront, going through Folkestone Country Park to reach Sandgate and Seabrook, where we picked up the Royal Military Canal and followed it for a couple of miles to Hythe. Hythe is just under halfway, and I always think it is good to have a decent stop here for a hot meal, so we had fish and chips and stayed for a good 30 minutes. Here Mike Pursey, who lives in Hythe, peeled off, not wishing to exert himself too much as the Games 100 marshals' walk was only a fortnight away. And then there were nine ...

The next few miles, along the sea wall, are very straightforward and, it must be said, a bit boring - but because the route is so straight, you can make good quick progress. So we cracked on, and by the time we got to Littlestone, where we turned off for New Romney, it was dark. We had another stop at New Romney, which I had planned would be sitting down by the light railway station. But there was a pub opposite the station, and - and we're only human!

Next came the bit which is always tricky - crossing fields to the road for Lydd. I had checked the route two weeks previously, but that was in daylight. Now it was pitch black. The line of the path seemed to disappear on the ground, so we followed a rough compass bearing, which took us to where we wanted to go - a farm road which we followed to the Lydd road. We followed this to Lydd, and unfortunately there we had to part company with Richard and Sandra Brown, from Dorset - two fantastic walkers who between them have completed loads of Centurion events. Something Richard had eaten had not agreed with him, and he wasn't feeling too well. By now it was gone 11pm. Richard and Sandra went into Lydd, found somewhere to stay, then completed part of the rest of the route the following morning, before returning to Canterbury, where they were staying. Anyway, and then there were seven ...

The next few miles, from Lydd to Camber, follow a cycle path, and are very straightforward. On any walk of a huge distance, it is inevitable that the walkers are going to get a bit strung out. My plan was to keep people together as far as possible - and thanks to people, more or less, not going too far ahead, we kept to the plan. Jane Dicker, who lives in Hastings, was with us, and she and Bob Field were starting to fall behind. But once we were in Camber we were really on Jane's home patch, and I knew she would have little difficulty finding her way home if we got split up. You can't go wrong on the cycle path, and the other five of us started cracking on pretty rapidly. We had our next stop at Camber, and rang Bob on his mobile. He and Jane were by now a long way behind, but Jane was OK to navigate them both to Hastings. So we agreed to part company, keeping in touch via mobile. And then there were five (or rather five plus two) ...

The route followed the seafront at Camber and then a cycle path to Rye, where we had another quick stop. I had planned to take the Royal Military Canal to Winchelsea, but opted for the two miles alongside the A259 instead - it

was slightly shorter, and in the early hours of the morning there was very little traffic. We went through Winchelsea, and picked up the canal which we followed to Cliffend, and where we had another stop. From here it was the route we have taken a few times on the Rye-Hastings New Year's Day walk. It was still dark, so I had to be careful with navigation. We went up a small hill and then dropped down into the houses at Fairlight Cove. We then had our last climb of the day up to the former coastguard station. By now dawn was breaking, and we were rewarded with some wonderful views stretching all the way back to Folkestone. Quite memorable. We then followed paths to Barley Lane, which led us to the expansive green above Hastings Old Town. We then dropped down to Hastings seafront and made our way to the railway station, arriving at 6am, so the walk had taken us 21 hours. We rang Bob, to find that he and Jane were both OK. Jane had peeled off near her home at Hastings, and Bob got to the station 40 minutes after the rest of us. It had been a really good walk, and congratulations must go to Richard Allison and Paul and Linda from Thames Valley, all of whom had never walked 100 kilometres before. Particular praise goes to Linda, who had put up with bad blisters for the last few miles and didn't complain once. If anyone fancies having a go at the Cinque Ports Challenge, I have written a route guide for the walk. This is NOT a route description, and should always be used in conjunction with the relevant OS maps. It is a rough guide, with important grid references. If anyone fancies having a go at the walk, and would like a copy of the route guide, just contact me (my details are below), and I can send a copy by post or email.

HOLLAND ISN'T ALL FLAT - AND WE HAD SEVEN WITNESSES by Peter Jull

A PARTY of seven took up the offer of a mini bus to Vlissingen on the Zeeland coast to take part in the Duin en Strandtochten event organised by De Vrolijke Tippelaars. After getting up at silly o'clock to start from Deal the bus picked up more at Etchinghill before catching the Shuttle through the Channel Tunnel. Many of you will know that from Calais into Belgium is indeed flat with nothing higher than a flyover bridge. The driver was submissive to the instructions given and took the "SatNav" route beyond Bruges towards the tunnel onto the island of Walcheren. That turned out to be the most traffic calmed route imaginable with speed limits, chicanes and speed bumps for many miles, sorry kilometres - we're in funny money country. Even so, and with the Shuttle having been 15 minutes late, we arrived at about the planned time without having seen a hill.

After registering for a small fee and handing over some invitations to our White Cliffs Challenge, which was part of the reason for going, we had a brief explanation of the brief route description (helpfully rechts was right and links left) we were off to follow the yellow arrows chalked on the pavement. The first showed the way out of the café that was the start point, the next r.a. (TR in our speak) 100m to the junction and then right again towards the coast and uphill! That was the start of the dunes for which the event is named and although lower at the town end, rising further on to a far from flat 175ft. Starting at or perhaps below sea level that's not a bad way to scotch the Holland is flat rumour. An arrow indicated we should follow a cycle path along the ridge after which the route description in Dutch became unintelligible to any of us. It later transpired that having followed the first three of 29 lines in less than 10 minutes, line 4 referred to 15km away! But there were always those arrows ...

The cycle path took us down the back of the dunes to a choice of routes and a confusion of arrows. The path back up the dunes looked more interesting than the one along the bottom but then oops, we're on the beach. Beach (strand) was in the title and the tide was out and the sand looked firm so press on. Some wooden steps back to the top of the dunes were soon spotted and on we went up and down the ridge including that 175ft. Sometimes on cycle paths and sometimes on footpaths (the surfaces were nearly all paved or treated), sometimes on the ridge and sometimes behind it we spotted a (very) occasional arrow but had no idea how far we'd walked or where we were walking to.

Inquiries of locals who were not speeding past on bicycles revealed that the Westkappel of line 4 was a place somewhat further on. The two ramblers with us had intended to do only 15km but even asking Dutch walkers with paper in hand similar to ours could only say their checkpoint had been passed and the next was not far but still not clearly enough for it to be found. Later translation revealed they were back over the dunes on the sand along which there were regular beach cafes. From where they eventually turned back they must have done over 20km.

Ahead we spotted a village below that looked to be at the west end of the island with a building that looked like a chapel and trusted it to be our destination. A yellow arrow at the bottom of steps off the seawall encouraged us but where was the checkpoint? In asking a likely looking family for help they were visitors but two older ladies, pensioners might be unkind but certainly grandmotherly, tried to assist. However they had clearly partaken of the local brew (it was not yet 2pm) and even if they had been speaking English it is doubtful their directions would have been sufficiently coherent. Round the corner we tried again with another Dutchman who had also had a drink or two but was lucid enough to interpret that our directions included a stable, we saw no horses, and instead helped us directly to checkpoint 2.

That took us past the scene of a boisterous and noisy local festival involving men in matching T-shirts erecting tall poles with crests on the top into a bank but otherwise of unidentifiable purpose other than that drinking lots of beer was an integral part. The checkpoint found, there was time for a refreshing beer (while there was some left) before starting the less eventful (just one more beer stop) return. The weather had been sunny intervals and warm enough to make the light sea breezes welcome until within a mile or two of the end. Darkening clouds over Belgium brought

spits and then more but with long views over the Scheldt estuary it was clear resorting to waterproofs would not be necessary for long.

Safely back at the start just as they were packing up, apart from Graham who had been ahead but gone on a chips detour, use was made of the café for R&R before finding the bus. To comply with the driver's tachograph restrictions it had been planned to meet the bus at a car park in the town centre which meant a stroll (with ice creams) along the promenade from the park on the edge where we were. When we got there the car park had been taken over by a festival with roundabouts, music and snakes but the bus had been spotted nearby and already found by the rambles. With a little more time to kill there was a chance to glimpse the delights of downtown Vlissingen, the marina, the pavement cafes and for the "Gunners" suffering from close season withdrawal symptoms Het Arsenaal.

Navigation issues, a cloudburst and a roadworks diversion lengthened the return journey beyond the Shuttle check-in time. Pedantic passport checking on the bus by a French border guard as we tried to leave the country when we had been just waved through on the way in, replicated by UK Immigration three minutes later off the bus removed any chance of blagging our way out of being held back to the next departure. Pursey Michelle, as the French had pronounced him, having left his passport on the bus, was further delayed when it was pointed out it was out of date, so much for French pedantry. An extra hour's wait ate into sleep time before an early start for the Andredswald the next day but did not spoil an interesting variation on the term challenge walk.

100 MARATHON CLUB by Jill Green

AT Christmas 2008, I got a letter from a good LDWA friend, Don Newman. Don is also a runner, and he suggested I join the 100 Marathon Club. I had seen people running wearing the 100 Marathon Club vests. I protested that I had only ever run one marathon and that was the London Marathon. Don told me that the South Downs 80 would also count, indeed everything over 26 and a bit miles, even the LDWA 100 miles. Alas, I did nothing about it.

I met Don on events in 2009 and he said he was still waiting for my list and he would put it all on a spread sheet. So at Christmas 2009, I did send a list to Don who kindly returned it to me, asking for all the events I had done before, and any I had done in 2008/09.

In November 2010, the Isle of Wight had deep snow, Jim had come to visit me; everything stopped - no buses, no shops open, pavements sheets of ice, delighted children, hundreds of snowmen. Jim and I went for countryside walks. In the evening, he asked if there was anything he could do to help me, so I produced my list. We went through it all again: 545 marathons, all with certificates or results sheets. Then we both went to see Don in Surrey. He spent all morning on the list. Now it was ready for me to send.

We tried to do it on the computer but this didn't work for us so I posted it, with my £10 membership fee. Nothing happened, then I got my membership card - number 348. Some time later I got a call from Roger Biggs (the chairman of the 100 Marathon Club), who told me the club was really only for people who run marathons. Well, that's that, I thought. Roger told me they were altering the rules to that effect, but he wouldn't strike me off. He said another lady had sent him a list like mine; I guessed that was Sandra Brown. I decided to drop it then. I had invested a lot of time and effort, but I decided not to ask for a vest or anything.

Then in 2012, I got another membership card. I telephoned the secretary who said that, as I am now over 70, I get my membership free. So Jim and I went through all the spread sheets again, looking at the 545 events and crossing out any where there were no runners participating. I even crossed out the events where some people did run though it was frowned on. I took out 150, then added the new ones and came up with 406 events in total. I've sent that off, but as yet haven't found out how to get my 100 Marathon Club vest.



WALKING THE INCA TRAIL by Geoff Thorp

I SEE according to Strider that this is listed as one of the top 10 walks in the world so I thought I'd give Kent readers my impressions. There were four of us in our party from Brabourne. We arrived in Cusco, Peru on September 9 and spent three days acclimatising to the altitude of 7,200ft. We left our hotel at 4am for the drive to the start at Piskacuchu. Scrambled egg and coffee was served while we meet the others, 18 porters, two guides, eight Americans

and two who were on honeymoon. They were English of course! Breakfast was followed by fees and a passport check to get into the main park. We were off crossing the Urubamba river and a path much like home, a little bumpy, to make me breath hard, but OK. We stopped for amazing views over the river, mountains and sacred valley at the look out of Miskay, 9,200ft. This overlooked the ruined town of Patallacta. Wherever you are in this region invariably you can see Inca ruins. The path now followed the Kusichaca river up a mountain valley. Time now for a great hot three course lunch in the naafi tent washed down with plenty of coca tea. The going from now on was tough, continuous rocky steps 20 to 50cms in height, either uphill or down. Stopping for air every 2-15steps was the only problem the four of us had. We stopped for the night at Llulluchapampa, 12,300ft, and had a wonderful cooked three course dinner. So, so tired into our tents at 8.30pm and it was snowing.

We all slept like logs including my wife Val, who had never spent the night under canvas or slept on the ground in her life. We were awakened at 5.30 with warm water to wash and a large mug of coca tea. At 6.30 the clambering up the trail resumed (average speed 1mph). The area was now changed from sierra to puna on the snow line with very little vegetation, to cross the highest point of the route, Dead Woman's Pass at 13,800ft. Descent now to Pacaymayo for lunch (soup, main course and pud). While we were dining there was a terrific hail storm leaving an inch deep of slush on the ground. This resulted in a bit of snow walking for the next 90 minutes and plenty of fine penetrating drizzly rain. We passed through many Inca ruins and another mountain pass at 12,200ft to set up camp for the night in a midge infested swamp at Chaquicocha at 11,500ft.

I noted the following four things. 1. The flora throughout is cloud forest consisting of numerous ferns, mosses and orchids growing on a diverse species of trees, there is very little rain relying on the clouds for moisture. 2. The porters were amazing carrying 35Kgs on their backs and running with this load on their backs in flip-flops and bare feet (they were callused like bovines). 3. Val quickly learnt a golden rule of camping in the wild when you have a nature call at 4.30am and there is a thick white haw frost, with the loo block 200m away this suddenly becomes 2m. 4. We have never ever seen such clear skies at night, uncountable stars and the milky way like a giant's white scarf.

Next day was the most impressive and interesting with plenty of time for our guides to explain everything about the numerous Inca ruins on the day's hike. Soon after our start at 7 o'clock we paused for silence, to stand there for five minutes and not hear a thing was truly amazing. It was onwards across a seemingly endless trail of rocky steps either uphill or down. There was no flat. Pass number 3 came up at just over 12,000ft but then it was downhill. The route was an engineering masterpiece, being etched into the mountainside, about a metre wide with a constant almost vertical drop off to our RHS. Interesting was the path going through a couple of tunnels using natural faults in the rock. Our third night's stop was Winay Wayna at 8,900ft. This campsite had breathtaking views over the snow top mountains in the distance. This not for the fainthearted, one metre from the entrance to our tent the sheer drop into the valley below was nearly 2,700ft. This evening's meal was a celebration with the cook producing a wedding cake for the lucky couple. It was a sad goodbye to our cooks and porters for we wouldn't see them again.

Last day and reveille at 3.30am. Yes that's correct, in order to enter the Machu Picchu site area at 5.30am when the gate is opened. An interesting feature on this last day is a scramble, up a 100ft climb, good hands and knees job! No wonder the porters went a different way? We arrived an hour later at the sun gate temple of Intipunku to look over the city ruins. All to no avail, everything was shrouded in cloud plus the inevitable very fine drizzle, so we couldn't see the ruin at sunrise. We had to wait at this point for over an hour for four of our group to catch up (Val and myself are over twice their age - these youngsters, tut tut!) We entered the city of Machu Picchu at 7,900ft and descended to the control point to register. The whole site is very closely monitored. Do not think you can just go there, but with a wad of dollars and a British passport you can!

Then the final celebratory beer at 8.30am. A much enjoyed two hour tour of the site followed. We lunched on pizza and more beer in the town of Aguas Calientes, a mere 6,700ft and then our first wash in four days at a five star hotel. This was my present to Val for a walk well done!



TRIPLE CHALLENGES

KENT Group members may be interested to know that on April 21-22, Michael Headley walked the Cinque Ports Challenge (100k, or 62 miles), the following weekend he walked (with Wendy Thurrell) 75 miles of the LDWA

Games 100, then the following weekend he completed the Wye Forest 50 (50 miles) - that's at least 187 miles in three successive weekends, or 15 days.

On April 21-22, Graham Smith also walked the Cinque Ports Challenge, the following weekend he walked the 50-mile Sussex Stride solo, then the weekend after that he completed the LDWA Games 100 marshals' walk - that's at least 212 miles in three successive weekends.

Well done Michael and Graham!



APPEAL TO BUY PART OF THE WHITE CLIFFS

AN APPEAL to raise £1.2 million to buy more of the White Cliffs of Dover has been launched by the National Trust. The timing of the appeal is quite appropriate for us, as September sees our 52-mile White Cliffs Challenge.

Historian and television presenter Dan Snow has given the appeal his support and is encouraging others to do the same. It is sure to appeal to many LDWA members, particularly Kent Group.

It will complete the missing link of coastline under National Trust care, uniting a stretch of more than 7km (nearly five miles) between the trust's visitor centre at Langdon Cliffs and the South Foreland lighthouse at St Margaret's.

The current owner of the land has offered it to the trust, but there is a deadline of the end of the year to raise the money. It is the charity's biggest ever coastal fundraiser.

If it is successful, it will mean people have access to more areas of the clifftop, and that it is cared for in such a way that it will improve its habitat for wildlife.

Hilary McGrady, director for the South East at the National Trust, said: "Immortalised in song and literature, the White Cliffs of Dover have become one the great symbols of our nation.

"We now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure their future for everyone to enjoy.

"If we don't raise the money then the future of the White Cliffs is uncertain and this stretch of coastline might one day be disrupted by inappropriate management or development."

Mr Snow said: "For me it's simple. The White Cliffs of Dover are one of the country's greatest and most iconic landmarks.

"When I heard that the National Trust had this opportunity to safeguard this crucial stretch of the Cliffs, I thought great.

"It's brilliant that they have a chance to secure this important section of the cliffs for ever."

Gareth Wiltshire, who works at the cliffs, said the trust will also be taking over a field which is currently rented out to a farmer.

"We will allow the natural grassland and wildlife plants to take over again," he said. "It will take a few years, but it will be a real benefit to the wildlife.

"It is an area of outstanding natural beauty and a site of special scientific interest, and buying the extra land will mean we can improve the amount of space we have for wild flowers and we can put waymarkers all the way across.

The funds need to be raised by the end of the year to help acquire this piece of the Kent coast and help with the conservation and management of the whole White Cliffs of Dover.

As well as via collection boxes at the White Cliffs Visitor Centre, there are three other ways people can donate to the appeal.

It can be done online at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/whitecliffsappeal and people can have their name engraved on a virtual White Cliffs.

Donations can be made via text. To donate £5, text DOVR02 £5 to 70070. The amount must be included in the text.

People can also make a donation over the phone by calling 0844 800 1895.

Standing at more than 110 metres high - the same height as 25 London buses stacked on top of each other - the White

Cliffs of Dover are home to a rich array of wildlife including the adonis blue butterfly, rare coastal plants such as oxtongue broomrape and sea carrot, and birds including skylark, the only colony of kittiwakes in Kent and peregrine falcons.

The National Trust acquired its first stretch of the White Cliffs of Dover in 1968.

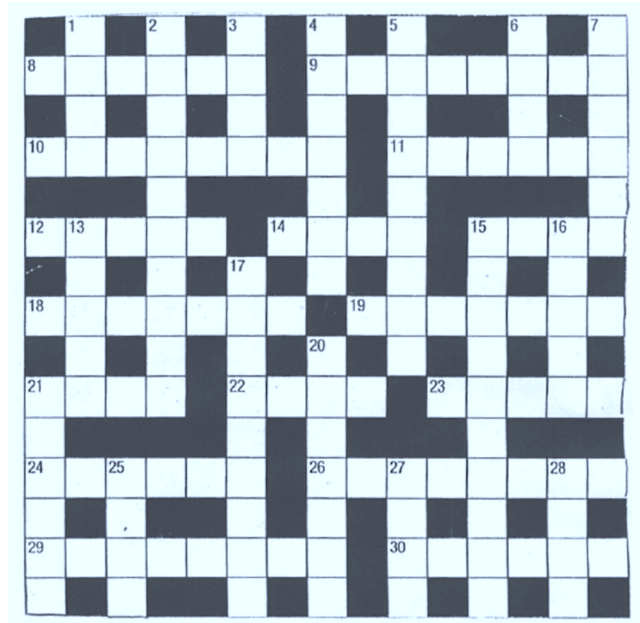
CROSSWORD set by Shirley Higgins

ACROSS

8. Animal was about to start leaping around us (6).
9. Have fun and hasten to find flower (8).
10. Remain about broken ring to see marine creature (8).
11. Lie close, in den at the centre of Castleford (6).
12. Chain, could be free (5).
14. Anxiety in safe area? (4).
15. Kind of print (4).
18. Distributes jam and honey (7).
19. Nasty to serfs in Ashdown and Epping (7).
21. Cowshed beside your rural entrance initially (4).
22. Fluorescent for none perhaps (4).
23. Sounds like cry from large animal (5).
24. I'm a dog! (6).
26. Making a long journey on foot to see ruler after walk (8).
29. Down to earth, dispatch to make a point (8).
30. Horse works hard like this (6).

DOWN

1. Pause at small station (4)
2. Weird regent's bec and water birds (10).
3. Star turn to become an emperor (4).
4. Where children enjoy themselves in East Sussex (7).
5. Unusual barn crook in Kent (9).
6. Notice pimple (4).
7. Might block light wind (6).
13. Ask for a job to plaster (5).
15. Use clove hitch to unite a couple (3, 3, 4).
16. Segment of broken plate (5).
17. Possibly dine at environmentally friendly village in Kent (4, 5).
20. Sounds like Laurie is limited to small amount of water on the beach (3, 4).
21. A blast destroyed by igneous rock (6).
25. River has mouth and tunnel (4).
27. Consumes messy teas (4).
28. Undiluted as in one atom (4).



Answers for April crossword:

ACROSS

3 Speldhurst, 8 Bad arm, 9 Calories, 10 Parallel, 11 Parish, 12 Spaniard, 15 Calcite, 17 Scaglia, 19 Aloe vera, 21 Supple, 25 Primrose, 26 Festival, 27 Litter, 28 Edenbridge.

DOWN

1 Canada, 2 Salami, 3 Small Hythe, 4 Enclose, 5 Dill, 6 Uprising, 7 Skewer, 11 Pucka, 13 Accessible, 14 Drake, 16 Cheriton, 18 Dappled, 20 Legend, 22 Pirate, 23 Listen, 24 Over.

The winner was Keith Warman.

SOCIAL WALKS - WHY AREN'T WE GETTING MORE PEOPLE?

WHEN you go through the various group listings in Strider, there is no doubt that Kent Group has one of the best social walks programmes in the entire LDWA. We seem to put on more social walks than most groups, and we also seem to have more variety on the programme. This year, for example, our walks have ranged from 17-18 milers to our 100k Cinque Ports Challenge, held in April. Also, which other group takes its members on walks in other countries? In July we had two walks on the Continent in three weeks, with the trip to Vlissingen, organised by Peter Jull, on July 7, then our annual French challenge two weeks later. And, let's not forget, we have been doing our French challenge for

about 16 years. OK, it's not the original Channel Cliffs Challenge, where we used to meet at the Dover hoverport at 5am and walk along the cliffs to Folkestone, get the Seacat to Boulogne and walk back to Calais, before getting the hovercraft to Dover and arriving back at about midnight. But it's still a good 23-mile walk, giving those going a decent taste of the scenery and countryside in the Nord Pas de Calais region of France.

Those continental walks are a bit exceptional, but all our walks are enjoyable, involving nice routes. Also, they take a fair bit of planning on the part of the leader. It was, for example, a great shame that only five of us turned up in May for Peter Jull's Plod Around The Parks - a very well worked out route which was full of interest (see article above). BUT we just don't get many people on our social walks. When you think of the distances most of us will travel to take part in challenge walks, it is certainly disappointing, and quite sad, that social walks can get as few as two - yes, two - people on them. Surely a well worked route like the Plod Around The Parks has got to be worth travelling to from west Kent or north Kent, hasn't it?

The danger is that if the numbers of people going on our social walks keeps dwindling like this, then leaders will get disheartened and they will be disinclined to plan and put on social walks.

So come on. We're a walking group, and a very good one. Let's get a few more takers on our excellent social walks.

COMEDY CORNER from Bill Gillibrand

A MAN goes to the Rabbi: "Rabbi, something terrible is happening and I have to talk to you about it."

The Rabbi asks: "What's wrong?"

The man replies: "My wife's poisoning me."

The Rabbi, very surprised by this, asks: "How can that be?"

The man then pleads: "I'm telling you, I'm certain she's poisoning me, what should I do?"

The Rabbi then offers: "Tell you what. Let me talk to her, I'll see what I can find out and I'll let you know."

A week later the Rabbi calls the man and says: "Well, I spoke to your wife. I spoke to her on the phone for **three hours**. You want my advice?"

The man says: "Yes".

The Rabbi replies: "Take the poison."

KENT GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman - Brian Buttifant

Secretary/newsletter editor - Graham Smith,

Treasurer - Neil Higham

Walks secretary - Mike Pursey,

Membership secretary - Nick Dockree

Webmaster - Michael Headley

Members

Phil Butler -

Joy Davies -

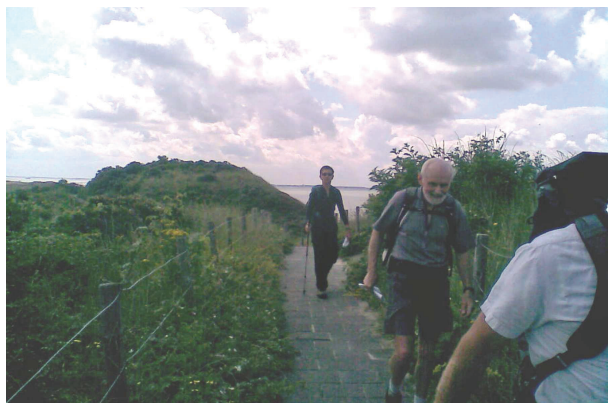
Stephanie le Men -

Mike Ratcliff -

PUB meetings are held on the first Monday of each month (except if that coincides with a bank holiday, when they are postponed to the second Monday) at the Rose & Crown, Wrotham. Meetings commence at 8.30pm. All welcome.



Kent Group members on the Biggin Hill checkpoint on the LDWA Games 100.
Pictures by Nick Dockree and Phil Butler



The trip to Vlissingen in Holland. Pictures by Peter Jull