

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION – Kent Group

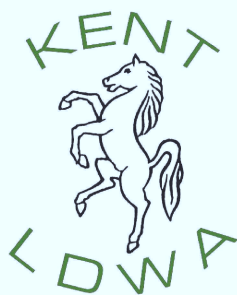
Aim: to further the interests of those who enjoy long distance walking

NEWSLETTER



Dave Sheldrake on the White Cliffs Challenge, *photo taken by Eric Rolfe*

Number 89



December 2012

www.ldwakent.org.uk/



This year's White Cliffs Challenge, *photos taken by Eric Rolfe*

KENT GROUP SOCIAL WALKS December 2012 to April 2013

Sun Dec 2 Christmas Lunch

Preceded by a walk of c7ml, led by Neal O'Rourke, starting from London Beach Hotel, Tenterden, at 9.30am, with lunch being served at 1.30pm (those going on the walk will be able to use the hotel's changing rooms on return).

Sat Dec 8 Christmas Cruise around Calais

c14ml. Meet 07.30 by P&O Desk, Dover Eastern Docks for 08.25 sailing (return approx. 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 09.18 at Strood rlwy stn GR TQ740693 Map: Exp 148. Finish at Newington rlwy stn. A walk on the North Kent coast via The Medway Estuary, Rochester Castle and Cathedral, Lower Halstow and The Saxon Shore Way. Lunch stop at Upchurch. Joint walk with London LDWA. L: Mike Ratcliff

Thu Dec 27 Post Christmas Sevenoaks Stroll

c16 ml. Meet 08.45 for 09.00 start at Shipbourne Church on A227 GR TR592522. Park in road opposite church. Map: Exp 147. Lunch stop at Wetherspoons, Sevenoaks. L: Dave Sheldrake

Tue Jan 1 New Year on the South Downs Again

c20ml. Meet 09.00 in Eastbourne at 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. L: Graham Smith.

Fri Jan 4 Winter Night Walk

c18ml. Meet 21.30 for 22.30 start at the Rose & Crown pub, Wrotham GR TQ612591 Map: Exp 147. Bring torch. L: Dave Sheldrake.

Sun Jan 13 Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 4

c19ml. Meet 08.55 at Rochester rlwy stn GR TQ748682 Maps: Exp 162,163. Linear route via Gad's Hill and Bean. Pub stop at Southfleet. Finish at Dartford rlwy stn. L: Peter Jull. This is the fourth of five walks which, in total, cover a 97-mile route between the Timeballs at Deal & Greenwich going over nine hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood.

Sun Jan 27 AGM

At Lenham Village Hall, preceded by a walk of c7ml. See article below for further details.

Sun Feb 3 The Roman Road

C 17.5ml. Meet 10.00 at Dover Priory rlwy stn GR 314414 Maps Exp 138, 150. Linear walk following the Roman Road from Dover to Sandwich via Richborough Castle, returning to Dover by train. Lunch stop at Eastry. L: Graham Smith.

Sun Feb 17 Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 5

c17ml. Meet 09.30 at Dartford rlwy stn GR TQ541742 Map: Exp 162. Finish at Greenwich rlwy stn. Linear route via Erith and Shooter's Hill. Pub stop. L: Peter Jull. This is the last of five walks which, in total, cover a 97-mile route between the Timeballs at Deal & Greenwich going over 9 hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood.

Sat Feb 23 The Four Pits Walk

c40ml. Meet 08.00 by the bridge over the River Stour at Fordwich GR TR179598 Maps: Exp 150,138. A circular walk taking in the sites of the former Kent Pits of Chislet, Betteshanger, Tilmanstone and Snowdown (this is an Anytime Challenge and certificates are available for completions, and badges can be obtained for £2). Various stops en route. Likely to be a late finish so bring a torch (or more appropriately miner's lamp!). L: Graham Smith

Sun Mar 10

Sevenoaks Circular Marshals' Walk For details contact Brian Buttifant.

Sun Mar 24 Sevenoaks Circular Main Event

See Events Diary in Strider and News of Kent Challenge Walks article below.

Fri Mar 29 (Good Friday) A South Downs Way Loop

c26/20ml. 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. Ls: (26ml) Graham Smith. (20ml) Joy Davies.

Sun Apr 7 Zulu 23

c23ml. Meet 09.00 at Walmer Castle c.p. GR TR379501 Maps: Exp 138,150. Lunch stop at Ash. L: Richard Frost

Sun Apr 14 Fuller's Frolic

c20ml. Meet 09.00 at Hastings Country Park at top, just off Fairlight Road GR TQ858118 Map: Exp 124. Pub stop at Udimore - food available. L: Neal O'Rourke.

Sat Apr 27 Cinque Ports Challenge

c100km. Meet 09.00 at Sandwich rly stn GR TR333576 Maps: Exp 124,125,138.

An unsupported walk from Sandwich to Hastings, linking the Cinque Ports and associated towns. Finish at Hastings rly stn. Includes night walking - bring warm clothing and torch. Several pubs and cafes along the route for refreshments. For more detail contact L: Graham Smith



PAT CLARKE

AS this newsletter was about to go to be printed, the news came through that Pat Clarke had died after a brave battle with liver cancer. Pat, who was 78, had been a Kent Group stalwart for many years, working on checkpoints at scores of events and very often going right through the night. She will be a great loss to Kent Group.

Our thoughts go out to husband Bryan and the Clarke family at this sad time.

Pat's funeral will be on Monday December 10 at Eltham Crematorium, 11am. Eltham Crematorium is just off the A2/Rochester Way, and the nearest railway station is Falconwood.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - JANUARY 27

OUR AGM will be on January 27, and will again be held at Lenham Village Hall. As with last year, Michael Headley will be leading a walk before the meeting, and a free meal will be provided for everyone attending. The walk will start at 10am, leaving plenty of time for us all to socialise and enjoy our meal before the meeting, which will start at 2pm.

So please come along and have your say about Kent Group of the LDWA.

Nomination slips for the committee are with this newsletter.

NEWS OF KENT CHALLENGE WALKS

Sevenoaks Circular

NEXT year's Sevenoaks Circular will be on March 24, with the marshals' walk on March 10. It will again be based at Sevenoaks Rugby Club, and there will again be three routes - of 30, 20 and 15 miles. The route will, more or less, be the same as this year. Roger Dean, who did such excellent work on the route this year, is refining the route slightly to eliminate some of the road walking.

Weald challenge walk

NEXT year's Weald walk will be the Heart of the Weald, which will be based at Wadhurst. Organiser Neil Higham is in the process of getting the date confirmed, but provisionally, it will be Sunday July 14. More details will appear in the next newsletter.

White Cliffs Challenge

THE WCC will go back to the shorter routes next year, and will return to St Margaret's. Date of the event will be September 8, with the distances of 28 and 15 miles. No date has been set yet for the marshals' walk, but this will appear in the next newsletter. For 2014 we may well be changing the route of the shorter distances. Peter Jull has come up with some suggestions for a new route, and he has been asked to put this on our social walks programme so that it can be walked and assessed before a decision is taken. The WCC is not due to be the longer, 50 mile-plus version until 2015. This year was the first time the event had been held at Deal and Betteshanger Rugby Club. Despite some initial teething troubles - which can be put down to a communication problem but which was swiftly resolved - the rugby club ended up an excellent venue for us, and the club's chairman Geoff Davies and events organiser Serge Orlov were extremely helpful. So we are likely to be going back there in 2015.

KENT SURREY SUSSEX TRIPLE CHALLENGE

NEXT year Sussex Group are holding the Sussex Stride, the next leg of the Triple Challenge of 50-mile walks, along with our own White Cliffs Challenge and Surrey Group's Surrey Tops.

The Sussex Stride will be held over the weekend of September 21-22 and will be at the usual venue of Longhill School, Rottingdean. The marshals' walk will be held over the bank holiday weekend of August 24-25. As usual, we will be organising a checkpoint, with a few of us taking part in the marshals' walk. Anyone interested in marshalling on the event is asked to contact secretary Graham Smith - details below.

CAMEL-TEIGN HUNDRED (Ivor's Dream)

AS we all know (or we all certainly should do!), next year's Hundred is being organised by Cornwall and Devon Group. Many Kent Group members will have entered the event, which promises to be one of the best Hundreds in recent years. Secretary Graham Smith has entered the marshals' walk, so he will obviously be marshalling.

Kent Group will be organising a checkpoint at Callington - 44 miles. As usual, marshalling on the Hundred is being coordinated by chairman Brian Buttifant. Anyone wishing to join Brian and Graham in marshalling on the event should contact Brian - details below.

VALLEYS HUNDRED

THE 2014 Hundred is being organised by South Wales Group, and we will be organising a checkpoint. This will be at Deri, and will be at 47 miles. Further details will appear in next newsletters.

KENT GROUP'S 40th ANNIVERSARY

MEMBERS who have read the fabulous 40th anniversary edition of Strider, which was sent out in September, may have noticed that we are due to celebrate our own 40th birthday in 2014.

Obviously this is a highly significant milestone (yes, forgive the pun) for our group, and we plan to mark it in various ways. There will certainly be a special newsletter at some stage in 2014, and it is hoped we can have a 'Focus on ...' section in one of the Striders for that year. We also plan to have some kind of social event, to which original members and long-standing members will be invited. This is likely to be preceded by a short walk.

It is also hoped we can organise a special challenge walk that year. One of the ideas which has been mentioned at a committee meeting was to resurrect the Wealden Waters 100k walk. The Wealden Waters appears to have been the first challenge walk of 50-plus miles organised by Kent Group. The event was discontinued in 2003, and since then has been replaced with the White Cliffs Challenge as our autumn challenge walk. If we do decided to stage it again as a 40th anniversary one-off, it would likely be our Weald challenge walk for that year, although there may well be a shorter Weald walk distance as well.

These ideas are being discussed by the committee, and it is hoped to have further details in the next newsletter.

In the meantime, secretary and newsletter editor Graham Smith - who joined the LDWA and Kent Group in 1996 - would welcome information from any members about the formative years of Kent Group. Graham's email address is below.

SOCIAL WALKS - WHY AREN'T WE GETTING MANY WALKERS?

IN our last newsletter, the point was made that we are not getting many people on social walks. This, of course, is a great shame, as a lot of thought and preparation can go into a social walk. And in Kent Group, we do have quite a wide variety of walks. It has been quite disappointing in recent months to see a mere handful of people - and sometimes fewer than that - turning up. For example, Neal and Jan O'Rourke's Wealden Waters Wander, in September, only produced four takers (including Neal and Jan) and the first two stages of Peter Jull's Timeball and Telegraph Trail - a new long distance walk linking Deal with Greenwich, for which Peter has spent much time meticulously working out the route and the travel arrangements - only had three or four people taking part (although it must be said that the second stretch, on October 14, did clash with this year's Founders Challenge). There were more than twice that number of people on Graham Smith's 100k Cinque Ports Challenge in May.

So what is the problem? Or is there a problem? Are our social walks too long, or are they too short? Are social walks in the east of the county too far for members living in the west of the country to travel to? And vice versa, of course. The cost of petrol has become a very important consideration for LDWA members these days. Is the pace of social walks too fast? Or is it too slow?

Perhaps people could contact secretary Graham Smith with their thoughts. If it is felt that there is a particular problem, or problems, these can be taken on board by the committee when our social walks programme is being produced. We are, of course, a group of walkers who organise walks for walkers, so if walks leaders are doing anything which may be discouraging people from coming along on walks, then we would like to know. If we are not told about any problems, then we cannot do anything to address them.

If anyone has some thoughts on this subject - and any views would be gratefully received - perhaps they could email Graham on the email address below.

WEAR YOUR KENT COLOURS WITH PRIDE

FOLLOWING requests from a few members, Joy Davies is in the process of contacting the company which manufactured Kent Group T-shirts, polo shirts and sweatshirts some years ago. As before, these can be available in various colours and sizes, and - again as before - the costs should be reasonable. Joy will be taking orders at the AGM.

SOUTH WEST COAST PATH - A WALK WITH NICOLA ON THURSDAY- SATURDAY MAY 2-11

WOULD you like to join me in walking part of the South West Coast Path in May 2013? For those of you doing the Camel-Teign 100 it might be good training. The coastal scenery should certainly appeal.

I am planning to complete the path in four stages, as set out in the chart. In stage 1 I shall travel to Minehead by train/public transport on May 2 and start walking on May 3. I shall travel home on May 11 from Helston, near Falmouth.

The mileages and estimated walking times are taken from the distance calculator on the SWP website. Neal O'Rourke has cautioned that guide distances cannot always be relied upon, and rounding has inflated the overall distance from 630 to 637 miles. Still it is a useful planning tool.

I plan to stay at B&Bs along the route as near to the start and finish of each day's walk and to use a luggage transfer service. Luggage transfer was very useful on the Hadrian's Wall Path and on the Cleveland Way.

South west coast path - estimated mileage and walking distance							
stage	day	from	to	miles	cumulative miles	estimated walking time - hours	miles - this stage
1	1	Minehead	Lynmouth	22	22	7.26	
	2	Lynmouth	Woolacombe	26	48	9.52	
	3	Woolacombe	Inslow/Barnstable	28	76	6.9	
	4	Inslow/Barnstable	Bideford	19	95	6.3	
	5	Bideford	Clovelly	11	106	4.47	
	6	Clovelly	Bude	25	131	11.42	
	7	Bude	Tintagel	21	152	8.3	
	8	Tintagel	Padstow	21	173	8.53	
							173
2	9	Padstow	Newquay	25	198	8.23	
	10	Newquay	Porthowan	19	217	6.36	
	11	Porthowan	Stives	22	239	7.56	
	12	Stives	Sennen Cove	23	262	9.17	
	13	Sennen Cove	Penzance	18	280	6.66	
	14	Penzance	Lizard	27	307	9.56	
	15	Lizard	Helford	24	331	7.89	158
3	16	Helford	Portloe	24	355	8.4	
	17	Portloe	Par	24	379	8.57	
	18	Par	Portwrinkle	25	404	9.54	
	19	Portwrinkle	Wembury Point	28	432	9.36	
	20	Wembury Point	Salcombe	28	460	10.5	
	21	Salcombe	Dartmouth	23	483	8.56	
	22	Dartmouth	Torquay	19	502	7.12	171
4	23	Torquay	Exmouth	19	521	6.95	
	24	Exmouth	Seaton	24	545	9.44	
	25	Seaton	Abbotsbury	26	571	9.1	
	26	Abbotsbury	Weymouth	24	595	8.03	
	27	Weymouth	Kimmeridge	21	616	7.94	
	28	Kimmeridge	South Haven	21	637	7.85	135

I have not decided when to do stage 2 but it is likely that it will be at a similar time in 2014. I would hope to do stages 3 and 4 at similar times in 2015 and 2016.

If you would, like to come, you can contact me via our secretary and newsletter editor Graham Smith. You can email me via Graham on the address below. As the walk will coincide with the first May bank holiday, we will be advised to book accommodation and luggage transfer well in advance.

DIARY OF A COMMON MAN - THE GAMES HUNDRED (MARSHALS' WALK) - MAY 5-7 2012 by Keith Warman

A SLIGHTLY different report for this year. Yes, the Common Man still did the Hundred and, yes, he still wanted to write his diary. In 2012, however, he chose to do the Marshals' Walk, which took place over the first Bank Holiday weekend in May.

The Games Hundred was devised in celebration this year of the Olympic Games, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the LDWA's 40th anniversary. The route was a linear one, starting in Hackney and finishing in Windsor. After wending its way through east London, it then followed the North Downs Way from near Woldingham to Ranmore Common, with deviations to visit checkpoints. A southerly sweep was then taken through the Greensand Hills. St. Martha's Hill and Newlands Corner were followed by a relatively low-level meander northwards to the finish in Windsor. Although no Hundred is ever 'easy', this was considered to be one of the less arduous routes, with around 9,000 feet of ascent and descent.

The venue for the Marshals' Walk was the headquarters of the Harriers Athletic Club in Victoria Park, Hackney. The official start was a short walk away at White Post Bridge, overlooking the Olympic Stadium. (Rumour had it that some kind of athletics meeting was due to take place in this stadium in July . . .)

The weather forecast was dull, overcast and wet for most of the weekend. As the ground was already sodden, it meant that we were unlikely to get too much sand in our eyes. Temperatures were expected to be lower than average for May, with cold nights. Unfortunately, the forecast was true to its word!

Taking the marshals' and main events together, there were 22 starters from Kent Group. Fourteen (six on the marshals' walk and eight on the main event) managed to stay the course and slither around successfully. Congratulations to all who finished and commiserations to those who had to retire.

At the start . . . Shirlie and I had already used five modes of transport to arrive that morning so I was itching to stretch my legs. We chatted to some of the 42 other starters before being given the signal to proceed to White Post Bridge. After limited formalities from Dave Yorston, we were off at 10:00 am exactly. Walked with Martin Lawson - Shirlie joined us for the first few miles and left us at Canary Wharf to return home.

1 mile . . . Back into the wonderful Victoria Park, amongst the joggers, cyclists and keep-fitters. Along surfaced paths lined with stately London plane trees set amidst huge swathes of mown playing fields. There was surprisingly little traffic noise.

3 miles . . . Under threatening skies and with a steady cool breeze, I was glad to have donned trousers instead of shorts.

Joined the Regent's Canal towpath and the going was very pleasant. Martin and I were just about managing to keep up with Shirlie. Caught up Gordon Harker and Pauline and walked as a jolly fivesome.

5 miles . . . Dwarfed by the gleaming towers of Canary Wharf, we spun through revolving doors into a spacious glass atrium. Set inside was a busy yuppie coffee bar - having left my red braces in my breakfast bag, I snuck out through more revolving doors. Phew. This must be a first for a Hundred route! Said goodbye to Shirlie at the underground station and then watched the driverless trains of the Docklands Light Railway or, as we say in the engine shed, the 'DLR'.

7 miles . . . Walked under the River Thames via the Greenwich Foot Tunnel. Another first for a Hundred route, which has been to over 2,000 feet above sea level on more than one occasion. Now we were below sea level. Our steady progress through the tunnel was in beat with the busker at the far end. We emerged to sail past the Cutty Sark and march through the grounds of the Royal Naval College. Get in step, Warman!

8 miles . . . Enjoyed a stretch along the Thames Path to reach checkpoint 1 in the car park of The Pilot public house. 12:36 pm. Nicely looked after. We didn't linger long and soon reached and admired the Thames Flood Barrier at Woolwich, where we headed south away from the river.

14 miles . . . Suburban south London now, through parks and open green spaces. At the café in the delightful Oxleas Wood, Gordon and Pauline took a breather so Martin and I continued ahead. What good company he was, spinning yarns and telling wonderful stories of his escapades on Hundreds.

18 miles . . . Arrived at checkpoint 2 in Mottingham Scout Hut at 3:43 pm. A warm welcome from Beds, Bucks and Northants Group (BBN) and superb refreshments were proffered and devoured. We pushed on and soon felt a little out of place, weaving between the shoppers in genteel Chislehurst - our slalom must have added several yards to the route.

25 miles . . . A great fillip here - just as Martin and I were strolling into Farnborough, we met my father. We walked together to checkpoint 3 in the St. Giles Centre and soon found my mother safely tucked up in a corner. Nicely looked after by BBN again. Met Mike Childs and Deirdre Flegg (from Dorset) and Richard Denby (from Bristol). Then Gordon and Pauline arrived. Cosy chatty atmosphere. Left around 6:50 pm and my father led us through the churchyard and into the vastness of High Elms Country Park.

27 miles . . . Tricky navigation through wonderful woodlands led us to Downe village, after which we found our first muddy



footpath. Little did we know . . .

29 miles . . . Flew into checkpoint 4 at The Spitfire Centre, Biggin Hill at 8:14 pm, where rations were dispensed by our Kent Group colleagues. Suitably refuelled then, in fading light, it was chocks away and Martin and I taxied out onto the runway and were off on our next sortie.

30 miles . . . Not at all pleasant - narrow, rutted paths through Long Coppice Wood were, as Tim Glenn would say, character-building stuff. Under torchlight, we slithered and stumbled up and down more steep muddy paths trying to avoid tripping or walking into concealed fallen branches.

32 miles . . . Heads down against the now driving rain on the exposed section around Beddlestead Farm. We did not see or hear the ram with bronchitis, which we were warned about in our instructions at the start. (I wondered if he wished to borrow my warm woolly jumper, but Martin thought he probably had one already . . .). For us, it was getting colder. Despite high spirits, this was becoming quite a test as we left the fleshpots of Greater London and entered leafy Surrey.

36 miles . . . Through the extremely wet (but delightfully named) Halliloo Plantation, across Warlingham golf course and up a slippery grassy slope to Woldingham. The elusive enclosed paths between houses were somewhat mucky and we were both liberally caked in mud from the knees down. The rain had eased but the cold wind belonged to a freezing February.

39 miles . . . Shortly after midnight, Martin and I stumbled across checkpoint 5, being a van parked where we joined the North Downs Way. Martin Burnell and Neil Higham looked after us admirably but, unfortunately, could not offer us hot drinks. Trying to shelter from the ferocious wind, I sat on the tailgate of the van, but to no avail - the wind blew under the van and straight up my trouser legs! I became extremely cold so quickly that I decided I had to don my heavy cagoule. (Oh, for a warm woolly jumper!).

41 miles . . . Navigation easier now, following the acorn waymarks all the way to the next checkpoint, but the underfoot conditions remained sticky and tricky. The long tracks made concentration difficult and I fell asleep twice while on the move. Soon, a clear path descended gently across a ploughed field to dip under the M23 motorway. However, our descent was rather less than gentle, as we slid more or less the whole way down, but at least we managed to find the tunnel under the road.

44 miles . . . With some relief, we reached the warm sanctuary of checkpoint 6 in Merstham Village Hall at 2:41 am. Well cared for by Betty Sherry, Louis Broz and Adrian Hudson. A few more walkers were resting here, licking their wounds. I was very tired and told Martin I needed a sleep. When I told him to go on, he replied, "No. I'm waiting here for you, Mr. Keith." What a gentleman. After 38½ winks, Betty woke me and, suitably replenished, we were ready to leave. Sadly, Deirdre Flegg had to retire here, so we invited Mike Childs to join us. As we left, the rain was torrential.

46 miles . . . A long steady climb to the top of Reigate Hill with the wind crashing through the trees and the rain slashing into our faces. The resolve of our merry threesome was undiminished, however, and good banter helped the miles go by. A glance behind us at Colley Hill and, what was this? The first signs of daylight, if you could call it that. At least we could see the mud a little more clearly now. Deep joy.

51 miles . . . The rain had eased slightly as we tackled treacherous paths, still on the North Downs Way. Mud and chalk, mixed at 1:1, is quite slippery. The monotony of the "chuck, chuck" sound as we ploughed on was hypnotic, the mud tenaciously tugging our trainers with every step. A long, slow climb up to checkpoint 7 in Box Hill Village Hall. 6:58 am. John and Judy Nickerson tended well to our needs. Stocked up on sustenance as it was 11.30 miles to the next checkpoint.

53 miles . . . We paused at the trig point on Box Hill, to view the drabness over Dorking below. The distant greensand hills, were just grey shadows in the murky mist. The steep steps down were lethal and never-ending. Mike fell over - no damage done (to the steps or to Mike), he just had a bit more mud to carry around!

57 miles . . . Passed a sleeping Tanner's Hatch Youth Hostel (a checkpoint on the main event but, alas, not for us). Ranmore Common is a delight at any time of the year, and equally pleasing was the sight of Neil Higham providing a drinks stop on the roadside by Steer's Field. Soon we left the North Downs Way and headed southwards (and breakfast point-wards) through the silent woods and secret little valleys of the greensand hills. Thankfully, the wind had eased and we slogged purposefully on.

63 miles . . . A lovely welcome from Dave Yorston, his daughter Coral and Surrey Group members at the breakfast stop, checkpoint 8, at Belmont School, Holmbury St. Mary. 11:50 am. Although wet and tired, our spirits were not dampened, and the prospect of dry clothing was enticing. The showers were cold, but that did not stop Mike from taking advantage of the offer - they breed Hardy souls in Dorset. Bolstered by warm encouragement, we set off on another long stage, 9.70 miles to Chilworth.

65 miles . . . Dropped down into peaceful Peaslake and passed the old post office which, as far as the LDWA is concerned, is 'where it all began'. We remembered our founders and hoped that they would be pleased that the Hundred was in the LDWA's birthplace.

66 miles . . . The steady climb through woodland to the highest point on the route, Pitch Hill, was remarkable. We were alone in this usually popular area. It was eerily calming to our weary souls.

69 miles . . . We welcomed the sandy tracks of Winterfold Heath and Blackheath, which were a bit drier than those we had already sludged through. Our progress became steady and resolute and it had even stopped raining.

71 miles . . . How things can change! The bridleway descent to Chilworth was in a narrow channel eroded through the sandstone and filled with 12" of best Surrey slime. There was no escape but to wade through. We could almost smell the teapot in the checkpoint ahead . . .

72 miles . . . Somewhat dishevelled, the three of us dropped into Chilworth Village Hall and checkpoint 9 to be tended to by the London Group. 4:50 pm. Don Newman was on duty, and he showed us his garden fork, which he'd brought from home to try and aerate the muddy gully for us. He gave up when he'd spent 10 minutes getting nowhere. Thank you for your kind thought, Don. We all greedily gorged on hot crumpets spread with a well-known yeast extract. My mate Martin had four. Dave Williams was also on duty, and I had placed a bet earlier with Martin that he would be as excitable as ever - he was! (Dave would later do the main event for his first Hundred completion). Great atmosphere.

73 miles . . . The steepest ascent, by far, took us up to the church atop St. Martha's Hill. After catching our breath, another section of the North Downs Way led us to Newlands Corner. From here, according to Paul Lawrence, it would be, "Downhill all the way to Windsor". Hmm. In truth, he wasn't that wrong.

76 miles . . . What a lovely surprise! Checkpoint 10 on a grassy clearing in the National Trust's Clandon Park estate was run by Tony Rowley and Susan Wilkinson. These committed Hundredeers had travelled from their home in North Yorkshire to look after us - and to do a bit of recceing ahead of the main event (which they had entered). 7:05 pm. For the first time on the event, the sun decided to greet us weakly for an hour - it was still up there somewhere.

78 miles . . . Well-used field paths took us to join (and follow for a while) the towpath of the River Wey Navigation near Send. Our next field crossing was completely flooded and impassable, so we took the instructed diversion - it certainly helped to keep the grey matter alert.

81 miles . . . Darkness heralded the start of our second night as we reached Old Woking and checkpoint 11 in St. Peter's Church Centre. 9:08 pm. Well cared for, yet again, with tasty refreshments served by (I think) Colin Travis and Christine Pendlebury. Ever ready with our torches, we set out on what I thought was the hardest section to navigate, 7.70 miles to Staple Hill.

84 miles . . . Through the outskirts of Woking and onto the strange landscape of Horsell Common. According to H. G. Wells, this is where the martians landed in The War of the Worlds, but the only aliens on the common this evening were the befuddled Hundredeers, meandering hither and thither 'twixt gorse and bracken 'neath tunnel vision torchlight.

89 miles . . . Frozen marshals, including Michael Hyland, greeted us at checkpoint 12 in Staple Hill Car Park. It was nearly 1:00 am and very cold again. They had not seen any other walkers for nearly 2½ hours. Worryingly, a group of four (who had been ahead of us) had not yet arrived. We didn't tarry for long and bade our farewells.

92 miles . . . After another dark crossing of sandy heaths, we reached the penultimate checkpoint, number 13, at Sunningdale Scout Hut. 2:05 am. To continue through Windsor Great Park (instead of the night-time alternative along roads round the Park perimeter) we could not leave here before 4:00 am because the Park gates are closed until dawn. I had planned to wait until then and have another short sleep. The usual, "Mustn't stop at a checkpoint for longer than two hours" rule was relaxed here, and my two chums agreed to rest as well. Christine Usher, her husband and Neil Higham looked after us. The 'mis-laid' group of four (Abigail and John Elrick, Paul Lawrence and Mike Pursey) duly arrived and all bar Paul decided to continue on the alternative route. At 4:20 am, suitably replete, the three of us, together with Paul and Neil Higham, set off on the final stage.

95 miles . . . Skirted Virginia Water in the beautiful Windsor Great Park. It was quite cold but not raining. All was silent until the dawn chorus began. We shared the perfect peace before the world awoke from its slumbers.

98 miles . . . Took a break at the magnificent Copper Horse Statue and gazed down The Long Walk, appropriately named. In the hazy distance, we could just discern the outline of Windsor Castle. The L o n g W a l k seemed endless but, eventually, it led us onto residential streets, with the end within reach.

101 miles . . . Hooray! Arrived at Windsor Scout Hut to finish at 7:57 am. We congratulated and thanked each other. A very nice reception from the marshals Dave and Lynn Yorston, Coral, Michael and Sandra Hyland and Norman Corrin. It was good to chat to other finishers and supporters. Reflecting upon the experience, I concluded that, whilst not technically difficult, the terrain and navigation had made it quite a challenge. A warm welcome was given by all to the final finisher, 77 years-old Richard Denby.

I would like to thank the organisers, Dave and Lynn Yorston, for their hard work, together with all the marshals who gave up their time for us. It had been a life-enhancing experience - I even wore trousers (no shorts) the whole way, another first! I hope that these damned things continue (and that I am able to enjoy them) for many years to come.

LDWA GAMES 100

THERE was quite an extensive Kent 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 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 members marshalled, manning our checkpoint at Biggin Hill, and also putting in lengthy (sometimes very lengthy) shifts as sweepers or closing marshals.

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

Andrew Boulden - 29.35.

Mike Ratcliff - 30.41.

Jim Catchpole - 34.38.

Richard Allison - 36.18.

Nicola Foad - 46.58.
Don Newman - 47.00.
Jane Dicker - 47.10.

Unfortunately Bob Field retired at checkpoint 9, Martin Brice and Alan Stewart retired at checkpoint 15, and Rex Stickland retired CP17. Jill Green, owing to her broken ankle, could not take part.

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. They both finished in 37.09.

Jack Denness, from Rochester, made his first Hundred attempt, but had to retire at checkpoint 5.

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.

The people mentioned above are either Kent Group members or LDWA members living in Kent - and the two are not always the same!

DON LOSES HIS RECORD - BUT WHAT AN EFFORT ON THE HUNDRED

KENT Group members will be interested, and many of us may be slightly saddened, to hear that Kent Group member and LDWA stalwart Don Newman has lost his record of completing every challenge event he has entered.

On the Wenlock Olympian Walk, held over the weekend of Saturday-Sunday July 21-22, Don entered the 100-mile event, which had to be completed in 40 hours, compared with the 48 hours given on the annual LDWA Hundred. He was going well but starting to struggle, and when he reached the 89-mile checkpoint, he found himself timed out. This meant, of course, that Don had to retire from the event.

Don says that he, and the other walker he was with at the time, did consider going on and continuing the walk, even if they were out of time and would not have been able to officially complete it, but they decided not to.

Don, of course, has become something of an LDWA legend, with the tales of his rivalry with Peter Barnett - going as far as stalking each other at checkpoints on Hundreds - becoming part of Kent Group folklore. He has completed 27 Hundreds officially, with another three unofficial completions. This means he has completed every LDWA Hundred since 1985. And many of us must have heard his tale of the time he completed the Gatliff with less than a minute to spare, having gone wrong (well, who hasn't on the Gatliff?), finally sprinting the last few hundred yards and shouting "STOP THE CLOCK!" as he burst into the registration hall at Edenbridge with seconds to spare.

And it must be said that Don's performance on this year's LDWA Games 100 has confirmed his legendary status. He finished the event in 47 hours, the longest time he has ever taken on a Hundred - but that bald fact doesn't begin to do justice to what he actually did. Three days before the event, Don hurt his left foot while gardening (and Don says that gardening is not something he does very often - rather like our newsletter editor). He was in a fair bit of pain and discomfort, and as the day of the Hundred approached, he wasn't moving well at all, and he thought seriously about pulling out. But he decided to give the event a go.

So he started, and didn't stop at all at the first checkpoints, as he feared that he would not be able to get up again if he stopped. After 20 miles he felt OK, and felt he had a reasonable chance of completing the event. So he trudged on ... and on and on. He reached all the checkpoints with a good bit of time to spare before their closing times, and eventually reached the finish at Windsor with an hour to spare.

What fabulous grit and determination. Commiserations on losing your unbeaten record on the Wenlock, Don. But you're a credit to the LDWA and an example to us all. Well done mate.

SUMMER FRENCH CHALLENGE

SEVEN Kent Group members turned up at Dover's Eastern Docks on Saturday July 21 for our Summer French Challenge - a 23-mile walk in the Nord Pas de Calais region just over the Channel. We decided to go by ferry this year because ... well, basically, we left it too late to book on Le Shuttle, which we have taken for the last three years. Le Shuttle is quicker, but it is certainly far more comfortable going by ferry. We booked with P&O and our crossings to and from Calais were both on



the new ship, *Pride of Britain*: nice roomy seats with good views across the sea, cafes, shops, a bureau de change - none of which you get on Le Shuttle.

Anyway, we had a lovely smooth crossing to Calais. On arrival we walked into the town centre and got a cab to the Auchan hypermarket at Coquelles, near the Channel Tunnel and from where we start the walk when we take Le Shuttle. It worked out at a couple of quid each and certainly worth it, as the walk through Calais is not the best walking in France.

From there we took our usual route through Coquelles to pick up GR (Grande Randonee) 128 to the village of Peuplingues, with fine views away to our right of the White Cliffs of Dover we had just left. We then followed a minor road before picking up GR 128 again. After couple of miles we reached the top of a rise - to be rewarded with fine views of the Nord Pas de Calais area, with Cap Gris-Nez in front of us. We kept on GR 128 to Mont de Couple, one of the best viewpoints in the Nord Pas de Calais region, and one of the walk's highlights. The summit is 530 feet high, and has a toposcope which tells you how far you are from some of Europe's major cities, including Moscow, Glasgow, London and Stockholm.

After that we took good tracks to the resort of Wissant, where we stopped at one of the bars (and very pleasant it was too). We then got onto the beach, and a couple of us took off shoes and socks to splash-splash in the shallow water of the outgoing tide before leaving the sand for the clifftop path. We then followed this to the bottom of Cap Blanc-Nez. There used to be quite a steep ascent here to the Dover Patrol monument, but that route has now been blocked off and the new path is a switch-back route, with much easier gradients. Cap Blanc-Nez is another excellent viewpoint, and on an exceptionally clear day you can see right across to the sister Dover Patrol memorial at St Margaret's. This day wasn't clear enough to make out St Margaret's, but we still had fine views.

After that, in the evening sunshine, we followed tracks on GR 128 back to Coquelles. A couple of us did a little bit of shopping at Auchan (OK, I admit it, I bought some beers - Leffe Ruby, a fruit beer which I love and which I can't buy in Deal). We then got what turned out to be the last bus from Coquelles - at a cost of much less than £1 each - back to Calais, and the ferry back to Dover.

As usual, it had been a very good day, one of the highlights of our social walks programme.

We have earmarked Saturday July 6 for next year's Summer French Challenge, when we are planning to revert to a Le Shuttle crossing - if Joy Davies can get us a cheap deal again. Details will appear in the next Strider and, of course, the Kent newsletter.

In the meantime there's the 14-mile Christmas Cruise Around Calais on Saturday December 8, which follows part of the Summer French Challenge route. Details are in the Kent Group social walks programme above.

ON THE WARPATH TO SAVE BRITAIN'S TRAILS

BRITAIN'S walking routes should be managed by a new charitable trust, according to the charity The Ramblers.

Currently the 13 National Trails are managed by Natural England and receive £3 million a year. But The Government wants to hand over responsibility for them to local authorities and volunteers.

Ramblers fear this will mean that some of the best known routes, such as the Pennine Way, could fall into disrepair, as some councils may not be able to afford to keep them up.

They argue it is necessary to have a central body that promotes and manages the trails for the good of the nation. A National Trails trust could also raise money to keep the network going.

Benedict Southworth, the chief executive of The Ramblers, said the 2,500 miles of trail could put money into struggling rural economies and encourage local people to go walking.

"Current proposals risk relegating these historic routes to the garden path rather than the world-renowned attractions they should be," he said.

"We want to see a National Trails trust that looks to expand, develop and improve the National Trails network."

The above article appeared in the Daily Telegraph on September 13, and will be of interest to LDWA members.

Brian Buttifant adds: As Natural England is greatly reducing their grants to local authorities, it is felt that the management and maintenance of our 13 trails throughout the country will suffer and standards will fall. We have already lost our North Downs Way officer and other trails could lose their officers. I spoke to John Sparshatt (national LDWA chairman) and was pleased to hear that the LDWA is in discussion with the Government about setting up a trust to manage all of the trails.

STOP PRESS: Kent County Council has just appointed Alec Goodey officer for the North Downs Way. Apparently Alec, who has worked in the media, has done much voluntary work for the NDW, and although this is a temporary appointment, he is working on plans which are due to be announced in April. There is an article about Alec and his work, headlined *Pathway To The Future*, in the current edition of Kent Downs Orchid, a quarterly magazine produced by the county council. More information about Alec can also be found on the website www.kentdowns.org.uk

COUNTY COUNCIL SLASHES FUNDING FOR MAINTAINING PATHS

LDWA members - indeed walkers throughout the county - will be concerned to hear that Kent County Council is to slash funding for maintaining public footpaths. Cuts to public footpaths, sports development and maintaining the Turner Contemporary at Margate were part of a previously undisclosed £2.5m package of savings which recently came to light. The county council will be spending £225,000 less on keeping public footpaths clear. It is not yet known what this will mean in terms of what will exactly be chopped, but at the moment it looks like we will be losing two footpaths officers. This, of course, is a great shame, and walkers will be worried about the implications. But we are living in difficult times, and many

people would consider that we are lucky that the cuts to the footpaths service are not going deeper. The county council is trying to make savings of some £60 million and trying to protect core services, so it could be argued that £225,000 is relatively small beer in the great scheme of things (Kent Group members with different views are very welcome to share them by sending them to the newsletter editor).

WHITE CLIFFS APPEAL HITS ITS £1.2 MILLION TARGET - HELPED BY OUR TWO HUNDRED QUID!

THE appeal to buy part of the White Cliffs of Dover has hit its target in just 133 days.

The appeal, to raise £1.2 million to purchase a 0.8-mile stretch of the cliffs overlooking the Port of Dover, was launched by the National Trust in June. Donations poured in with an average £9,000 raised every day. More than 16,000 people and organisations supported the appeal, with an average donation of £40.21.

These included £200,000 from Dover Harbour Board and what are described as “significant contributions” from the Regatta Foundation (the charitable arm of the outdoor clothing company Regatta), conservation organisation the Royal Oak Foundation and 16 National Trust supporter groups.

There was also £200 from Kent Group of the LDWA, made after the National Trust let us use the visitor centre at Langdon Cliffs for our first checkpoint on this year’s White Cliffs Challenge.

The appeal’s success completes the missing link of coastline under National Trust care, linking a stretch of more than 7km (nearly five miles) between the trust’s visitor centre at Langdon Cliffs and South Foreland Lighthouse.

The fundraising drive was given a boost in July when a number of household names, including Dame Vera Lynn, Dame Judi Dench and the Dover-born soul singer Joss Stone, gave their support.

National Trust director-general Fiona Reynolds said: “Thanks to the generosity and support of thousands of people we’ve reached our target nearly two months early.

“This appeal has tapped into something unique - the emotional connection that people have with special places such as the White Cliffs of Dover.

“The trust will now look to enhance the quality of access to this land and build on some of the fantastic nature conservation work that has been carried out by the team on the ground.”

Alison Burnett, a volunteer on the White Cliffs of Dover team, said: “There has been a real buzz around the appeal with this opportunity to add the missing piece of the White Cliffs so that they are in the care of the National Trust.

“It’s wonderful to think that we’ve managed to raise the money so that future generations can enjoy all that this unique place has to offer.”

EAST KENT COASTAL PATH

WALKERS could soon be stepping out along a new route through Deal and Sandwich as part of a scheme to improve the south-east stretch of the English coastal path.

A public consultation has just begun on the 60km path, with improved access, from Ramsgate to Folkestone as part of the One Coast for All campaign by the Ramblers.

Anastasia French, campaigns officer for the Ramblers, said: “It is wonderful to see the progress being made to guarantee a path Kent can be proud of. The improved access to Kent’s coast will bring so many benefits to the area - improving public health and wellbeing by increasing opportunities for walking - and also bringing significant economic benefits. We encourage people to engage with this public consultation to ensure the best route forward for all.

“The Ramblers look forward to continued work with Natural England, landowners, local authorities and others as, step by step, the dream of a complete English coastal path draws closer.”

Through its One Coast For All campaign, the Ramblers has urged the government to keep its promise of creating an English coastal path, a right won by the public as part of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Dedicated volunteers have been closely involved in securing the best outcome for walkers in Kent and soon people will be able to walk uninterrupted from Ramsgate to Folkestone along Kent’s characteristic clifftops and beaches.

Ian Wild is a Ramblers volunteer who has been working with Natural England to help find the best route. He said: “We are very pleased that Natural England have taken account of our suggestions to help secure the best access to the coast for walkers, in particular the opening up of the old Richborough port quay and improved access to the banks of the Stour which will make a massive difference to coastal walking in Kent. We have an incredibly varied coastline in Kent and this is a significant step to improving access for walkers.”

DEAL WALKING FESTIVAL

KENT Group member Alan Sutton, who lives in Deal, has organised Deal Walking Festival for five years. The festival has been a week of walks, held in late August or early September, of mainly 6-10 miles. Alan is now handing the organisation of the festival over to the White Cliffs Ramblers - to which some members of Kent Group belong - although he is likely to remain involved.

As this newsletter was being printed, a steering group was being set up to organise the festival, which will be between Thursday August 22 and Thursday August 29. The festival walks will continue to be shorter ones, but Sunday August 25 has been earmarked for a joint Deal Walking Festival/Kent LDWA Three Pits Walk, led by Graham Smith, who lives in Deal. This will be approx. 18.5 miles, and links the three former Kent pits of Betteshanger, Tilmanstone and Snowdown (and is

not to be too confused with Graham's 40-mile Four Pits Walk Anytime Challenge, which also visits the site of the other pit, Chislet, and is on our social walks programme on Saturday February 23 - see social walks programme above). There will be further details about Deal Walking Festival in the next newsletter.

MY FIRST FIFTY by Peter Jull

THE great persuader has struck again. Three years ago I innocently turned up at the start of the White Cliffs Challenge to wave the welcome flag on behalf of the local chamber of trade and did the short 22m route. Having finished in a reasonable time our esteemed newsletter editor persuaded me that I should do a 30m Sevenoaks the next year nearly killed me but he still convinced me to have another go and then to join the LDWA and then to lead a walk - and now look what he's had me doing. I'm 54, in the middle of the night, in the middle of nowhere and walking 54 miles for the first time!

Actually it's only the middle of nowhere when you don't know where you are and I was more gullible than I might have been because I was familiar with two-thirds of the route. On other challenge walks I have always started with the leaders and faded to a crawl at the end. Pacing was going to be my solution despite concern that starting slow I could still fade at the end and be out of time. So, among the last out of the rugby club gates, the bulk of the field were out of sight before Langdon Cliffs but it was still only 12.15, so much faster than I had intended. Fading seemed like it was ready to kick in before Capel and prospects of finishing felt bleak. Perhaps it was the intrusive A20 traffic drone that spoils any worth this part of the route might have for me otherwise.

More energy restoring sustenance powered me up Tolsford Hill ready to argue the relative value of its view compared to others in east Kent. In the end only argument to be had was with Scotland and Essex as to the direction down. I claim I was more right than they. At this point two lady runners, more of whom later, came to attention in expressing disappointment that they shouldn't head straight for the copse at the top of the next hill but follow the right of way. Above Postling I had walked before but the path seems to have moved compared to my recollection and the map but not the coombe down which I knew to go. At least five others I could see too far ahead to shout to clearly didn't. Two of those were my lady runners who caught me again a little later with the prescient comment "We should have stayed with you". When I turned to face the hedge I fear they thought I intended "gentleman's relief" instead of logging a geocache it would have been churlish to ignore being right on route.

So the descent from Farthing Common and the route description is still in my pocket. In the field below are my two runners looking lost. I wave them to the corner I think is right but when I catch up with them they read from theirs so I am strictly cheating on my challenge. The right corner is confirmed by others coming up behind, so onto Lyminge. One of them, later known as Debbie with the magic bag, going at a similar pace, I soon fell in with. Darkness fell as Elham was reached where our two runners were preparing to depart. Debbie's bag performed its first magic producing a spare torch for one of the runners who's own had gone on the blink.

Debbie and I followed a little later and got to the point where it was TR up a (surely the word "very" was missing here) steep bank when we saw two torches coming back towards us. Now who could that be? Yes it was our two runners who I knew by now from their constant cheerful chatter to be Penny and Caroline. Caroline remembered me from the Andredsweald but although I recalled a conversation about the identity of the awe inspiring Tara and Wendy who had just powered past us, I regretfully hadn't recognised her. "We should have stayed with you" was a phrase I did recognise from earlier and we did stay together to find our way out of the field and on to TL on track across field.

Question: how much notice should you take of someone you know has gone wrong at least three times before when it comes to navigation? Answer: not as much as I did. I'm sure the route description would have been obvious in the daylight but being night the bag magicked up a compass the reading of which was less than magic. An obvious footpath across the field was democratically chosen even though it felt wrong to me but ended at a stile rather than a corner gate. There followed an Exodusal wandering from corner to corner and eventually an inconclusive consultation of the magic bag's maps. Diverted from a return to the entrance to start again towards another wandering torch I noticed the crackle of stubble underfoot go quiet for a step or two on grass. So the invisible track was heard rather than spotted, running in the right direction from the right point, and soon leading to the escape gate.

Caroline was beginning to feel the cold but resisted the temptation to jog ahead to keep warm and the exertions of the last big climb of the day out of the valley soon provided the required circulation. But after the complex approach to Hearts Delight the SO for 1000yds was too enticing to remember the resolve to stick together and off she jogged with Penny. But when I followed Debbie into Bishopsbourne, where were the others? She had already ascertained they hadn't been through and perhaps we shouldn't have laughed but it wasn't long before up they trotted with tales of a BR having misled them. "We should have stayed with you" didn't need to be said again and they put on more layers ready to stick to walking. That I was sticking to my polo shirt was raising some eyebrows but others were in shorts and I see no difference between having your arms out rather than your legs.

I must thank Debbie, Penny and Caroline for a great night (does that sound wrong?). I would have laughed more but



laughing was not compatible with a post-cold persistent cough even though regularly dosed with Potters Pholcodine (other brands of cough pastille are available) en route. This 50 mile walk had been Caroline's 50th birthday present to Penny and within minutes of finishing their joviality was restored to full extent organising certificate presentations and photo shoots to the bemusement of the volunteers.

My recovery in the days after was much better than after some shorter walks so the great persuader also succeeds in getting this article for the newsletter. At the moment I'm NOT doing it but if you see me in Cornwall next year it's all HIS fault.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, MARSHALS

AS the report and results sheet for this year's White Cliffs Challenge which is with this newsletter, says, we had a record entry of 155 in this year's WCC on September 22-23.

It was one of the LDWA's 40th anniversary events, and part of the Kent Surrey Sussex Triple Challenge. It was held at a new venue for the WCC, Deal and Betteshanger Rugby Club in Deal. Everyone who entered was given commemorative LDWA 40th anniversary/WCC-KSS Triple Challenge mugs. All entrants' names were entered into a raffle, with prizes including P&O cross-Channel ferry tickets, a £100 gift card for the outdoor gear specialists Simply Hike Partnership, Kent and Sussex beer, and vouchers for TGO magazine. There were also special LDWA 40th anniversary/KSS Triple Challenge cakes, provided by Surrey Group.

Sincere thanks to all the marshals - some of whom worked for 24 hours non-stop - for doing their bit to make this year's WCC the success it was.

The marshals are listed here, with apologies to anyone whose name has been left out.

Kent Group - Brian Buttifant, Joy Davies, Nick Dockree, Bob Field, Jane Green, Michael Headley, Neil Higham, Peter Johnson, Liz and Ben Keeler, Derry Lowe, Linda Michel, Andrew Melling, Merv and Fiona Nutburn, Mike Pursey, Pauline Piddock, Mike Ratcliff, Eric Rolfe, Graham and Sarah Smith, Wendy Thurrell, Ivan Waghorn and Henry Williams.

Surrey Group - Elizabeth Bryant, Tony Cartwright and Mary, Janet Chapman, Glenys Kirkpatrick and Joan Wrenn, Sussex - Gillian Aitkin, Kay Armstrong, Chris Baines-Holmes, Trevor Beeston, Chris Coates, Anthony Mitchell and Laurie Jo Wright.

VANGUARD WAY CHALLENGE

WE have been contacted by Gareth R Davies, from Croydon, who is planning to organise a Vanguard Way challenge next year. It would involve the entire 66-mile walk being done in one go.

The Vanguard Way goes from Croydon to Newhaven. It is a very pleasant route, which is full of interest. Some members will recall that many years ago Kent Group had a Vanguard Way challenge, where the walk was done in one go. More recently it was put on our social walks programme in a series of four walks.

Gareth has contacted our secretary, Graham Smith, who has told him that some members are likely to be interested, particularly if the challenge takes place before next year's Hundred, as some people like to do walks of 50-plus miles to prepare for Hundreds.

At the moment Gareth is looking at the logistics, including public transport, of the Vanguard Way. We are waiting to hear from Gareth. Details of this project will appear on our website.

THE THREE PEAKS OF YORKSHIRE - WITH FEN

by Graham Smith

THE Three Peaks of Yorkshire is one of the greatest hill walks in England, and in October I completed it for the second time. I was accompanied by Fen, the three-year-old border collie belonging to my Sarah and myself (well, Fen is really Sarah's dog but she lets me take her on walks - and, believe me, Fen loves her long walks more than I do, which is saying something. The thing is, her long walk opportunities are a bit limited because Sarah does heelwork to music - otherwise known as dog dancing - with her, but that's another story).

The Three Peaks of Yorkshire is a 25-mile walk linking three fine whaleback hills - Pen-y-ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough, the last of which a few Kent Group members will remember from the 2008 Yoredale Hundred. The walk involves a good 5,000 feet of ascent.

I first did the Three Peaks of Yorkshire in 1982, with another border collie, Joe (Joe, long since departed to the great checkpoint in the sky, was more my dog than Sarah's, and he completed scores of long distance paths with me). A few things about the walk have changed in those 30 years, notably the heights of the three peaks, as they have all been re-measured. In 1982 I used as my guide The Three Peaks Walk from Walks in Limestone Country, written by a certain A Wainwright. Pen-y-ghent was then 2,273 feet and it is now 2,277. Wharfedale was 2,419 feet and it is now 2,415, and Ingleborough was 2,373 feet and it is now 2,372. The long stretch between Pen-y-ghent was then pretty boggy and it is now very, very boggy, sometimes nightmarishly so. But more of that later.

Fen and I did the Three Peaks halfway through a very nice holiday in Howarth, which Sarah and I discovered last year when



we had a holiday there to coincide with the group reps' meeting (which just goes to show how much of a walk widow Sarah is). Anyway, Sarah and I drove over to Horton in Ribblesdale, from where most walkers start the challenge, and Fen and I were dropped off at 9.15am. I told Sarah I thought we would do it in 8-9 hours. Thanks to the bogs between Pen-y-ghent and Whernside, I was a good hour out. But we did have a great day.

Pen-y-ghent has a lovely distinctive shape, and its ascent is a delight. First there are nice easy slopes, which give way to a little bit of easy scrambling as you get near the summit. Fen enjoyed the scrambling more than I did. We made the summit in quick time, and I felt there would be no problem hitting my estimate of 8-9 hours.

We came down from the summit and started striding across the seven or so miles to the Ribblehead Viaduct, just beyond which is Whernside - and hit the bog almost immediately. Now bog for a fit young dog like Fen is no problem, in fact it's fun. She loved splashing through the water for mile after mile. But it's certainly not fun for a middle aged man who is certainly not as fit as he was 30 years ago. The passage of time has seen tens of thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of shoes and boots on the Three Peaks trail, which means the path (or what there is of it) has become more and more difficult to negotiate, involving wider and wider detours to find more solid ground. And although the weather was dry, in the previous few weeks there had been a lot of rain, making conditions about 20 times worse than can be found on the Gatliff (yes, it was that bad). At one time a wrong step led me knee-deep into the spongy stuff. It was arduous, painstaking slow progress. But progress it was, and it was such a relief when firmer ground was reached. The firmer ground led to a farm track, which led to a minor road, which in turn led to the B6255 which Fen and I followed to the Ribblehead Viaduct, which carries trains going to Carlisle (and I must say that the Settle-Carlisle railway, which Saran and I - and Fen, of course - took on another day of our holiday, is a great experience).

Just beyond the Ribblehead Viaduct is Whernside, the highest of the Three Peaks, and I must be honest and say it is my least favourite of the trio. It is nothing like as shapely as its two sisters, it is steeper, and you have to make a fairly wide detour from the viaduct before you can take the track which leads you to the summit ridge. So by the time I could start the actual ascent, I was pretty puffed, and when I had laboriously got to the summit ridge, I even more puffed (but Fen certainly wasn't). There was then a walk of the best part of a mile to the actual summit, marked by a trig. point, steps you have to retrace for the descent.

What spurred me on was the delightful and so distinctive shape of Ingleborough just across the valley. Ingleborough is a lovely hill, my favourite English hill in fact. Ascending Ingleborough involves a nice flat approach before the gradient starts to gently increase. There is then a short, sharp climb which is actually steeper than the ascent of Whernside, but because it is not so long, it doesn't feel like it. The flat summit of the last of the Three Peaks was soon reached. Unfortunately cloud had then descended. When I completed the Three Peaks Walk in 1982, the views were magnificent, in fact as fine as Wainwright had said they would be in his Walks In Limestone Country guide, stretching right across to the fells of the great man's beloved Lake District. Unfortunately, this time the views didn't even stretch across Ingleborough's flat summit. Fen and I had a quick stop by the trig. point, and I had to use the compass to ensure we were heading in the right direction for Horton in Ribblesdale when we got off the hill. As we started to lose height, we gradually got more visibility. We were also on a good firm track which shows little signs of the multitude of shoes and boots which have used it over the years. It's a good five miles back to Horton in Ribblesdale, and Fen and I arrived at 7pm, by which time it was just about dark. We met Sarah at the Crown Hotel. Fen could have gone on and on, but I had just about had enough. A couple of pints and a good meal at the Crown and I was a very satisfied man.

Yes, I am very glad I did the Three Peaks of Yorkshire again. It was something I had been promising myself for years. But I'm not sure I would want to do all three in one walk again - although Fen definitely would.

COMEDY CORNER

I got covered in ketchup earlier. From my head tomatoes.

My senile mate keeps knocking on his own front door and then goes round the back to answer his own knocks. I don't think he realises what he's letting himself in for.

BBC NEWSFLASH

Three Cliff Walkers Fall to their death. Wow, what were the chances of them all having the same name?

Just been to my mate's funeral, he was killed by a tennis ball hitting him on the head.

It was a lovely service.

Q: How many Americans does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A: 100. 1 to screw in the bulb and 99 to chant U-S-A, U-S-A.

I bought a train ticket and the driver said "Eurostar" I said "Well I've been on telly but I'm no Robbie Williams". Still, at least it's comfortable on Eurostar, it's murder on the Orient Express...

I phoned the local gym to ask them if they could teach me how to do the splits. They asked me how flexible I was. I told them I can't make Tuesdays.

I met the bloke who invented crosswords yesterday. I can't remember his name, it's P something T something R.

So, I went down my local shop and said I was looking for a sailor with one arm. He said, sorry mate I'm a wholesaler.

I saw this bloke yesterday. He told me he was off to dig a hole and fill it with water. I thought, he means well.
 I was an accountant from the age of 20 to the age of 30 before I was sacked for no apparent reason. What a waste of 14 years.
 Hubby and wife out driving, not talking after a row. Passing a farm of mules and pigs, wife asks sarcastically, relatives of yours? Hubby replies, yes, in-laws.
 A Red Indian introduced me to his wife and said "This is Three Horses". "What a beautiful name. What does it mean"? I asked ... "Nag, nag, nag".
 There's no money in running a dating agency for chickens. It's so difficult to make hens meet.
 As the dog sat watching the orchestra, he stared at the conductor and thought..."Just throw the bloody thing".
 WARNING. Don't join the Tesco dating agency. My mate did and he ended up with a bag for life.
 The Margaret Thatcher film the Iron Lady has been classed as a 12A...it's unsuitable for miners.
 Two Irishmen look through a mail order catalogue. Paddy says: "Look at those gorgeous women! The prices are reasonable too." Mick agrees. "I am ordering one of them right now." Three weeks later, Paddy says to Mick: "Has your woman turned up yet?" "No," said Mick, "but it shouldn't be long now. Her clothes arrived yesterday!"

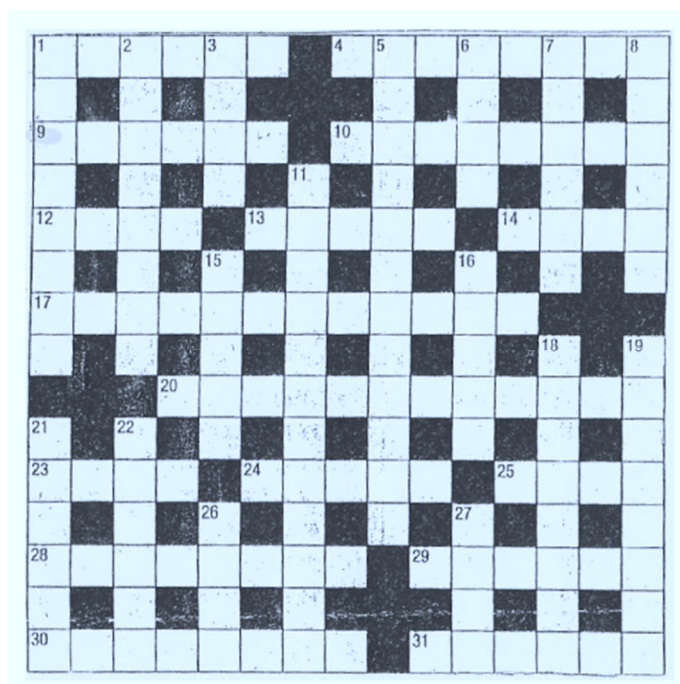
CROSSWORD set by Shirley Higgins

ACROSS

1. Strange ringed windows in Pluckley (6).
4. Flute fan could become rich (8).
9. Cove or tarn in Yorkshire (6).
10. Criminal concerning guard (8).
12. Biblical character back on outside arch (4).
13. Recap about gambol (5).
14. Later a French refusal (4).
17. Centre page inside, every cloud has one (6,6).
20. Success on the beach off East Kent coast (7,5).
23. Keen, go in silver (4).
24. Enthuse and point to large crow (5).
25. Only a lake (4).
28. Mixed meal done, something to drink (8).
29. Bother, disturbance to elms (6).
30. Wrecked PE in tent. Sorry! (8).
31. Posts prize money (6).

DOWN

1. Soggy at headland, moisture (8).
2. Trustworthy, surprisingly re a bill at end of spree (8).
3. Tidy trim (4).
5. Shorter White Peak event needs funny fin feet and weird smile (7,5).
6. Holiest conceals dishonesty (4).
7. Gin den might become the finish (6).
8. Unusually try tan for a dictator (6).
11. Enclosed area, Heronden near Tenterden, for example (6,6).
15. Ogre seen at the start of demonstration (5).
16. Bite champ! (5).
18. Automatic reflex of a joint (4-4).
19. Like finest very big fibrous material (8).
21. Smack might be middle, over or nether! (6).
22. Public ground at Shipbourne for instance (6).
26. Insect has inverted taste (4).
27. Trench round castle sounds like a speck (4).



August crossword answers: Across - 8 Walrus, 9 Larkspur, 10 Stingray, 11 Nestle, 12 Range, 14 Fear, 15 Type, 18 Spreads, 19 Forests, 21 Byre, 22 Neon, 23 Whale, 24 Setter, 26 Trekking, 29 Landsend, 30 Trojan; Down - 1 Halt, 2 Brentgeese, 3 Tsar, 4 Playden, 4 Cranbrook, 6 Spot, 7 Breeze, 13 Apply, 15 Tie the knot, 16 Petal, 17 Iden Green, 20 Low tide, 21 Basalt, 25 Tyne, 27 Eats, 28 Neat. No prize as Shirley only received three entries!

THE LAST WORD - FROM THE EDITOR

WELL, we are coming to the end of another year, and what a year it's been for Kent Group of the Long Distance Walkers Association.

Our Sevenoaks Circular, in March, was its usual huge success, and the new route - well, not really new, it was the 1992 one, for which Roger Dean put in tremendous work in updating the route description - was delightful. In fact, I would say walking this year's Sevenoaks Circular route was one of the most enjoyable walks I've done in Kent this year. I am so pleased that we are keeping this route for at least another year.

Then in July we had the Andredsweald, which would have had a higher turnout but for two factors - very poor weather on the day and Andy Murray appearing in the Wimbledon men's final, both of which contributed to us getting a higher than usual number of no-shows. But it was on an excellent route, and full credit must go to our treasurer Neil Higham for taking care of the arrangements virtually single-handed - when so much of his time in the earlier part of the year was spent working on the LDWA Games Hundred (of which more soon).

Then in September we had our White Cliffs Challenge, which was an LDWA 40th anniversary event. Despite some teething troubles with the event's new venue, Deal and Betteshanger Rugby Club, it turned out to be the most successful WCC we have had since we started the event in 2005. We had well over 150 people starting the event, from a total entry of more than 170. The venue, despite the teething troubles mentioned above, was excellent, and the rugby club committee could not have been more helpful. The WCC, of course, is our part of the Kent Surrey Sussex Triple Challenge. Everyone who took part, and the marshals, were given commemorative mugs (supplied by us) and special commemorative cakes (supplied by Surrey Group), and their names were entered into a prize draw. What's more, the weather on the day was brilliant. As an LDWA 40th anniversary event, it really could not have been better.

There was a tremendous turnout from Kent on the LDWA's main 40th anniversary event, the Games 100, as reported above. Several members either completed the event or the marshals' walk. Some members - like our treasurer Neil Higham - put in a massively long shift marshalling on the day. The Games 100 was a huge success, due in part to the efforts of the Kent Group members who were involved.

The only walking downside to 2012 for Kent Group has been the number of people going on many of our social walks, which is a subject covered elsewhere in this newsletter. One of the strengths of Kent Group is our extremely varied social walks programme, but numbers on some walks have been down - sometimes worryingly so - this year. If members respond to the request for information in the article above, perhaps any problems - if, indeed, there are any - can be addressed.

Next year is full of promise for Kent Group. We've got our three challenge walks - the Sevenoaks Circular in March, the Heart of the Weald in July, and the White Cliffs Challenge (which reverts to the shorter distance) in September. In addition, many members will be either taking part in the Camel-Teign Hundred or marshalling on it. I have entered the marshals' walk, which means I am also marshalling. I don't know Cornwall and Devon very well, so I am looking forward to the event very much.

I am afraid that as this newsletter was getting ready to be printed, the news came through that Pat Clarke had died. This means that 2012 is ending on a very sad note for Kent Group. Pat had been a tower of strength for us over so many years.

We are going to miss her so much at the starts of our events.

So in wishing all Kent Group members of the LDWA a very merry Christmas and lots of great walking in the new year, let us all spare some thoughts for Bryan Clarke and his family at this time.

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

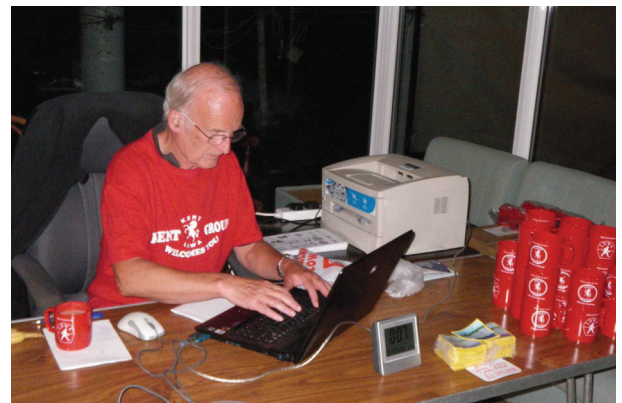
Stephanie le Men

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.



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This year's White Cliffs Challenge, *photos taken by Eric Rolfe.*