

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION – Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



**Michael Headley and Mike Pursey by a poppy field near Escalles
on our Summer French Challenge on July 6. *Picture by Peter Jull.***

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www.ldwakent.org.uk/



The Heart of the Weald, July 14. *Pictures by Jeff Campbell.*

KENT GROUP SOCIAL WALKS AUG to DEC 2013

Sun Aug 4 Cream Tea Walk c20ml. Meet 09.00 at Grafty Green GR TQ873488 Map: Exp 137. Park on roadside. Pub stop at George Inn Leeds village, food available. L: Neal O'Rourke.

Sat Aug 10 South Downs Thirty c.32ml. 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. A circular walk on the South Downs via the Seven Sisters, the Cuckmere valley, Firle Beacon and Willingdon Hill. Lunch stop at Alfriston (c22ml). Food also available at Firle (c17ml). L: Mike Pursey.

Sun Aug 18 White Cliffs Challenge (30ml) Marshals' Walk. For details contact Mike Pursey

Sat Aug 24 The Three Pits Walk (Deal Walking Festival walk). c18ml. Meet 08.30 at Northbourne Village Hall GR TR334523 Maps: Exp 138, 150. A walk visiting the former Kent mines of Betteshanger, Tilmanstone and Snowdown. Pub stop. L: Graham Smith.

Sun Aug 25 Timeball and Telegraph Trail (Deal Walking Festival walk). C 14.5ml. Meet bus shelter, South Street, Deal, to catch No15 bus at 9.47 to green bridge on A2 at Ileden, or meet there for 10.50 start. Last section of Trail leading from the Greenwich Timeball; through Womenswold & Betteshanger, to Deal Timeball. Pub stop at Tilmanstone. L: Peter Jull.

Mon Aug 26 Evening walk with fish and chips (Deal Walking Festival walk). c10ml. Meet 5.30pm at Walmer Station GR TR363503. Maps: LR 179 or Exp 138. Evening walk to Dover, having fish and chips at the end (not in a restaurant) and taking a train back to Walmer from Dover Priory Station. L: Graham Smith.

Sun Sep 1 Wealden Waters Wander 2 c25ml. Meet 08.30 at Forest Row c.p. GR TQ425351 Map: Exp 135. Possible Pub stop at Boarshead. L: Neal O'Rourke

Sun Sep 8 White Cliffs Challenge See Events Diary.

Sun Sep 29 Tunbridge Wells Circular c 28ml. Meet 08:00 in Church Road, Southborough Common GR TQ575428. Maps: Exp 136,147. Park on roadside . A circular route clockwise around Tunbridge Wells in the High Weald. Pub stop for lunch, but advisable to bring food and drink to supplement. For more details contact leader. L: Roger Dean

Sun Oct 6 Cheyne Walk c20ml. Meet 09.30 at Sholden New Road, West Deal GR TR356525 Map: Exp 150. Lunch stop at Shepherdsweil. L: Richard Frost.

Sun Oct 13 Another Minnis Meander c18ml. Meet 08.30 at Ivy House, Stelling Minnis GR TR147483 Map: Exp 138. Bring packed lunch. L: Liz Keeler.

Sun Oct 27 Free Conversation with Every Backmarker c20ml. Meet 09.30 at Martin Mill rlwy stn GR TR342466 Maps: Exp 138,150. Lunch stop at Goodnestone. L: Richard Frost.

Sun Nov 3 Lewes Loop c18ml. Meet 9am at Lewes rlwy stn GR TQ417098 Map: Exp 122. Pub stop. L: Graham Smith.

Sun Dec 1 Christmas Lunch Preceded by a walk of c7ml, led by Neal O'Rourke, starting from London Beach Hotel at 9.30am. Walkers will be able to use the hotel's changing rooms on return. Lunch will be served at 1.30pm. See separate item below.

Sat Dec 7 Christmas Cruise around Calais c14ml. Meet 7.30am 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.

Mon Dec 30 Post Christmas Sevenoaks Stroll c17 ml. meet 08.45 for 09.00 start at Shipbourne church on A227 GR TR592522 Map: Exp 147. Park in road opposite church. Lunch stop at Wetherspoons, Sevenoaks. L: Dave Sheldrake.

Wed Jan 1 New Year in Sussex Again c23ml. Rye to Hastings & return. Meet 9am Rye rlwy stn c.p GR TQ919205 Map: Exp 125. Bring torch. Lunch stop at Hastings. L: Mike Pursey.

KENT GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman -Brian Buttifant,
Secretary/newsletter editor - Graham Smith
Treasurer - Neil Higham
Walks secretary - Mike Pursey
Membership secretary - Neil Higham
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.

FAMILY DINNER

THIS year's family dinner will be at the London Beach Hotel, Tenterden, for the sixth successive year. As we all know, this is a first class venue, which always provides us with top class food and service. The date is Sunday December 1 and the meal will, as usual, be preceded by a walk, again led by Neal O'Rourke. The walk will be of about seven miles, and will start at 9.30am. We will be able to use the hotel's changing rooms on our return. Lunch will be served at 1.30pm. The meal is costing £25.95 person for three courses or £19.95 per person for two courses, followed by coffee and mince pies. There will be a £2.50 supplement for the cheese board. Jan O'Rourke has again kindly agreed to make the booking arrangements with the hotel. A booking form is included with this newsletter, so please fill it in and return it to Jan, with your cheque, by November 4.

NEWS OF KENT CHALLENGE WALKS

Sevenoaks Circular

Due to popular demand, next year's Sevenoaks Circular will be the same routes of 30, 20 and 15 miles as it has for the past two years. We have no date for the event yet, as we are waiting for the fixture list from Sevenoaks Rugby Club. We should have details in the next newsletter.

Weald challenge walk

Next year we will be organising a special Weald challenge walk - it will be the return of the Wealden Waters, as part of our 40th anniversary celebrations. It will take place in early July (see article below). We have been putting on the Andredsweald, the Heart of the Weald and the Walk With The Smugglers in consecutive years, so this means that the next one of that trio - the Walk With The Smugglers - is now due to be held again in 2015.

White Cliffs Challenge

It's not long to go until this year's WCC, being held on Sunday September 8 at the excellent venue of St Margaret's Hall, with distances of 30 and 15 miles. The marshals' walk is on Sunday August 18. As usual, we're going to need plenty of marshals - so Graham Smith is likely to be telephoning people pretty soon.

KSS TRIPLE CHALLENGE

SHORTLY after the WCC, comes the next leg of the Kent Surrey Sussex Triple Challenge of 50-mile walks, the Sussex Stride, over the weekend of September 21-22, with the marshals' walk held over the bank holiday weekend of August 24-25. We are organising a checkpoint on the event, at East Dean, about halfway, where we will be providing a hot meal. Anyone wishing to marshal on the event, and/or take part in the marshals' walk, is asked to contact Graham Smith - details above.

This is the sixth year of the KSS, so this year's Sussex Stride will see some KSS Silver Awards certificates presented, for people who have completed the six KSS events in consecutive years.

KENT GROUP 40th ANNIVERSARY: RETURN OF THE WEALDEN WATERS

NEXT year marks the 40th anniversary of Kent Group of the LDWA, and our milestone (no pun intended) will be marked in various ways.

Most importantly, we will be putting on the Wealden Waters challenge walk after an absence of 11 years. The Wealden Waters was the first challenge walk the group organised, and was discontinued in 2003. There are going to be two distances - 100k (which was the usual distance of the event), and 40 miles (a shorter distance to attract people who don't fancy having a go at 100k, and to tie in with the 40th anniversary theme).

We are waiting to get confirmation of the date and the venue, but the event will be our summer Weald challenge walk, so it will be in July, hopefully on a similar date to the one on which we usually hold our Weald walk. In the past the event was held at the tennis club at Tunbridge Wells. Sadly, we will not be able to use this venue next year, but we are planning to get another venue in the Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells area.

Roger Dean, Neal O'Rourke and Keith Warman are working on the 100k and 40 mile routes.

Many Kent members will welcome the return of the Wealden Waters, an excellent walk going through fine Wealden countryside. It will also, of course, be an opportunity for members who have not done it, to do so. There will be further details in the December newsletter.

Also as part of our 40th anniversary celebrations, we are resurrecting two other walks - the Invicta Hundred (organised in 1992) and the Millennium Hundred (in 2000, of course). Peter Jull has taken on the project of splitting these two walks up into sections (of four or five stages each) and they will go onto next year's social walks programme, each as a series of linear walks. Graham Smith will also be putting on his Four Pits Walk, linking the former Kent coal mines of Betteshanger, Tilmanstone, Snowdown and Betteshanger for our 40th anniversary year. This walk is 40 miles, so the distance ties in very nicely with our special birthday.

We are also planning to have a 40th anniversary barbecue, preceded by a short walk, for members young and old. Date, venue and more details in the December newsletter.

In the meantime, newsletter editor Graham Smith is planning a special edition to mark our big birthday, and he needs information about the early days of the group. So please send him your Kent Group memories - good ones, bad ones, funny ones.



Mike Pursey, Michael Headley and - typically trying to get into the picture - Martin Burnell, from Thames Valley Group, pictured at the Bolventor checkpoint, near Jamaica Inn, on the Camel-Teign 100



Phil Butler and Brian Buttifant on a stroll at Tolborough Tor, near the Jamaica Inn checkpoint

CAMEL-TEIGN 100 - ANOTHER GREAT KENT GROUP EFFORT

ONCE again the annual LDWA Hundred resulted in a tremendous effort from Kent Group, both in terms of entrants on the event and in marshals.

On the event, 15 Kent Group members started, with 12 completing the route and three having to retire. This compares very favourably with the ratio for the event as a whole, where there were 492 starters, with 385 finishers and 107 retirements. In addition, one Kent Group member completed the marshals' walk, which took place three weeks before the main event.

Particular congratulations go to Peter Jull, who completed his first Hundred (see his account below), and Wendy Thurrell, who was the 17th fastest entrant home.

Kent Group members put in a superb effort at our checkpoint, at Callington, at 43.7 miles. Unfortunately, due to a misunderstanding with the organisers, the promised staffing reinforcements did not arrive, so many of us had to put in a very long stint. But (more or less) we managed to keep all our customers happy.

One happy customer, Don Newman, emailed us to say: "I was glad to see you on the Hundred. I'd only recce'd my expected night section from Callington to Tavistock, but I fell a couple of miles short. Rather than navigate slowly and carefully in the dark, I took a chance, and followed a lady with red flashing lights on her pack. Luckily she was actually doing the event, and not heading for an emergency or for Soho!"

Kent Group entrants, and their times, as follows:-

Wendy Thurrell - 27:47.

Andrew Boulden - 29:22.
 Merv Nutburn - 33:14.
 Christophe Delogne - 35:15.
 Stephanie Le Men - 35:15.
 Graham Smith (marshals) - 36:33.
 Don Newman - 37:54.
 Jim Catchpole - 40:23.
 Jill Green - 40:23.
 Mike Pursey - 42:39.
 Keith Warman - 43:56.
 Alan Stewart - 43:57.
 Peter Jull - 47:25.
 Michael Headley - retired CP11, 29:42.
 Gordon Harker - retired CP10, 27:54.
 Jane Dicker - retired CP8, 18:05.
 Kent Group marshals at Callington - Brian Buttifant, Graham Smith, Phil Butler, Ivan and Ann Waghorn, Martyn Berry, Pauline Thrush, Roger and Roz Dean, Nick Dockree and Mike Attewell.

VALLEYS HUNDRED

The 2014 Hundred is being organised by South Wales Group, and we will be organising a checkpoint at Dery, 47 miles. As usual, Brian Buttifant will be organising the CP, so anyone wishing to help is asked to contact him.

100 No1 - A SURPRISE SPRING by Peter Jull

AFTER completing the White Cliffs, I said if I was subsequently seen in Cornwall it would be Graham's fault. The inevitable "encouragement" followed as did an entry application but I planned to keep quiet about participating to surprise the Kent checkpoint when I got there. My secret was nearly blown when at the AGM Brian asked who had entered the Hundred, but a discreetly raised finger felt a sufficiently ingenuous a response without being spotted.

I must not complain about Southeastern electrics after experiencing the poor performance of West Country diesels when overcrowded as they were (compounded by a dozen fellow walkers and bags on my trains) travelling on from Teignmouth. Next day my driver from Newquay exclaimed "Good God" as he squeezed his bus past the crowds outside Wadebridge town hall. Inside Christophe and Steph were asked to not mention me as was Phil outside. Knowing the plans for him to be with Graham I should have twigged I needed to stay in the crowd but didn't, and my surprise was sprung early when I was spotted watching the band.

Hanging back to avoid getting carried away by the speed of the leaders I found myself next to Brian for a few words before following the horde off beside the Camel. Wasn't comfortable with the pace and hubbub at the back and some careful overtaking, including a good morning to Jane Dicker, got me much nearer the front by Checkpoint 1 and away from Blisland less than 25 minutes after it opened. To and beyond Checkpoint 3 was straightforward - follow my leader then ouch, I didn't know I had a muscle there up the front of my shin. It wasn't that tweak but the gradient up to Brown Willey that slowed me for hello to Gordon as he and many more passed me. Just how many false summits are there to Brown Willey along that ridge? And then the thought, would it have been safe to go there if the wind that had buffeted me off me feet as I tried to photograph the sunset from Newquay cliffs the evening before persisted?

Approaching Bolventor the first "stony track" didn't presage the nemesis they would feel like towards the end. The Jamaica Inn had comforted the marauding Kent checkpoint team who had news of those Kent members who had gone before me i.e. all of them. I gave up my place in the toilet queue to the ladies who had bunged theirs up but it was a long time before there was a quiet bush, with walkers still in a steady stream. But just in case I had got my route description out for the first time.

Mike Headley was leaving North Hill as I arrived, which felt encouraging regarding my time, but this was a long stop for change of underwear to improve comfort. Rest and rehydration were soon exerted and sweated out again, not for the last time, by a steep climb soon after leaving a checkpoint. A woman in white who had recce'd the section led the way but outpaced me and I was left in the dark unprepared, having added 2½ hours to 8pm and made 9.30 dusk for arrival at Pensilva; oops. My tweaked muscle must have tightened to a noticeable limp as the Raynet man pounced on me excitedly - "Are you an injury?" Just looking for the toilet actually, before leaving.

Accosted passing the pub for questioning on where we were all going, one girl yelled at the other "Don't talk to my boyfriend!" It's a long time since I've scored in 30 seconds. That score and the enormity of our undertaking was diminished when it transpired they didn't know where Teignmouth was, the limit of their geographical knowledge going no further than the local metropolis that is Callington which seemed to

astound them enough.

Stalled while trying to pick the right direction across a field, a party of three caught up containing a North Hill resident who led the way home to Callington and a warm welcome from all. Mike Pursey was getting ready to leave as I arrived so I was still content with my time and would have taken a longer snooze if I could have got more comfortable. The next section was quite busy and co-operative navigation readily led to Luckett. Keith was here ordering his alarm call but it was too crowded to stretch out. Pressing on was soon shown to be a mistake as I was sleep walking like a drunk, but a picnic bench at the top of the woods proved just the right spot for a dawn lie down and also amusing those passing by.

On waking I felt so much better I overtook a dozen or more on the way to breakfast and was away before many more as shoes and clothing were comfortable so were not disturbed. Gordon was here looking uncomfortably slumped asleep on a table. Back on the moors the sun was getting scorching and the shade was getting scarce. Too much pace took its toll but stopping in the sun was no rest. Non participants began to appear in numbers on the old railway.

My first extra yards were going back to get my cup from Princetown but then straightforwardly to Huccaby to find Mike Headley retired with the lean, waiting to be picked up. I hear he reported me as going well although I was fast asleep next to a cow pat when he was taken away. North Yorkshire woke me up and chucked me out before the two hours were up, but when I got to Dartmeet there was disappointingly no ice cream van there. The plethora of path options climbing out of the valley meant I chose the wrong one, missed the car park and wasted a few more hundred yards. Despite this detour and another one of a mile after the last clipper having misread the route description (not the only one judging by the many I saw coming into Ashburton the wrong way) and the stony bits of Dr Blackall's Drive and the steep climbs and descents. This was my favourite leg.

Closely followed by my least favourite. Having left with five others, I had been outpaced before turning towards the woods. Handicapped by not being able to read the route description without glasses or see where I was going with glasses, it was miserably slow going in the dark which was making me cold. I'm sure there really were blue marks on the trees, but anyway the ground matched the description to start with until I think I muddled the two Ramshorn Down signs. Contemplated waiting for someone to come up behind but there was neither sight nor sound of anything but an owl in true scary movie fashion. Pressed on, soon towards the sound of civilisation - a busy road. Clearly the A38 but how far along? The large checkpoint square obscured sufficient of the map for decipherment to defeat me, other than I needed my back to the A38. Following a minor road it wasn't too long before I spotted head torches bobbing in the valley below. Finding a path heading that way, the first torch I met turned out to be a sweeper who informed me I was heading back towards Ashburton instead of Liverton. Pointed in the right direction, I got there without further mishap but only just before closing time. Having been more than four hours ahead of cut-off schedule and spent two snoozing at Huccaby, the two in hand had been lost, taking more than five hours to do a seven mile leg, nine if you include my nearly two miles of wanderings.

Rushed out and rushed the next leg, which with the following one was, as predicted, blighted by traffic noise - as if I cared by then. Left Chudleigh Knighton with two sweepers but it was soon clear I couldn't match the pace being set and it was agreed I would follow the route description and be picked up by the last sweeper if necessary. Devon miles must be longer than Cornwall miles, they certainly seemed to take longer to cover despite what felt a good pace.

The final moment of despair was after leaving Larcombe Farm and reading ahead to "stony track, signed 'Unsuitable for Motor Vehicles'. Continue for 1530 yds" Give me a muddy Kentish ploughed field any day over these ankle wrenching knee knacker stones. Too late to give up, the final climb was purgatory and then the anticipated expansive views of Teignmouth were hidden by high hedges. The click click of walking poles behind me encouraged a last bit of competitive energy to keep my finishing position and the school was in sight. Waiting at the gate was an incredibly sprightly Keith, last seen fast asleep in Luckington. but having finished four hours earlier. Guided by him through the grounds, the resounding applause on entering the hall was surprisingly moving even though I had heard what to expect: 47 hours 25 minutes.

ONE HUNDRED AND TWO HUNDRED Ks IN SUCCESSIVE WEEKENDS by Graham Smith

OVER the successive weekends of April 20-21, April 27-28 and May 4-5, I walked two 100k walks (the Dorset Giant and my own Cinque Ports Challenge) followed by the Camel-Teign Hundred marshals' walk. One of the reasons I did the two 100k walks so close to the Hundred was because I considered doing them was good preparation for the 100-miler.

One or two people have since expressed some surprise that I would want to do 100k walks so close to the Hundred, so I thought I should explain the method in my madness (and, yes, at times it certainly did feel like madness).

I guess those of us who attempt Hundreds all approach them differently. Personally I feel it is very important to get lots of mileage done earlier in the year, starting with our New Year's Day walk. I usually plan to do a walk of at least 20 miles every weekend right through January, February, March and April up to

the Hundred, whether it be the marshals' walk - which I have entered for the past two years - or the event itself. I would usually up the mileage come late March, and make sure I have done at least one walk of 50 or more miles before the Hundred.

Last year, on the two weekends before the Games 100 marshals' walk, I did my Cinque Ports Challenge and the 50-mile Sussex Stride (which I completed solo). Yes, I was bit tired and stiff after both walks, but I found that a good hot bath and a good rest worked very well. After a couple of days I felt absolutely fine, with that nice feeling of tightness in the leg muscles, and ready for the Hundred.

I think most of us agree that it is crucially important to get in plenty of walking before a Hundred, but I know quite a few people who would not dream of attempting a walk of 50 or more miles so close to the big one. It's whatever works for you, and I must say that what works for me is doing some very big mileages in the weekends leading up to the Hundred.

For various reasons (weather, working) earlier this year I hadn't done quite as much walking as I usually do, so I must say I found those two 100k walks very useful, and very enjoyable.

Not only had I not walked the Dorset Giant before, but I had never walked in Dorset. It was a very nice route - quite undulating, with a couple of very nice stretches along the hills - and excellent checkpoints, with plenty of good food and drink. There wasn't too much road walking, so my feet weren't too bad afterwards. In fact I liked the Dorset Giant so much I have entered the Dorset Duddle in August, and I'm really looking forward to it.

My Cinque Ports Challenge does involve a lot of concrete. In fact I would say that if you include the long stretches of promenade, probably more than 50 per cent of it is on concrete. The walk links the Cinque Ports, Antient Towns and Limbs of Sandwich, Deal, Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, New Romney, Lydd, Rye, Winchelsea and Hastings. Eight of us started, with four pulling out halfway, at Hythe. We remaining four - Jane Dicker, Sarah Turner (a new member from Thanet, and a very strong walker), myself and Richard Frost. Richard, as some people know, tends to be a bit of a law unto himself. The four of us kept together until Lydd, by which time it was about midnight. Then - somehow, and I still don't know how - we parted company. I wasn't too worried, because I know Richard can look after himself. I did try to contact Richard afterwards, and he left a strange message on my answerphone at home which went something like "Graham - if Hastings police ring and ask about Pontin's at Camber Sands, just say it was a night walk for charity." One of these days Richard will get himself arrested - actually he was arrested once, and I seem to remember it made a story for the newsletter.

Anyway, I digress (as my good friend Mike Pursey would say). Unfortunately, Sarah had to stop about five miles from Hastings, as she thought she had pulled something in her leg (as it turned out, she hadn't). Jane and I walked on, then got in Jane's car and went back to pick her up. My feet were very sore, and I had to wear flip-flops (even at work) for a couple of days afterwards. But it didn't take long for the blisters to heal. And so to the Camel-Teign 100 marshals' walk. I had hardly ever walked in the West Country before, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I absolutely loved Bodmin Moor - wild, remote and quite inspirational. One of the checkpoints was opposite Jamaica Inn (of Daphne du Maurier fame), and in fact I was so inspired, I read the book afterwards.

Again, there was quite a bit of road walking, which gave me blisters, and I have to say they did bother me in the middle section of the walk. I got to the breakfast stop, at Tavistock, and took a fairly ruthless approach to one of the blisters - I won't go into details, in case anyone is eating their own breakfast while they're reading this. But I will say that I did use a combination of Compede plasters and Neurofen painkillers. By the time I had done 70 or so miles, I could hardly feel my blisters.

I certainly enjoyed Dartmoor, but by then I had done more than 60 miles, and well into checkpoint-to-checkpoint mode, and I didn't enjoy it as much as I did Bodmin Moor. It's an excellent walk, and full credit to Cornwall and Devon Group for organising it.

I had a good hot bath afterwards, then another one the following morning. I was certainly stiff, and not moving quickly at all for the first 24 hours after the walk. But I had a bit more feeling in my legs the following day, and the day after that, I would say I was back to normal, more or less.

So my training for this year's Hundred paid off. I'm certainly looking forward to next year's Valleys 100 (didn't the route pictures in the last Strider look fantastic?), although at the moment I haven't decided whether to enter the event or the marshals' walk. Whatever I decide to do, let's hope for better weather in the walks taking place in the earlier part of the year leading up to it.

HORRENDOUS HUNDREDS IN 2012: PART ONE - THE GAMES by Don Newman

WHY is my left foot twice the size of my right foot? That is not a question I wanted to be contemplating just four days before the Games Hundred. I didn't know why my foot was swollen, nor what had caused the swelling. Perhaps it was that 10 minutes of digging in the garden? This is something I do about once every five years, and I obviously lack technique (Carol, help, I need some training!). My foot was not only swollen, but also painful. I slept only sporadically on the four nights before the event.

I had been really looking forward to this Hundred. The route appeared to be relatively flat and easy,

compared with say the Lakeland, or Snowdonia. Also it passed through the Surrey hills, and Peaslake, where I have lived for the past 25 years. I'd helped check the route description, marshalled on the marshals' walk, distributed leaflets, and felt involved and raring to go. Now a last-minute injury threatened to put me out of the game.

Anyone who has talked to me will know that I take Hundreds very seriously. In fact, one of the few regrets of my life (Dave Williams, stop laughing!) is that I didn't know about the LDWA or Hundreds in 1973. If I had, I would certainly have done them all, and become a real LDWA legend, like the one and only Roger Cole. Anyway, I have done every annual Hundred since 1985. No matter how hopeless my chances seemed, I just had to give this one a go.

From my base camp, at the Travelodge in scenic Slough, the evening before the event, I saw a guy with a Zimmer frame, moving pretty well. Perhaps I could borrow the frame? No, I couldn't catch him up to ask him! Next morning on the coach heading for London, I chatted to Andrew Boulden. He was contemplating his usual sub-30 Hundred. I was wondering how far I'd get before some kindly marshal took pity on me, and obliged me to retire.

As I limped from the start, and through Victoria Park, Chris Dent stopped to encourage me. Then he sped off on his bike, ignoring my pleas for a lift. I glanced behind me, and saw very few walkers. OK, I'm not as fast as I was in my youth, but I'm still used to being up in the top third of the field early on, not right at the back. At CP1 I didn't stop, thus overtaking a hundred or so people. I did the same at CP2, passing Ali, Dave and Nick, all attempting to complete their first Hundred. They were sunbathing, snacking, and obviously enjoying the event far more than I was.

I reckoned that if I managed to do about 20 miles I'd start to believe that I'd get to Windsor. I limped on through the afternoon and early evening, counting my blessings. At least navigation was easy, with that oh so detailed route description. Also, the weather was good.

Both these conditions were to change later on! I walked a bit with Don Bolton, and also with Ali, Dave and Nick, but I couldn't keep up with them for long. There was no respite from the pain in my foot. Even in checkpoints, with my foot on the floor, a chair, or a table, it still hurt.

At Biggin Hill I had my first stroke of luck. Mike Headley arrived for marshalling duties just as I hobbled out. He lent me a walking pole, even adjusting it for me. Using it like a cross-country skiing pole, I could propel myself along at a more respectable rate. Brilliant!

Things were getting better. Then they got worse. As darkness fell, it started to rain, lightly at first, then like a monsoon. I huddled in the Woldingham CP, listening to the rain beat down on the tin roof. I avoided eye contact with others who were giving up. It would have been so easy to succumb and join them. Eventually I decided that the rain wouldn't stop, and I couldn't afford to waste any more time. I was soon stumbling along the North Downs Way in the dark.

At some point on that awful night, I emerged from a wood and found that the rain had stopped. I slithered down that muddy quagmire towards Merstham. The path had been like concrete only a week before. Daylight found me hobbling up to Reigate Hill. I was on home territory now, and felt encouraged. At Box Hill I was offered a welcome bacon sandwich with 'mud or blood?' sauce, by the ever-cheerful Merv Nutburn. From the Box Hill viewpoint I could look along the valley towards home, Peaslake, and think that I would at least get that far. I didn't enjoy the climbs or the mud approaching Tanners Hatch, but I was moving better, even overtaking some other stragglers.

At the breakfast stop I had another morale boost. Changing my socks, I realized that my foot didn't hurt any more. It was probably numb like my brain. OK, it was still swollen and awkward, but without the pain I could enjoy a steady stroll through Peaslake, and up the familiar Pitch Hill in the afternoon sunshine.

Another muddy slither brought me down to CP12, where our 'Chilworth Crew' of London Group stalwarts had marshalled just four weeks before. I couldn't retire there, having not allowed anyone else to do so on the Marshals' Walk! I strolled towards St Martha's, the last big hill, feeling like a vagrant alongside some well-dressed families on their way to an outdoor concert at the Manor House. At the top of the steep hill I sat on a bench, and looked back in satisfaction. I would surely get to the finish now? I phoned Jane, and she met me at Newlands Corner, with clean, dry waterproofs, and a large bowl of salad. Sitting in the car was surely my most blissful moment of the event. Jane thought otherwise, and told me later that she was quite glad when I left. Apparently my deodorant had worn off after 32 hours of walking!

It got dark as I crossed the Wey Navigation. I slept briefly, on the floor at Old Woking, oblivious to the cheerful banter going on around me. Soon the fragrance of the sewage works told me that I was approaching Woking. It started to rain again, and would continue throughout the night. I hadn't recce'd Horsell

Common, as I'd expected to get there in daylight. I was soon standing still, shining my torch along identical looking tracks, without a clue which way to go, and despairing about the time I was wasting. I could see two torches approaching, so I waited for a second opinion. Two girls arrived, and proved equally as baffled as I was. Then one of them looked up, and saw the large LDWA arrowed sign. Saved again!

Emerging from the trees we encountered Tony Wintle, an unofficial marshal who was just out to help walkers on a tricky bit of the route. More mud, and much more rain made for another unpleasant night, but a

small crowd of us eventually shuffled into the tent near the M3. Here my tired brain became hopelessly confused, as Keith Warman strolled in, in full walking gear. “Keith, what are you doing here? You did the marshals walk.” “Yes Don, and now I’m marshalling. I’m the sweeper!”

The ignominy of being caught up by the sweeper spurred me on. I stumbled out into the dawn, and broke the Olympic limping record on that last stretch of open common. I usually linger at Cornwall & Devon’s gourmet CP, but not this time. I entered Windsor Park, for what should have been a triumphant stroll past the colourful rhododendrons. However, I wasn’t feeling at all triumphant, just desperate to cross the finish line. Eventually emerging from the park, I encountered Steve and Landy, who helped me across the road, and pointed me towards the finish. I limped into the school after exactly 47 hours.

This was my slowest ever Hundred, but I didn’t care. My foot was hurting again, but I didn’t care. All I cared about was that I’d somehow finished, succeeded, and my 100% record was still intact. The emotions, of disbelief and elation, would come later. There are so many things you need to do at the end of Hundreds, and you can’t do them all by yourself, due to physical and mental exhaustion. Joelle congratulated me, and brought me food. I managed to wash myself, but couldn’t face a shower. I was so tired. In the gym, a hard-working Norman Corrin was sweeping up, and waking the last of the snorers, so I couldn’t stay there. I needed to get home, for food, sympathy, a bath, and a beer, not necessarily in that order!

Paul Lawrence gave me a lift to the station. Somehow I stayed awake on three trains. The last train took me back into the Surrey Hills, where I had struggled the day before. Jane, with her big smile and nursing skills, picked me up at Gomshall station. At home, suitably refreshed, I stayed awake, and we watched the Jubilee concert on TV together. When I finally went to bed, I’d been awake for 57 hours.

Before I fell asleep, a disquieting thought occurred to me. I’d entered another Hundred, the Wenlock, and it was in just seven weeks time.

To be continued....



Kasteel de Dornenburg registration



KNBLO checkpoint banner

REGGESTREEKWANDELOCHT 30km AND KASTEELLOCHT 40km by Peter Jull

YOU may have heard me mention before that watching Kent one day cricket takes precedence over walking but following the team occasionally presents walking opportunities that would not otherwise be considered. This year there was also the chance to go one further than our esteemed editor, one country further that is than his recent Belgian expeditions. With Kent drawn against the Netherlands and the match scheduled for a Friday in Deventer a search on the KNBLO (their version of LDWA and Ramblers combined) website readily revealed an event the next day a few miles up the road from where I was to stay and another on the Sunday a short detour off the way home. A perfect long weekend seemed in prospect.

That perfection was dashed at the start by French passport control who, rarely at Dover early mornings, were stopping everyone but while undermanned and unhurried. That 15 minute queue was not allowed for and enough to miss my ferry. My ill temper was tempered slightly by the novelty of the ferry putting to sea via the western entrance and slightly more by Kent winning but only slightly because it was the least exciting match I can remember, enlivened only by a dozen beery boisterous stags in the paltry crowd, and finished two hours early. So more time for walking.

Safely checked in to the hotel one town east of Deventer but on the motorway, a short drive into Holten and by parking near the station a map was discovered of the adjacent national park, showing a Canadian war cemetery in the woods a couple of miles off. This seemed a good target for an evening walk, it was really only 7pm even though the locals were pretending it was 8pm. Clear tracks, cycle paths and signs made navigation there easy but under the trees dusk was falling fast on the way back, being so much further east

perhaps the locals did have the time right. Unprepared and torchless, I'm sure I could have got back merely by aiming for the frequent clanging of the Americanesque level crossing bells or the more thunderous church bells which a UK populace would undoubtedly complain about as noise pollution.

The start the next day was at an athletic club in the next town, Rijssen. In return for a short registration form and €3 I was given a route description that would have done credit to any LDWA event compared to that from Vlissingen last year. Three A4 pages of line by line instructions in Dutch is however just lots more words to not understand apart from L & R and the distance between each turn. The organisers were very welcoming and explained in fluent English that the route was also marked by black arrows and introduced me to two Dutch ladies who agreed to walk with me.

With no LDWA style mass start it was go when you're ready within set time bands for each of five distances. Soon out into flat farmland on tracks, cycle paths and quiet roads the route then led into the other end of the national park from the day before. In the woods the tracks invariably had a tarmac cycle path along one side which all the Dutch walkers consistently chose to use. That the mad Englishman was walking on the dirt/sand tracks was soon picked up on as a peculiarity for a topic of conversation. Other parts of the park were more open heathland where they had to get their shoes dirty and with views that looked like there might be a slope ahead but which disappeared mirage like on approach.

Rest stop at 10km was a roadside tent with just coffee and tea for €1 and a free mini Mars. Rest stop at 20km was a roadside tent but having approached from the opposite direction it was a minute before the familiarity of the benches and urn prompted realisation that it was the same place. Its clientele were still in the same age range as an LDWA event, anyone younger, and many others, were using the event as training for the Four Day Nijmegen Marches a couple of months later.

Walking on we came to more typically English type terrain walking along a grassy bank beside a river at the same time as English type weather arrived in the shape of a squally shower blowing across a completely exposed part of the route and then persistently precipitated until near the end by which time we were back under trees which reciprocated the precipitation their leaves had caught. A man on a bicycle had stopped to explain (in my case explain to my companions who explained to me) that a self operated ferry punt we were to have used to cross the river was missing necessitating a detour through an industrial area which was decidedly less exciting than the punt sounded. In fact much of the last few kilometres were urban but quiet, leafy and spacious. At the end, no check in, just drinks for sale at the bar if you wanted and goodbye with confirmation that I was their first ever English participant.

The next day's event was going to be easier to find than a back street sports club as the start was a tourist attraction and bound to be signposted. 40 miles towards home and left a bit and then round in circles a lot as the village wasn't signposted from the wrong side of the river although the castle was, after I found the right bridge. Kasteel de Doornenburg certainly out grandeur'd a typically utilitarian LDWA starting hall even if they were using a tent in the bailey. The man checking me in seemed very excited to have a foreigner to deal with and explained the route markings were red circle turn right, yellow square turn left and white triangle straight on. I later learned this was becoming a standard system in Holland. For just €2 this time the route description was a 24 page glossy brochure including all 8 distances and although the black arrows (or lack of) had caused uncertainty on a couple of occasions I was confident enough to set out alone.

A gratuitous circuit of the castle did offer the full range of middle distance views to satisfy the tourist photographer in me then, almost back to the entrance, a turn away from the village led to a ferry that was there and operating. The short wait bunched a few walkers together as we crossed what turned out to be the Lower Rhine. The main Rhine bank soon came next but was rarely rural. Is barge diesel drone really less intrusive than motorway hum or just different? The eight routes frequently split and rejoined but were all clearly marked and the ferry bunch had soon unbunched. Alone again I was entertained by the sound of a marching band drifting across the polders from the nearest village, needed for 1.1km SA through a brick works but that did let me spot three others, matchstick distant ahead. A wrong turn at the exit would have meant Germany in 100m but my matchsticks had it right, left that is. Closing slowly until they conscientiously followed the tarmac round the sides of some playing fields I caught up by the dastardly trick of walking on the grass. More young Nijmegen trainees.

Ninety-eight per cent of the route was hard surface, tarmac, concrete etc. Elevation was essentially flat but there were those river dykes some of which were ooh - at least 20ft high, and had to be climbed on several occasions. Rest stops were just local cafes. Back at the castle there seemed to be some degree of checking off returnees and everyone was interested and chatty. But my two day mission to seek out new routes and new customs, to boldly go where no LDWA member has gone before was dented by revelation that they had previously had people from England, and Australia and Japan. We'll have to advertise our events more widely.

Would I recommend either event or similar ones? Most LDWA members would not appreciate all the paved surfaces or the lack of elevation but there was always a warm welcome and conversation interesting. Not quite the most densely populated country in Europe any more but the way they spread out their housing and roads it is commendable how they managed to keep the routes, especially around Rijssen, more tranquil

than many in Kent. For me, exploring is as important as the walking, so if another opportunity arises I suspect I'll be in Holland again.



At dawn on the broad ridge below the glacier



On the glacier at an altitude of about 3,300 metres



Looking back across surrounding ridges and a sea of cloud



Dave just below the summit looking east

GRAN PARADISO by Dave Sheldrake

I was returning home from a three week trip to Scotland when I received a message from my son Jason, "I'm thinking of climbing Gran Paradiso in August; are you interested"? I had wanted to climb Paradiso for a couple of years so replied that I was definitely interested.

Gran Paradiso is the highest summit in the Graian Alps and at 4061 metres (13,322 feet) the highest mountain entirely within Italy, situated in the national park of the same name.

After much planning and preparation we made the short flight to Turin from where we hired a car for the two and a half hour drive to Pont at the head of the Val Savarenche.

The road climbed steeply upwards before levelling out in a long narrow valley hemmed in by steep mountain slopes. Pont is a small hamlet at an altitude of 1,960 metres with two hotels a shop and a large campsite which gets extremely crowded in the summer. We had opted to stay at the campsite to keep costs down but the facilities were fairly basic.

On the day after our arrival we decided to do an acclimatisation climb and set off for the Chabod hut at 2,750 metres in very warm conditions. The path wound endlessly up through the pine forest and we reached the hut in about two and a half hours then pressed on to a height of about 3,000 metres. As it was quite late we turned back and descended to the valley.

Although Gran Paradiso is one of the easier 4000 metre peaks the ascent is usually made in two days due to the length of the route and the altitude. We had therefore booked in advance for two nights at the Refuge Vittorio Emanuele II which gave us an option of an extra day if the weather turned bad.

We set off next morning about 11am with full packs containing climbing gear including rope, ice axes, helmets and enough food for two days. The day was extremely hot, around 28 degrees centigrade, and we plodded slowly up the zig zags, passing dozens of other groups on the way and arrived at the hut by lunchtime. After a good evening meal attended by 100 plus other climbers we turned into bed as we needed an early start.

We were up early and decided to miss out on breakfast and were away by 4.15am, with head torches on across the boulderfield. The first part of the route was over moraines and there were several other groups ahead and behind us and we could see their lights in the darkness.

At the edge of the glacier we stopped to rope up and fit crampons. Dawn was just breaking and the first rays of the sun glowed bright yellow on the ridge opposite. We continued on up the glacier at a steady pace crossing several crevasses on the way. I was finding the going quite tough and had to rest every few minutes while other groups overtook.

After another two to three hours we gained the broad ridge which gave us a fantastic view of peaks appearing above cloud level. Our progress was quite slow as we gained altitude although the slope wasn't that steep and a few climbers passed us on their way down from the summit. Eventually the summit rocks came in sight and we joined the crowds and the inevitable queue waiting to get to the top. The final pitch was a grade three scramble involving an extremely narrow ledge and we clipped into the rocks for safety. The summit, which has a statue of the Madonna, is very narrow, but the views were sensational in every direction. Away to the north were Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa, with peaks and valleys as far as the eye could see. After photographs and a quick bite, we began the long descent. It was now very hot, and we needed to be off the glacier as soon as possible. Once we were off the glacier we relaxed, and spent almost an hour resting and eating.

We reached the Refuge Emanuele by late afternoon and spent the rest of the day on the terrace, soaking up the sun and the view.

Next morning we strolled down the track to our valley and our campsite. All in all it had been an excellent trip, with good weather and my first 4,000 metre peak.



Graham and Mike's Scotland trip. Clockwise, from top left, the view from the summit of Spidean Mialach, Mike Pursey on the summit of Sgurr a'Mhaoraich, Mike Pursey on the summit ridge of Ladhar Bheinn, the view from the summit of Gairic

SCOTLAND 2013 (or how I came to owe Dave Williams £1) by Graham Smith

MIKE Pursey and myself had planned to go to Scotland this year with Mike Ratcliff, who had accompanied us on our last two visits, and had loved it. On the few occasions we had seen him since, Mike R was saying

how much he was looking forward to this year's visit, and how he couldn't wait to go up again. But there are other things in Mike R's life now: a change of job, and - most importantly - a partner, with whom he does many walks with East Kent Walking Group. But I was convinced he would still be with us - so convinced that I bet Dave Williams, a member of London Group of the LDWA and who did not share my optimism, £1 on the subject. We set the dates for the trip before Christmas, and Mike P prepared an itinerary with typical thoroughness. "Yes, I'm up for that," Mike R told us both. Then as the date approached, Mike R informed us that he wouldn't be able to join us at the start of the trip, as he had so many other things on - but he assured us that he would join us a few days later, and probably stay on a few days after we had left. So, as I picked Mike P up at his Hythe home at 7.30am on Friday June 14, I thought my pound was safe. This year our main destination was Knoydart, a peninsula in the West Highlands opposite the Isle of Skye and cut off from the main UK roads network - and which has three Munros. You get to Knoydart either by boat or by a 16-mile walk-in from the nearest proper road, which was not an option for us. Knoydart is an area Mike P and myself have targeted for years, but due to its inaccessibility, an expedition there involves a lot of planning. There are many other hills not far from Knoydart, so we planned to stay in Invergarry for three days before going to Knoydart.

It took just over 12 hours to drive to Invergarry, where we found a very nice, secluded camp site. The next day our first walk took in two Munros - Gleouraich (3396 feet, and pronounced glyawreech) and Spidean Mialach (3268 feet, and pronounced speet yan meelach). The walk starts from Loch Quoich, and getting to the first summit is mainly via a superb stalkers' path. We then walked along the ridge and dropped down to a bealach before a steady climb to the summit of Spidean Mialach, where the views, particularly over to the east, were magnificent. The sun had been shining all day, and conditions were at their clearest while we were on this summit, so it was a great feeling. It was a super start to the trip, and we looked forward to Mike R joining us. Before we went to Fort Augustus in the evening to get something to eat, Mike P tried ringing Mike R to ask what time he felt he would be arriving. There was no reply, so he left a message on his voicemail.

The next day's walk involved one Munro - Gairich (3015 feet, and pronounced gaareech). Again the walk started from Loch Quoich, but this time we went to the other side of the loch for the ascent. It was another good steady walk, with a tiny bit of easy scrambling, and a very nice summit, but conditions on that day were a bit cloudy, and we had to negotiate a bit of bog near the loch before the ascent, so the walk wasn't quite as enjoyable as the previous day's. When we returned to Invergarry Mike R rang Mike P - offering profuse apologies for mucking us about, but he had lots of other things on, and he would not be joining us. I suppose we had been warned. I texted our group's other Mike, Michael Headley, that I now owed Dave Williams £1, and he texted back 'East Kent Walking Group 1 Scotland 0 then.' Oh well, we said, it's Mike R's loss.

Mike P and I both agreed that the next day's walk - over Sgurr a'Mhaoraich (3369 feet, and pronounced skoor a vooreach) was the best of the trip. Again it started from Loch Quoich, again we had glorious sunshine, and again the ascent was mainly via an excellent stalkers' path, which took us to the Munro's eastern top before the summit itself, which had superb views. We then had a fairly steep descent before an enjoyable walk/scramble of a couple of hundred feet to another sub top of Sgurr a'Mhaoraich, An Bathaich, which has a delightful broad ridge.

The next day we packed up our tents, accompanied by a few thousand (or was it a few million?) midges, and set off for Mallaig, and the boat for Knoydart, where Mike P had booked accommodation in a bunkhouse at Inverie, which is more or less the only place with any population on the peninsula. Inverie has a very good pub, the Old Forge, which provides nice meals and good beer.

Our first walk involved two Munros - Meall Bhuidhe (3104 feet, and pronounced myowl booe) and Luinne Bheinn (3081 feet, and pronounced loonya vyn). With a fairly cold wind, coming in from the sea, behind us, we set out on a long track up Gleann Meadail which took us to the top of the pass. We then walked to the top of Meall Bhuidhe, and by the time we got to the summit, the clouds had thickened, so we did not get extensive views. Also, unlike with most Munros, there is no substantial cairn on the summit. We then descended the hill's north-east ridge to a bealach before going up to the east ridge of Luinne Bheinn. And just as we reached the summit the weather changed - and how. Heavy cloud came over, bringing with it rain and a very strong wind, with visibility cut to a few yards. It looked like the rain would stay for a long while, and although it is usually quite straightforward coming down off a mountain in clear conditions, it is quite another matter coming down when you can only see a few feet in front of you. Mike and I were wet, cold and getting pretty miserable. But thanks to some tremendous navigation on Mike's part, map and compass were used to get us out of the low cloud, and we suddenly found ourselves a few hundred yards from the broad track which would take us back to Inverie. The lesson is that the weather can change quickly, and sometimes dramatically, on the big hills, so walkers should make sure they know what they are doing with map and compass before venturing on them. Fortunately for us, there is probably no one better with map and compass in Kent Group than Mike P.

The next day our walk took us to the best hill of the trip - Ladhar Bheinn (3346 feet, and pronounced

larven). We were accompanied by fine rain for just about the entire walk, but fortunately it was not heavy, and the clouds were way above the mountain tops, so visibility was pretty good, although not as clear as it had been while we were walking the hills from Loch Quoich earlier in the week. We followed good wide tracks before a bit of a slog (but not a steep one) up to the summit of Ladhar Beinn. The top of the mountain has one of the best ridges I have ever walked in Scotland, which takes you to the three summit cairns, the first of which has a trig. point. I loved the ridge so much I decided to go back the same way, just so I could walk it again. Although it was a bit cloudy, we still had great views, particularly across Loch Hourn to Beinn Sgritheall, a Munro we walked up in 1997.

So that was another year's trip to Scotland, visiting an area we had planned to visit for several years - we walked up some fantastic hills and saw some marvellous scenery, and in the main had pretty good weather. As I always say, when you reach the top of a Scottish hill and gaze around you at nothing but lochs and other hills, it's one of the best feelings in the world.

DEAL WALKING FESTIVAL

THERE'S not long to go now to Deal Walking Festival, taking place between August 22-28. In the past the festival, now in its fifth year, has been organised by Alan Sutton, a Kent Group member from Walmer.

The walking festival was an important part of Deal meeting the criteria to get the prestigious Walkers Are Welcome status, the first town in the south of England to do so. Other parts of the criteria included getting the support of the local authority - in this case Deal Town Council - for walking, and getting plenty of pubs, guest houses and restaurants to demonstrate that they welcome walkers.

Alan has now handed over the festival to the White Cliffs Ramblers, the branch of the national Ramblers organisation which covers south Kent to which some Kent Group members belong.

This year the festival has been expanded in big way, and will include 23 walks, ranging in length from two to 18 miles, several of them over the bank holiday period, and three of them joint LDWA/ramblers walks.

These are Graham Smith's 18-mile Three Pits Walk on Saturday August 24, a 14.4-mile stretch of Peter Jull's Timeball & Telegraph Trail going from Ileden and going back to Deal on August 25, and Graham Smith's 9.5-mile evening walk from Walmer to Dover on Monday August 26, ending with fish and chips. See social walks programme above for full details of these three walks.

The walking festival programme also includes health walks, historical and special interest walks, walks for the disabled, a walk about the smugglers of Deal, a treasure trail for families, and a walk about the wildlife in and around Deal.

The full walks programme is on the festival's website, www.dealwalkingfestival.org.uk. There is a link to this website on our own website.

COMEDY CORNER

When chemists die, they barium.

I changed my iPod name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid.
He says he can stop any time.

How does Moses make his tea?
Hebrews it.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went.
Then it dawned on me.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity.
I can't put it down.

I did a theatrical performance about puns.
It was a play on words.

They told me I had type A blood, but it was a Type-O.

A dyslexic man walks into a bra....

Class trip to the Coca-Cola factory.
I hope there's no pop quiz.

Energizer bunny arrested.
Charged with battery.

I didn't like my beard at first.
Then it grew on me.

How do you make holy water?
Boil the hell out of it!

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.

What does a clock do when it's hungry?
It goes back four seconds.

I wondered why the ball was getting bigger.
Then it hit me!

Broken pencils are pointless.

I tried to catch some fog. I mist.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary?
A thesaurus.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool ..

I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.

I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

Velcro - what a rip off!

Cartoonist found dead in home. Details are sketchy.

Venison for dinner? Oh deer!

I used to think I was indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.

Be kind to your dentist. He has fillings, too.

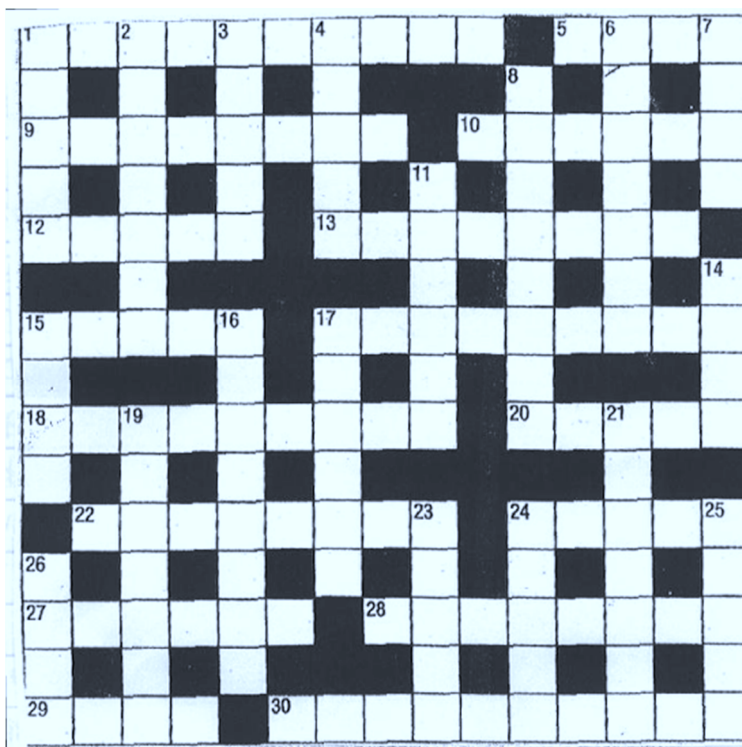
CROSSWORD set by Shirley Higgins

ACROSS

1. Brief confused strain to conservative (10).
5. Very good, right tree (4).
9. Inclusive cover (8).
10. He acts perhaps and fiddles (6).
12. Attempt wild trail (5).
13. Exercise at the start of May went wrong in Wales (8).
15. Hedge sparrow protects surroundings (5).
17. Fagus Syvatica sounds like sand at centre of street (5, 4).
18. Someone secretive, Black Bess? (4, 6).
20. Short distance for me at start of trek (5).
22. Honeysuckle produced by trees stem (8).
24. River by church. Strong drink here! (5).
27. Cool country we hear (6).
28. Light starter (8).
29. Barrow made from headless post (4).
30. Water course ruins diver in chaos (5, 5).

DOWN

1. Belief might be national (5).
2. Topless walking is slow progress! (7).
3. Period of enchantment (5).
4. Lit up strange flower (5).
6. Something amazing. Pull it! (7).
7. Jonathan seen on Wye (4).
8. Plan to meet we hear at village in Kent (8).
11. Unit for mum upset by French dad (6).
14. Only French mother (4).
15. Decapitated fool seen in whirlpool (4).
16. Sounds like shed you'll register (8).
17. Watch it while you're being snapped. Robin that is (6).
19. Him dour? In his element! (7).
21. Lit wood! Crazy, also out of control (3, 4).
23. Bird decapitates dog! (5).
25. Sharpens one in the outskirts of Hawes (5).
26. Cats could make this (4).

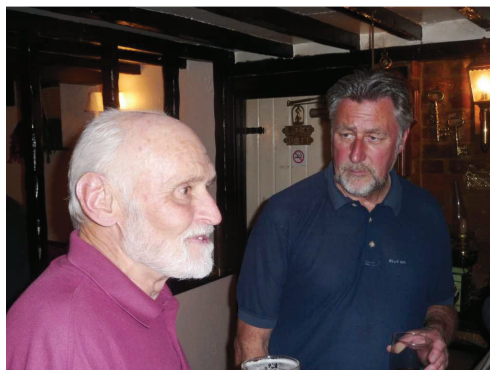


April crossword answers.

ACROSS - 1 Itch, 4 Macaws, 9 Canterbury Bell, 11 Chiselled, 12 Edges, 13 Avenue, 15 Matadors, 17 Instinct, 18 Ascent, 21 Chino, 22 Direct her, 24 Waymarked posts, 25 Stay up, 26 Eels.

DOWN - 2 Theme, 3 Hobble, 4 Meridian, 5 Cable cars, 6 Wild goose chase, 7 Acacia, 8 Antiperspirant, 10, Isis, 14 Uniformly, 16 Acid drop, 17 Inch, 19 Thrush, 20 Greece, 23 Capel.

The winner was Laurie Lowe.



Post 100 Gathering at Trottiscliffe. Photos by Bryan Clarke