

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION – Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



**Some of the crowd gathered for the 40th Anniversary Barbecue on 1st June 2014
at the Staplehurst farm of Linda and Roger Munn**

Number 94



August 2014

www.ldwakent.org.uk

**Pictures taken at the 40th Anniversary Barbecue on 1st June 2014
by Shirlie Gill and Eric Rolfe**



Our Banner



Waiting to start the walk led by Roger Munn



**Merv Nutburn provides
the musical entertainment**



**Graham Smith, Mike Pursey
and Brian Buttifant**



Joy Davies and Gordon Harker



Pauline Thrush and Liz Keeler

KENT GROUP SOCIAL WALKS AUG to DEC 2014

Sun Aug 3 White Cliffs marshals' walk For details contact Mike Pursey

Fri Aug 8 Summer night Walk c19ml. Meet 21.30 for 22.30 start at the Thompson's Bell PH, Dover Road, Walmer GR TR368502 Map Exp 138. L: Graham Smith

Sun Aug 10 Cream Tea Walk c20ml. Meet 09.00 at Boughton Malherbe church GR TQ882495 Map: Exp 137, park in field opp. Pub stop at Hawkenbury. L: Neal O'Rourke

Sat Aug 16 South Downs Thirty c30ml. Meet 08.00 at Eastbourne, western end of promenade (B2103) by South Downs Way marker post GR TV600972. Map: Exp 123. Park nr 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

Thu Aug 21 Evening walk with fish and chips (White Cliffs Walking Festival walk) c10ml. Meet 17.30 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

Sat Aug 23 White Cliffs Challenge See Events Diary

Sun Aug 24 Village Church Tour (White Cliffs Walking Festival walk) 15.5ml. Meet 09.30 in front of The Five Bells PH, Ringwould GR TR360482 Map: Exp 138. A walk passing the churches of Ringwould, Ripple, Tilmanstone, Eythorne, West Langdon, Waldershare and Sutton. Pub lunch stop. Possible visit to modern milking parlour. L: Peter Jull

Mon Aug 25 The Three Pits Walk (White Cliffs Walking Festival Walk) c18ml. Meet 10.00 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 31 North Downs Way Loop: Wye to Dover 23.5ml. Meet 09.00 at Wye public c.p. GR TR053468. Pub stop planned but bring lunch. L: Dave Jones

Sun Sep 7 Les Trois Chateaux Revisited c32ml. Meet 07.30 at Sissinghurst church GR TQ794374 Map: Exp 136, park nearby. A walk in the Weald of Kent visiting the castles of Sissinghurst, Bodiam and Scotney. L: Neal O'Rourke

Sun Sep 14 Millennium 100 Part 3: Folkestone to Wye 29ml. Meet 08.30 outside Folkestone Central rlwy stn GR TR220364 Maps: Exp137,138. Linear route finishing at Wye rlwy stn for return journey or contact leader for possible car share. Pub lunch stop. In celebration of Kent Group's 40th anniversary, a reminiscence of the 2000 event. L: Peter Jull

Sun Sep 28 Battle of Britain Walk c12ml. Meet 10.00 at Alkham village green c.p. GR TR256423 Map: Exp 138. Walk the lovely Alkham valley and visit the Cat & Custard Pot pub for lunch, formerly frequented by battle of Britain pilots from the former airfield which was nearby. L: Joy Davies

Fri Oct 3 Millennium 100 Part 4: Night Walk from Wye 16 ml. Meet 19.00 for 20.00 start at Tickled Trout PH, Wye GR TR049469 Map: Exp 138. Park in village c.p. GR TR053469 (5 mins walk away). In celebration of Kent Group's 40th anniversary, a dark reminiscence of the 2000 event. L: Peter Jull

Sun Oct 12 Pearl Barbour c17ml. Meet 09.30 at Walmer Castle c.p. GR TR380501 Map: Exp 138. Lunch stop at Guston. L: Richard Frost

Sun Oct 26 Millennium 100 Part 5: Wye to Canterbury 24ml. Meet 08.30 at Wye rlwy stn GR TR053468 Maps: Exp 137, 138, 150. Linear route finishing at Canterbury West rlwy stn for return journey or contact leader for potential car share. Pub lunch stop. Bring a torch as it may be dark before the finish. In celebration of Kent Group's 40th anniversary, a reminiscence of the 2000 event.
L: Peter Jull

Sun Nov 2 Staplehurst Stroll c14ml. Meet 09.30. GR TQ812436. Map: Exp 137. A circular walk visiting Staplehurst, Sutton Valence, Ulcombe and Headcorn. Bring packed lunch. L: Roger Munn

Sun Nov 9 Bridge over the River Stour c20ml. Meet 09.30 at Worth Cricket Pitch GR TR332561 Map: Exp 150. Lunch stop at Pluck's Gutter. L: Richard Frost

Sun Nov 16 Lewes Loop c18ml. Meet 09.00 at Lewes rlwy stn GR TQ417098 Map: Exp 122. A circular route on the South Downs. Pub stop. L: Graham Smith.

Sun Nov 23 Battle of Bossenden Wood 17ml. Meet 09.00 at Faversham Recreation Ground c.p. in Park Road GR TR019611 Map: Exp 149. First train from London will be met at station, 400m from start. Circular walk taking in locations (murder, battle, inquest, trial etc.) associated with the last armed uprising of English peasantry. Pub lunch stop. Map Images KCC Map/RD. L: Peter Jull

Sun Dec 7 Christmas dinner, preceded by short walk - see article below.

Sat Dec 13 Christmas Cruise around Calais c14ml. A circular walk in the Nord Pas de Calais visiting Cap Blanc Nez. 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. Alternatively, crossing as car (ferry) passengers may be planned. Don't forget your passport! Please ring Graham for means of travel and confirmation of times. L: Graham Smith

Mon Dec 29 Post Christmas Sevenoaks Stroll c17 ml. meet 08.45 for 09.00 start at Shipbourne Church on A227 GR TQ592522 Map: Exp 147. Park in road opposite church. Pub lunch stop.
L: Dave Sheldrake

2015

Thu 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.

Pictures on the inside front cover and inside back cover were taken by Eric Rolfe and Shirlie Gill at our 40th anniversary barbecue, held at Roger Munn's farm in Staplehurst on June 1. Pictures on the back cover were taken by Bryan Clarke on the Sevenoaks Circular on April 27.

KENT GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman - Brian Buttifant,
Secretary/newsletter editor - Graham Smith,
Treasurer/membership secretary* - Neil Higham,
Walks secretary - Mike Pursey,
Webmaster - Michael Headley,
Members
Phil Butler
Joy Davies
Roger Dean
Nick Dockree
Stephanie le Men

*The April newsletter reported that Roger Dean was taking over from Neil Higham as membership secretary. Just to clarify, Roger, Neil and chairman Brian Buttifant have agreed that Roger can take over this role - but not just yet. Apologies to Neil for jumping the gun.

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.

40th ANNIVERSARY BARBECUE by Brian Buttifant

OUR 40th anniversary barbecue, held at the Staplehurst home of Linda and Roger Munn, was a huge success which 70 members and friends were able to enjoy in nice summer weather. The venue was ideal, for which we are very grateful. Our man of many talents, Merv Nutburn, entertained us, playing his baritone and inviting us to sing along. After enjoying our barbi - cooked for us by Joy, Linda, Pauline and Gordon - Merv changed and joined the West Hill Morris, who gave us a superb display of dancing, allowing some members to join in. It was nice to see some past members and two past chairmen, who travelled to Kent to join the party. Roger started the day off by leading a five-mile walk around the local area.

Among the very nice comments sent to us afterwards were the following:

Paul and Mary Hatcher: "Just to let you know how much Paul and I enjoyed our visit to Kent to meet up with old friends at the BBQ.

"Thanks to all who put in so much effort in arranging everything (even the weather!)"

Laurie Keys: "Thank you very much indeed for putting on the lovely barbecue on Sunday. It was great to meet up with old friends and the entertainment was also very good. You all worked so hard!"

This occasion replaced our post 100 buffet and I must apologise to the 13 members who did the Valleys 100 that I failed to mention their valiant efforts in awful conditions. Anyone who took part deserves admiration. I know full well that any Hundred can be challenging and bad weather makes it very tough, but this year conditions were at their very worst. Those who did the marshals' walk had drier weather after a very wet winter.

FAMILY DINNER

AFTER six very good years at the London Beach Hotel and Golf Club, Tenterden,, we have decided to have our popular family dinner at a new venue this year - Chart Hills Golf Club in Weeks Lane, Biddenden. The only reason is that the committee felt it was just time to give somewhere else a try (and we can always go back again if members wish).

The date is Sunday December 7, and the meal will, as usual, be preceded by a walk, again led by Neal O'Rourke. The walk will be of 6-7 miles and will start at 9.30am. Lunch will be served at 1.30pm.

Cost of the meal will be £12.95 for one course, £16.95 for two courses and £19.95 for three courses.

Jan O'Rourke has again kindly make the booking arrangements. A booking form is included with this newsletter, so please fill it in and return it to Jan, with your cheque, made out to Kent LDWA, by Saturday November 22.

NEWS OF KENT CHALLENGE WALKS

Sevenoaks Circular

AS this newsletter went to press, we had not got the date for next year's Sevenoaks Circular, as this is entirely dependent on the Sevenoaks Rugby Club fixture list, which is due out in August. So we do not yet know if the walk will follow the same excellent route it has taken for the last three years. The date of next year's event will be in the December newsletter, and what we can guarantee is that there will not be a clash with the South Downs Marathon, organised by Sussex Group, as there was this year (for reasons which were unavoidable), and which obviously affected entries on both events.

We have been given the date of next year's South Downs Marathon and it's Sunday March 29. It's a great walk - so put that date in your diaries now.

Weald walk

After this year's special Weald walk - our 40th anniversary Wealden Waters, which was taking place as this newsletter went to press - next year we are due to hold A Walk With the Smugglers again. This will be based at Goudhurst, and the last time it was organised, the distances were 26 miles or 15 miles. Full details should be in the next newsletter.

White Cliffs Challenge

This year's White Cliffs Challenge is almost upon us - and we need your help. It has a new day and a new month - Saturday August 23. The event has been moved from the usual Sunday in September because of the White Cliffs Walking Festival (see the article below) with which some of our members are involved. The walking festival is going to be a high profile week of walks, which it is hoped will result in much publicity, so it makes a lot of sense for the WCC to be held during the week.

The WCC will be based at St Margaret's Village Hall, and there are two distances - 32 and 15 miles. Thanks to Peter Jull, the longer route has been tweaked slightly, to include a brief excursion into the delightful Alkham Valley. The marshals' walk is being held on Sunday August 3. We're going to need as many marshals as we can get, so all offers of help will be gratefully received. Contact Graham Smith - details above.

KSS - SURREY TOPS

THIS year the Kent Surrey Sussex Triple Challenge of 50-mile walks goes back to our neighbours in Surrey, with the Surrey Tops, being held over the weekend of September 20-21. As usual, Kent Group will be arranging a checkpoint, and this will be CP1, at Elstead, at 16 miles. Anyone willing to offer their services is asked to contact Graham Smith (details above). The Surrey Tops marshals' walk will be held over the weekend of August 23-24 although it must be pointed out that this is the same weekend as our White Cliffs Challenge.

Next year the KSS event is our own White Cliffs Challenge. The WCC has been provisionally earmarked for August 29-30, with the provisional venue Deal and Betteshanger Rugby Club, the base when we last held the 50-mile event two years ago. We are moving away from a September slot because A) Essex and Herts Group are holding their Shotley 50 over the weekend of September 26-27 (they cannot hold it earlier because of tides, and because of getting permissions from certain farmers over footpaths going over certain fields because of crops) so we have been asked to avoid a clash, and B) this means the event can be held as part of the White Cliffs Walking Festival, which seems to make sense.

Confirmation of next year's date and venue for the WCC will be in the next newsletter.

WHITE CLIFFS WALKING FESTIVAL

The White Cliffs Walking Festival - which will include our White Cliffs Challenge - is being held between August 21-27.

The festival follows the great success of last year's Deal Walking Festival, when 674 people went on the 24 walks. It was decided that a natural and logical development would be to turn it into a White Cliffs Walking Festival.

It is being organised by The White Cliffs Ramblers (to which some Kent LDWA members belong) with much involvement from Kent Group of the LDWA. The festival will feature 32 walks of various lengths in the Dover-Deal area, including four LDWA walks, the main one being our White Cliffs Challenge on Saturday August 23.

There will also be a 10-mile evening walk from Deal to Dover on August 21, ending with fish and chips, led by Graham Smith; Peter Jull's 15.5-mile Seven Churches Walk on Sunday August 24 - visiting the churches of Ringwould, Ripple, Sutton, Tilmanstone, Eythorne, Waldershare and West Langdon - on August 24; and Graham's 18-mile Three Pits Walk, visiting the sites of three mines in the Kent Coalfield (Tilmanstone, Snowdown and Betteshanger) and villages and memorials associated with them, on August 25.

For full details of the festival, visit www.whitecliffswalkingfestival.org.uk

FUTURE HUNDREDS

ON the Red Rose Hundred next year, we have been earmarked for a checkpoint - at Dunsop Bridge (60.5 miles, the first checkpoint after breakfast). This promises to be a first class route, with plenty of fabulous undulating Lancashire countryside, so it should be a Hundred to remember.

And on the 2016 Hundred in Dorset, we have been provisionally earmarked to for a checkpoint at Evershott (49 miles).

Also, we are due to hear from the LDWA national committee in October if our bid to stage a Cinque Ports Hundred in 2018 has been successful. As previously reported in the newsletter, the event would be based at the Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover, with the route visiting all the Cinque Ports, Ancient Towns and some of the Limbs. The breakfast stop would be at Brockhill Park Performing Arts College, near Hythe.

Hopefully the next newsletter will be able to report some good news.

40th ANNIVERSARY WEALDEN WATERS

OUR special Wealden Waters walk - Kent Group's first overnight event - was taking place as this newsletter was being printed.

On June 28-29 we had the marshals' walk for the event, with Jim Catchpole, Roger Dean, Jill Green, Michael Headley, Graham Smith, Wendy Thurrell and Keith Warman completing the 100k walk. Sarah

Turner started the 100k walk but had to retire at Marsh Green (60k), and Bob Field did the 40k walk. The marshals' walk was marshalled by Brian Buttifant, Bryan Clarke, Neal and Jan O'Rourke and Alan Stewart. Jill Green has sent the following report:

KENT GROUP 40th ANNIVERSARY WEALDEN WATERS - MARSHALS' WALK

by Jill Green

HIGHLIGHTS of the Wealden Waters marshals' walk include beautiful views from Ashdown Forest. Four ladies came galloping up behind us. They were lost and could see we had a big map.

Unfortunately the apples in my pack were interesting. The lady had to dismount to control her horse and look at the map to work out where to go. This all took some time. I enjoyed large clumps of Common Spotted Orchids and Marsh Orchids.

Jim and I didn't see any other walkers. The wonderful checkpointers had to hang about for us. I have suffered an injury that prevented me from starting the Valleys 100, so I had to take care. Jim went at my speed. We were doing well until the darkness fell. It was very dark too - no moon or stars, but lots of steady rain. The torchlight reflection on the plastic map case made reading difficult. This section, in darkness, was flat, so we thought it would be no problem. We made mistakes (our fault) and we went back each time and started again.

We both developed blistered feet, Jim worse than me. He looked like he was walking on broken glass but he never complained. We were now slow and it took a supreme effort over the last 11k to get in with 15 minutes to spare. We called us the 144 Team - that's our age, as we are both 72 now. Neal was a hero with his broken ankle, and Jan was a saint. Brian B was always so happy. Bryan and Alan did a split shift. We were looked after so well and it must have been a pain waiting for us. We told them how much we appreciated all they did for us.

WELL DONE EVERYONE by Brian Buttifant

OF the 10 Kent members who did the main event in appalling conditions, five completed the route - Wendy Thurrell in a very good time (see below), Andrew Boulden, Graham Smith, Don Newman and Keith Warman. Commiserations to Jennifer, Alan, Jim, Peter and Mike. They all put in a great effort, and were among 232 people who failed to complete the route (with 255 doing it). This was the highest number of non-completions since the 1980s - so it's got to be better next year!

Twelve of us manned checkpoint 7 over Saturday night at Deri Community Hall, at 47 miles. We were joined by four friends from Bristol and West Group, who helped make us a good checkpoint team. The hall was very nice and I feel we did a good job for the organisers.

The team were Mike Attewell, Martin Brice, Brian Buttifant, Joy Davies, Christophe Delogne, Nick Dockree, Michael Headley, Stephanie le Men, Neil Higham, Merv and Fiona Nutburn and Neal O'Rourke, plus Richard Jasper, Jeff Parsons, Dave Street and Bruce Young from Bristol and West Group. Thanks to you all.

Valleys 100 Kent members' results:

Andrew Boulden - 31.49.

Malcolm Dyke - 35.01.

Wendy Thurrell - 29.52.

Graham Smith - 43.22.

Don Newman - 47.11

Keith Warman - 47.46.

Retired/timed out:

Peter Jull - CP11 (71 miles).

Mike Pursey/Alan Stewart - CP 13 (84 miles).

Jim Catchpole - CP11 (71 miles).

Jennifer Howland - CP5 (37.3 miles).

Richard Allison (not actually a Kent Group member but lives in the county) - CP 12 (80 miles).

Marshals' walk

Merv Nutburn - 35.17.

Christophe Delogne/Stephanie le Men - 36.34.

THAT HUNDRED by Graham Smith

THERE'S no such thing as an easy Hundred, but some Hundreds are harder than others. The Valleys 100 was the eighth Hundred I had started and turned out to be the seventh I had completed (although I did complete the Mid Wales 100 in 2007, albeit completing the second half of the walk in 2008, as I retired on the event). So I'm a relative novice at Hundreds. But the Valleys 100 was certainly the toughest Hundred I've done, and my view was shared by many fellow sufferers (sorry, walkers) with whom I walked the event on that never-to-be-forgotten bank holiday weekend of May 24-25-26.

I usually like to get lots of mileage in before a Hundred, but for various personal reasons I hadn't been able to do that before this year's event. So I hadn't done as much preparation as I would have liked. When I arrived at Pontypool and checked in, my plan was to plod on, and when fatigue took its toll (as it would) to aim to go from checkpoint to checkpoint. Times have never been important to me (I always consider the important thing is to get round), but I had heard about the tough climbs from Stephanie le Men, who had completed the marshals walk, so I knew it was highly unlikely I would finish (if I did finish) before midnight on the second day.

So I set off with 486 others at just after 10am, having had our pep talk from main organiser David Morgan. It was raining, and had been raining for a couple of hours before we set off. I don't think anyone actually believed it would rain for as long as it did (if they did, there may have been more retirements than there actually were, and I believe that may have been a record - I'm sure Keith Warman would know). I moved on at my usual steady pace at the start of a Hundred, and quite enjoyed the walking and the first couple of climbs - because it was drizzling and the clouds were low, we couldn't actually see much. But we were off on this year's Hundred, we were excited and it was good to get moving. I was initially walking with my friend from Deal Peter Jull, who completed his first Hundred last year. Peter was moving well, and seemed to be coping with the conditions better than I was. At the second checkpoint, Maescwimmer, we met chairman Brian Buttifant and fellow Kent member Nick Dockree, and it was great to meet a couple of people from Kent Group.

Peter wanted to stay a bit longer at the checkpoint so I moved on, and the next couple of legs went by in a bit of a blur. It was wet, so wet I slipped over three times within the space of two miles. By now I was walking with John Pennifold, an LDWA character with huge enthusiasm who was filming a video while he was walking. Just before the Gelligaer checkpoint (44 miles), I started to feel a blister on my small left toe. I should have addressed the problem at the checkpoint, but I chose to ignore it (which wasn't a good decision). My three slip-ups had meant I was pretty filthy, a point made to me by a couple of marshals at the checkpoint, but they did say I wasn't quite as filthy as a couple of other people who had fallen into deeper mud than I had.

At Deri we were looked after by Kent Group, and how marvellous it was to see those familiar smiling faces and to be waited on by them. It really was such a boost, and I was very grateful. By now it was dark - and still raining. John's friend Megan James was now walking with us. Megan had a GPS, on which was the entire route. So while John and I followed the route description, Megan checked on her GPS, and in this way we navigated through the night. We were also, of course, navigating through saturated and very slippery ground, and the rain was not letting up (I had my fourth slip-up during the night). So we plodded and splashed on, getting wetter all the time, but I must say John and Megan's good humour and optimism rubbed off on me, so although I was absolutely soaking (as was everyone else), I actually felt OK.

My little toe (which I had still not attended to) was now causing me a bit of pain, and as dawn was breaking, I was falling behind John and Megan. I pressed on, and spent a good hour and 15 minutes at the breakfast stop. The rain had not stopped since we started, and my clothes were absolutely saturated. So at the breakfast stop I had a complete change of clothes, and at last attended to my blister, by putting a Compede plaster on it.

I had a nice breakfast, and when we started walking again, the rain had (more or less) stopped. I was then walking with Luis Broz, and starting to properly enjoy the walk. Leg 10 took us along a ridge (my favourite type of walking) which I loved, before we dropped down to checkpoint 10 at Pen-y-fan Pond. For the rest of the day, the walk was much drier. There were a couple of long moorland stretches which I enjoyed, with good views. The only downside was the rain, which had not disappeared. Although drizzle had stopped and we were getting some sunshine, we were getting showers - and they were heavy ones, heavy enough to easily penetrate my waterproofs and make me very wet again. Also, I was now getting more blisters, and was having to use painkillers to make them more bearable.

Some of the walking was excellent, and the section to Cwmavon (80 miles) followed a high level terrace and offered extensive views across to the Severn estuary. By now the showers had stopped, and I was feeling fine (well, more or less - despite my fifth slip-up).

But my optimism did take a bit of a knock at the stretch to the Keeper's Pond, where after a fairly steep climb, we had to negotiate 1.2 miles of bog. It was slow, hard going ("Another treadmill: getting more arduous"- Wainwright's words in his Pennine Way Companion while going over the Cheviots, sprang to mind). But another welcome stop, where we were looked after by the cheery people from Thames Valley, and we moved on. There were now 15 miles to go and it was rapidly getting dark, so it looked like I would be walking through the second night on a Hundred for the first time.

We were quite high up, and at first the paths were good, and easy to follow while it was still light. But as we lost daylight, navigation became harder. When daylight had just about disappeared, we had another climb on more boggy ground, and we made very laborious progress. This was followed by a boggy descent. We were going very slowly, my feet were very sore, so sore the Neurofen was by now not having much effect. I was feeling very fatigued, very sore and not a little annoyed with the difficulty of the route, and thinking of retiring. But we found a road, which led to the checkpoint at Llanellen, organised by London Group. The cheery souls at the checkpoint lifted my spirits considerably, particularly when Dave Williams checked for me and told me that Mike Pursey was still out there, and on course to complete his 10th Hundred.

It was now just after midnight and we moved on, following the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal for four miles. Yes, it was boring walking, but very easy going, and all we wanted to do was finish.

A quick stop at the penultimate checkpoint, manned by The Irregulars, and we were off on the last but one stretch, of 3.5 miles. At the end of that leg we came to the last checkpoint - via a very steep climb to Folly Tower. Now it's a very nice folly, and the views from it, at 4.45am, were delightful. But it had been a steep, uneven, wet climb getting to it, and I had to wonder why such a difficult ascent had been put in so close to the end. Come on, after 98 miles, there's only one thing we all want to do, isn't there? We really want it to be easy.

Anyway, then came the last two miles to West Monmouth Comprehensive School. There were four of us in our group - myself, Luis, Luke Bradley and Alan Nash - and I don't mind admitting I found the reception we got when we entered the hall, when organiser David Morgan shook our hands, a little emotional.

Kent members Alan Stewart and Mike Pursey were there, and I was so sorry to learn that Mike had been timed out at 84 miles, and had to retire. He and Alan were 24 minutes past the closing time, and they both felt they could have continued. It's a great shame that there couldn't have been a little more flexibility in such difficult conditions, to allow people another 30 minutes to get round the course.

Anyway, I had got round in 43 hours 22 minutes, by far the longest time I have taken on the seven

Hundreds I have completed - but so what? It was certainly a memorable one, and I am very grateful to all the people I walked with for their company, and to all the people at the checkpoints for their support and encouragement.

Now for Lancashire.



The pictures above show walkers on Peter Jull's 4Forgotten Pits Walk, including two of the 4Forgotten Pits

THE 4FORGOTTEN PITS (April 13) by Peter Jull

Early arrivers at Lydden church resisted the inveiglements of the local vicar to divert via nearby Temple Ewell to witness the Palm Sunday procession due that morning. So at the appointed time it was a party of seven plus Graham's dog Fen that set off to start with the steady then steep climb out of the valley rewarded by a breath-catching pause to look back at the grand view back across the upper Dour valley but then to be temporarily thwarted by an excessively stiff gate catch. Judicious application of some weight to the appropriate spot freed the opening into the next field which convinced the resident large flock of sheep that we must be concealing some turnips about our persons. Their attempt at swarming us was too hesitant and we escaped in time to saunter safely across the A2 thorough a long break in traffic and away again.

The next field crossing was aided by the clear reinstatement of the path the alignment of which would otherwise have been dubious and disconcerting with the destination gap in the far hedge well disguised even only 5 yards out until Fen in the lead disappeared through it. This approach to Shepherds Well has been little frequented by the LDWA while the route out was the frequently recurrent North Downs Way but this time without the frisky horse that three weeks earlier had flicked a kick coming scarily close to Graham's head. Crossing the East Kent Light Railway prompted a discussion often returned to as we progressed about which routes it had taken to reach the pits we were to walk past. The NDW was left

but we were still reversing a route by which Richard had led us late last year. A pause in a shady field corner to regather those who had fallen behind for the purposes of expelling liquid became an opportunity to take on liquid and indulge Fen in her favourite game of stick chasing of which she never tired even though her entreating posing was mostly ignored all day.

Richard's route was abandoned on entry to Fredville Park by diverging from the main track to exit opposite the path leading to Nonington school. Then another regathering and refreshment halt in its porch opportunistically a brief internal examination of the church by those interested. Leaving the village behind, we passed the only other walkers encountered all day, a Bruderhof family - clearly, by their dress and accented greeting, Americans from the nearby community residence. Goodnestone was purposely avoided in pursuance of diversity by searching out an unreconnoitered track round the back of the Park Gardens. It led past a field in which a farmer's cultivating tractor had attracted so many seagulls that distantly visible Ramsgate must surely have been denuded of its entire population.

Turning towards Wingham turned out to be the Four Pits route along which the footprints of those who survived this far in February's super soggy manifestation of it were now rocky hard mud indentations. Passing stables, two inquisitive horses had to be coaxed away from the gate so we could continue through their fields. Approaching Wingham, the Four Pits route was abandoned by turning right so we could take up the Millennium 100 route past at last the first of our 4gotten pits. Dwarfed by the grain silos of the animal feed merchant currently in occupation and largely hidden by screening hedges here was the least that would be seen of our targets.

Next stop was lunch at the recently reopened Black Pig in Staple which was also being patronised by an early member of Pink Floyd now turned local artist. The gentle sunshine and breeze of the morning was becoming more scorchio on the road to nearby Hamill and destination number two. Definitely dilapidated, its post pit purpose as a brickworks having been abandoned some years ago there was still enough to pose in front of for a photo. The approach to Eastry was by a generally straight and long track (Four Pits again) and departure by a generally straight and even longer minor road. This least interesting part of our day done a deserved drinks break was taken at a conveniently located lump of log.

From here it was down and up on a track then down and up on road and path before turning west across carpets of crunchy beach nuts. Soon it transpired that the long field approach to Eythorne had featured on the White Cliffs Ramblers' 25th anniversary walk the week before, but then it was into Waldershare Park by a path none of those participating had experienced before. A pause to admire the view along the feature avenue of trees turned into a last drinks stop then it was away from the big house by reversing the White Cliffs Challenge route to be.

By consensual view the most imposing remnant of mining heritage was soon found at Guilford Colliery where the main building has been converted into high class housing and renamed The Winding House, demanding another posing pause for photos. Our last animal encounter was with some Sussex cows with calves at foot who took an intimidating interest in Fen, but some gentle shooing safely revealed access to the exit gate. The oblique approach to the return crossing of the A2 was across cultivated fields without the slightest visual clue to direction but achieved without deviation. A dangerless ambled passage led into our only margarine field of the day, despite the countryside views having been dotted with blocks of bright yellow. At the far side it was the final turn for home and as promised the best was left until last as spectacular valley views opened out and then our final 4gotten pit and the church just beyond could be seen in sinking sunshine reduced to gentleness again. While stickless Fen chased rabbits instead, we struggled with some barbed wire then posed in front of Stonehall to complete the photographic set before the final gentle road descent to the end.

THE CINQUE PORTS CHALLENGE (May 2-3) by Graham Smith

THIS was the third successive year I had put my Cinque Ports Challenge on Kent Group's social walks

programme. The walk links the Cinque Ports of Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, New Romney and Hastings, and visits the Ancient Towns of Winchelsea and Rye and the Limbs of Deal, Folkestone and Lydd. It's 100 kilometres (or thereabouts) and for the past two years I started it from Sandwich at 9am, so we walked to Hastings, finishing some time the following morning.

This year I decided to start it at 9pm, from Hastings. The reason was because I have done a couple of 100k challenge walks in Belgium, and these start at 9pm. The main benefit of starting a very long walk at 9pm is that A) you are walking straight into the night, rather than walking into the night later on, and B) you go home afterwards to recover, and then have the whole of the following day to do ... well, whatever you do on a non-walking/non-working day.

I certainly wasn't expecting many people to turn up at Hastings station at 9pm on Friday May 2, and not many did. When I arrived Michael Headley was there, plus Richard Allison, and Jane Dicker turned up later. Keith Warman had indicated he wanted to come, but he contacted me beforehand to say that owing to a minor injury, and with the Valleys 100 coming up, he would have to pull out. I was also contacted by Faith Allen, who expressed an interest, but Faith does not drive and she pulled out because of transport difficulties.

So at 9pm we four (who did become five - of which more later) set off along Hastings seafront into the clear night. And we did have a very nice night, going into Hastings Country Park and then following Barley Lane and paths to the old lighthouse at Fairlight. I was very grateful to Jane here, as Jane lives in Hastings so this is very much her patch, which was a very handy for night navigation.

We then dropped down to Fairlight Cove and reached Cliff End (where I had my first problem - the batteries on my torch were dying, and had to be replaced, so it was pretty silly of me not to check them before a 100k walk, wasn't it?). Here we picked up the Royal Military Canal which we followed for a couple of miles before turning off to reach Winchelsea. It was now just past midnight, and as there was very little traffic around, we took the A259 for Rye, where we had a stop. We then went round the town and took the cycle track for Camber - when we four became five. Richard Frost joined us. Nothing ever surprises me about Richard, and he had decided to catch a train to Rye. So we followed the cycle path and the seafront, and then took the cycle path again to Lydd, where we had another stop.

After that we took the road before taking a path across fields to New Romney. It was just starting to get light by now, and when we got to New Romney it was proper daylight. To be honest, the whole stretch of the walk from Rye to New Romney is not that interesting, so it was good to get it done in the dark. Anyway, we then took a road to Littlestone and followed the sea wall to Dymchurch. The night without sleep was then catching up on us (it certainly was with me) and we had another stop, all of us shutting our eyes for a little while. As we pressed on to Hythe, we were getting a bit strung out, with Jane and Richard F some way behind. My plan had been to have breakfast in Folkestone, but in Hythe we found the Waitrose store, which has a café selling bacon or sausage sandwiches - so Michael, Richard A and myself had our breakfast stop there. Jane had indicated she was going to stop there as well, but we waited and didn't see her. It later transpired that she had actually got there before us (she took a different route while we were waiting by the canal in Hythe), saw a bus going back Hastings and took it (which had always been her plan). And Richard F? Well, Richard had found a bench by the Hythe rifle ranges and slept for half an hour. He then walked on through Hythe to Folkestone, couldn't find us - and got a bus back to his home in Deal (I found this out later).

So then we were three. We pressed on along the Royal Military Canal to Seabrook, then took the seafront to Sandgate and Folkestone. Then it was up onto the cliffs (which, of course, we know so well from our White Cliffs Challenge) with fabulous clear views across the Channel. We went through the Capel Battery site (subject of a successful court case, backed by The Ramblers, two years ago requiring the site's rogue owner to remove obstructions he had unlawfully placed across the rights of way access points) and had another stop at the cliff top café. Then we followed the cliff paths to Dover and walked along the seafront before going up to the Langdon Cliffs Visitor Centre, and another stop.

So we followed the cliffs to St Margaret's, and another quick stop, and dropped down at Kingsdown to go past Walmer and along Deal seafront. We then followed the seafront to the Sandwich Bay Estate, from where we took roads for the last couple of miles to Sandwich, getting there at 5.30pm.

We had certainly had excellent conditions, and it had been a very good training walk for the Hundred. Would I start it at 9pm again? To be honest, I had had a pretty busy week at work, which caught up with me a bit just after it got light, when I found I was very tired. So for personal reasons, right now I probably wouldn't start it at 9pm again. And - let's face it - 9am is a more civilised time anyway. But is there a civilised way to do a 100k walk? I'm really not sure there is.



The pictures above show Peter Jull's Martello Rabbits walk

MARTELLO RABBITS (May 11) by Peter Jull

Six set off with instructions to avert their eyes from the right to avoid spoiling the end objective and instead looking left revealed a bonus Martello hidden by surrounding residences from most directions, as well as number 1 prominent above. A pause to take in the view of The Warren from the west that inspired the walk then down the path leading to the sea. Arriving at the shore revealed the effect the stiff breeze was having on the tide and some unplanned jeopardy as waves washed against the seawall then 15ft overhead but not quite wetting walkers. The climb up to Capel, even with zigzags, was steeper and stiffer than any expected on Welsh wanders due a fortnight later and led out of The Warren with no rabbits seen.

The route inland led to a calmer climate and leveller landscape before down and out again in the upper Alkham Valley. From here Mike Headley shortcutted back to other duties, leaving the rest up and down and round past Swingfield but those behind missed sight of rabbits running at our approach. The longer, lower, less frequented route round Reinden Wood revealed the bluebells season was fading. Crossing

the last grass before lunch at the inimitable Cat & Custard Pot at Paddlesworth, a proper wabbit watch finally remedied refund requests for rabbits missed.

Wind whistling through the wires as we crested the North Downs scarp returned us to the coastal climate and recognition of NDW bits of the Millennium 100 route. Quickly diverting directly down to Peene and round the back of Newington, the route rejoined the 100 one up to Dibgate Camp. Down again and up the last long climb to Shorncliffe cemetery, it was on to Martello country. Three a house, four in the woods disguised by ivy with five nearby fenced off and all to the sound of the sea surging on the shingle far below.

Down to sea level again and past Sandgate Castle, built for fulfilling the same purpose as Martellos but 250 years earlier. Into Folkestone's tourist zone, pastel painted beach huts, the play equipped park, the zigzag path with manufactured grottoes easy enough for bathchairs up to the Leas. Old Folkestone's Bayle and steps down to the harbourside pausing at the large map of an unknown but truly long distance walker's exploits across Europe over four decades. Timorous avoidance of fountain surprises still gets under the railway arches and to the back of the sands deserted by the now low and quiet distant tide. Lastly up to Martello 6 ahead, which no one really noticed before at the start and finish just beyond.



Pictures show Graham, Fen and Mike on the summit of Beinn Eibhinn, Graham's 200th Munro; Fen swimming in a lochan; Fen, Mike and the tents at the Roy Bridge camp site; and Fen and Mike on the summit of Carn Liath.

200 MUNROS - AND COUNTING (June 14-26) by Graham Smith

THIS year Mike Pursey and myself were accompanied by border collie Fen on our Scotland trip (Fen is actually my wife Sarah's dog - who does heelwork to music with Sarah, and whose exploits and

successes I have recounted to Kent LDWA members on numerous social walks). For reasons I don't have time or space to go into, it made lots of practical sense for Fen to come to Scotland this year - but what I can say is that she definitely prefers hillwork to heelwork.

Mike arranged the itinerary, which this year was in the Dalwhinnie area, where we planned to go up several Munros. I always like to start our Scotland trips with a hill in the Southern Uplands, and this year we did Criffel (1867 feet), which is just off the Solway Firth. We drove up on the Saturday, found a nice camp site at Anan, visited a pub, and were up in the morning to drive to Criffel. The climb was straightforward, albeit a little boggy, with nice views from the summit. We then decided to go to Criffel's sub top of Knockendock - but then made a navigational error. Instead of free-ranging to the main path we had come up on, we followed an obvious track which kept turning away from our starting point, with the result that we ended up a good 2.5 miles from where we should have. Mike and I have now been going to Scotland for 24 years, we have done about 450 Munros between us, and we should have known better. I didn't fancy walking 2.5 miles on a B road with a dog, so I left Fen with Mike and moved at challenge pace (4mph) on the road to get the car. Lesson learned.

We then drove (M74, M8 through Glasgow and then the A82) up to Roy Bridge (about 15 miles east of Fort William), where we were basing ourselves for the next part of our trip. We pitched our tents at the excellent Roy Bridge camp site, went to the pub and got ready for our first big walk of the trip the following day - the 3038 foot Geal Charn (pronounced gyal kaarn), which would be my 199th Munro and Fen's first. It's a fairly remote hill, and involved a drive of 30 miles-plus. We had a pretty lengthy walk in, before quite a boggy climb through heather to the fairly flat summit. The weather was good, and although Geal Charn isn't the most memorable Munro I've done, it made a good start to the trip.

The next day we were tackling Beinn Eibhinn (pronounced ayveen), 3615 feet, and Aonach Beag (pronounced oenach byek), 3661 feet. This involved getting the train from Roy Bridge to Corrour Halt - one of the most remote and beautiful railway stations in Britain, and walk along the entire length of Loch Ossian. After this we followed a burnside path before heading up through heather and bog to get onto the summit ridge. It was another fairly flat summit, where we were rewarded with sunshine and spectacular views for my 200th Munro. A nice ridge and a fairly sharp drop led to Aonach Beag, and we had to re-ascend Beinn Eibhinn to return. The temperature was going up as the afternoon wore on, and reached 24C degrees. We were all hot, and Fen was able to cool down by swimming in just about every burn and pool she found. Mike and I didn't have a swim, but we did have some cold beers, bought in the Corrour Station House Restaurant.

The next day Mike did another Munro, Beinn a'Chlachair (pronounced a'claachar), which is 3566 feet. I had walked that hill before, so instead I got the train to Corrour Halt again and went over Leum Uilleim (pronounced lie-am oolyam, and 2982 feet), a Corbett (that's a Scottish hill of between 2,500 and 2,999 feet) which is quite close to the station. It's an excellent hill, offering fabulous views, with a fine ridge walk after the summit. To get the train back to Roy Bridge, I had to move quickly in that sun (which was fine for Fen but I found it a bit harder). I got back to the station in under three hours, and would really have liked another hour to enjoy the summit.

Then came the best walk of the trip - Stob Poite Coire Ardair (3458 feet and pronounced stop potya kor aardar) and Carn Liath (3301 feet and pronounced kaarn leea). This is in the Creag Meagaidh nature reserve and we had a steady climb on a good path to the first Munro, followed by a fabulous ridge to the next one. The return was by another excellent path, passing a lochan which Fen couldn't resist swimming in.

On the Friday we returned to Corrour Halt for Sgor Gaibre (3133 feet and pronounced skor gyra) and Carn Dearg (3087 feet and pronounced kaarn jerrack). This involved walking along Loch Ossian again before striking up across boggy ground for the first summit, then another fine ridge to the next summit. We then descended to pick up a good path back to Corrour.

The following day, we had a short drive from Roy Bridge for Stob Coire Sgriodain (3213 feet and

pronounced stop kora sgrfeedan) and Chno Dearg (3432 feet and pronounced know jerrack). This involved another fairly boggy climb before a short, sharp climb to the ridge which we followed to the first summit, and then a bumpy, up-and-down (but straightforward) pull to Chno Dearg, followed by a bit of free-ranging to a good path which led us back to the starting point.

On the Sunday we drove to our second base, Newtonmore (where lives Scottish writer/broadcaster, Munroist - he's done them all at least twice - and Ramblers stalwart Cameron McNeish). We found a very nice camp site and then set off down the A9 for Meall Chuaich (3120 feet and pronounced myowl chooeech). We followed a private road to the bottom of the hill, and were rewarded with a fine path (and hardly any bog) to the summit.

The following day we completed four Munros - Sgairneach Mhor (3251 feet and pronounced skaarnyatch vore), Beinn Udlamain (3317 feet and pronounced byn ootlaman), A'Mharconaich (3199 feet and pronounced a varkaneech) and another Geal Charn (3008 feet). We had planned to just climb the first three of these, but the paths were so good (firm, clear and very little bog), the weather was ideal, and all three of us (particularly Fen) were feeling fit and strong. On the third summit I suggested to Mike that we should throw in Geal Charn as well, and he didn't need asking twice. We were rewarded with fantastic views across the long, thin Loch Ericht. It was the first time in a few years that Mike and I had walked four Munros in a day, and it felt like rolling back the years.

Then the last full day was A' Bhuideanach Bheag (3017 feet and pronounced a voonach vek) and Carn na Caim (3087 feet and pronounced caarn a kym). This involved a stiff climb to the huge, flat, featureless summit plateau of A' Bhuideanach Bheag (where I initially missed the trig. point). We then had a fairly long, easy walk, on a good path, to the second summit.

When we started the drive south, Fen and myself did what I call an Osh (Other Scottish Hill) - another A' Bhuideanach, this one being 2985 feet (which for some reason is not classified as a Corbett), while Mike had a stroll to Dalwhinnie.

So it was a great 11 days in Scotland, in which Mike did 17 Munros and Fen and I did 16. I'm now on 210 and Mike is well into the 230s.

Oh, and we also visited one or two pubs, downed some Scottish beer and malt whisky, and saw some of the World Cup on TV (and, believe, me, it wasn't too easy watching England go out of the World Cup in the company of a pub full of Scots).

FRENCH CHALLENGE

The picture (right) was taken on the Summer French Challenge on July 5. One of the traditions of the walk is that we always have a photo taken in that bus stop, which is near the village of Escalles. The tradition is that the photo should have it in it people who have not been on our French walk before, and the picture above shows this year's Summer French Challenge first timers, Janet Field from Canterbury and Sukai N'Dure from Ashford.



The walk, as people who have done it know, is 23 miles, and by general consent it is one of the highlights of our social walks calendar. It follows a very pleasant route - going out to the excellent viewpoint of Mont de Couple, then visiting Wissant before some beach-bashing and then the clifftop path to another fine viewpoint, Cap Blanc Nez, which offers some tremendous views across the Channel to the White Cliffs of Dover, before taking tracks back to the hypermarket of Auchan at Coquelles, where we usually leave the cars.

Next year we plan to extend the walk by taking in Cap Griz Nez, a very prominent headland (which is actually where Channel swimmers go to or from). This will make it about 30 miles, and it should be a

better walk than it already is. This longer walk will be led by Graham Smith, with Joy Davies leading the 23-miler. The date earmarked is Saturday July 18 - so put that date in your diaries.

And don't forget our shorter (14 miles) French walk, the Christmas Cruise Around Calais, which is on Saturday December 13 - see social walks programme above.

COMEDY CORNER by Neal O'Rourke

THIS story is set in a term of President WC Bush.

The scene is on aircraft which is going to crash with five passengers and four parachutes.

The first passenger stepped forward and said "I am Ronaldo, a famous footballer so I should survive", grabbed a parachute and jumped out.

The next passenger stepped forward and said "I am the President of the most powerful nation in the world and probably the smartest, so I should survive" grabbed a parachute and jumped.

The next passenger stepped forward and said "I am Hillary Clinton and could be the the next President of the United States, so I should survive", grabbed a parachute and jumped out,

The remaining passengers were an elderly Bishop and a schoolboy.

The Bishop said to the schoolboy "Well I think that you should take the last parachute as I am at the end of my life, where you have the rest of your life to enjoy."

The schoolboy said to the Bishop "There are enough parachutes as the smartest President that ever was took my school satchel."

A CHAP boarded an aircraft on holiday to find that his seat was next to a young woman reading a book. As he sat down he said to the young woman "I am to understand that it is a good idea to have a conversation with a fellow passenger while in flight to help pass the time."

He then said: "Can we first talk about nuclear energy?"

At this the woman closed her book, turned her head and said "Could I please ask you a question?"

The chap said "Well of course."

She said then said to him: "If you have a cow, a deer and a horse, they all eat grass."

"Well yes" the chap replied.

She then said to him "A cow produces a pat, a deer produces pellets and a horse produces a grassy mixture." "Why is that?"

The chap replied "Well I don't know."

She then said to him "Well if you don't know s***, how the heck can we talk about nuclear energy?"

A CHAP went to Spain for a holiday.

Shortly after arriving, he made his way to a restaurant. As he sat down a waiter came to his table and asked what he would like to eat.

The chap replied that he had never been to Spain before and knew nothing about Spanish food.

The waiter said to the customer that their restaurant had a specialty which was the bull's testicles.

The customer said he would give them a try.

The waiter soon brought the meal to him. He returned later and asked him what he thought of the meal.

The chap replied that he enjoyed it very much.

He returned there each night and had the same meal.

On his last night he returned to the restaurant, the waiter came to his table and asked what he would like to eat.

The chap replied the "The usual please." As before, the waiter brought his meal. He came back later asked the customer what he thought of the meal.

The chap replied that he enjoyed the meal as before but they were smaller this time.

The waiter replied: "This time the bull he WIN!"

CROSSWORD

Sadly, Shirley Higgins has decided that she can no longer compile the crossword for Kent Group's newsletter. The crossword has been a feature of the newsletter for several years, and we are very grateful to Shirley for studiously and efficiently compiling it for so long.

**Pictures taken at the 40th Anniversary Barbecue on 1st June 2014
by Shirlie Gill and Eric Rolfe**



Keith Warman, Eileen and Laurie Lowe



Queueing at the barbecue



West Hill Morris entertain



Some of those in attendance



**Jackie Puttock, Mary Hatcher,
Kevin Puttock and Paul Hatcher**



Another view of attendees

The Sevenoaks Circular 27th April 2014

Photographs by Bryan Clarke



Checkpoint 1 - Dryhill Park

Back row: Graham Smith, Mike Pursey, Wendy Thurrell
Front: Neal O'Rourke, Jan O'Rourke



Checkpoint 2 - Knockholt Village Hall

Mike Attewell, Maria Davis, David Sheldrake,
Ann Waghorn, Ivan Waghorn



Checkpoint 3 - St Andrew's Church Hall
Bob Field, Bill Gillibrand, Roger Dean



Checkpoint 4 - Scout Hut, Ide Hill

Nick Dockree, Martin Brice, Alan Stewart



Checkpoint 5 - Rose & Crown car park, Dunton Green
Christophe Delogne, Stephanie LeMen



Headquarters at the Rugby Club, Sevenoaks

Alan Stewart, Neil Higham, Michael Headley, Pauline Barnett