

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION — Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER

Ernie Bishop: 1927-2016 – obituary and tributes inside



Ernie Bishop with two other Kent chairmen Brian Buttifant (centre) and Peter Barnett (right) with a young Don Newman (left)

KENT GROUP NEEDS YOU: PLEASE COMPLETE OUR MEMBER'S SURVEY AND YOU MAY WIN A £25 GO OUTDOORS VOUCHER - INSIDE

Number 99



April 2016

www.ldwa.org.uk/kent

Photos from the Sevenoaks Circular Walks 2016
by Bryan Clarke



KENT GROUP SOCIAL WALKS APRIL to AUGUST 2016

Sun Apr 3 Questions from Kent – Which (which way is witch?) 23ml. Start 09.00 at Hucking Country Park c.p. GR TQ847581 Maps: Exp 137,148. Pub lunch near Charing. **L:** Peter Jull.

Sun Apr 17 Fuller's Follies c20ml. Meet 08.30 at Etchingham rlwy stn GR TQ442273 Map: Exp 136 - park in west side c.p. (poss £1 charge). Pub stop (poss) at The Wheel, Burwash – food available. **L:** Neal O'Rourke.

Sun Apr 24 Questions from Kent – What (what is what?) 21.5ml. Start 09.00 at Cobtree Manor Park GR TQ743587 Map: Exp 148. Pub lunch at Otham. **L:** Peter Jull

Sat Apr 30 Cinque Ports 100 Social 1: Legs 1/2 Hastings to Rye. c16mls. Meet 08.20 latest at Rye rlwy stn (Parking £1.50) GR TQ919205 Maps: Exp 124,125. Catch 08.33 bus to Fairlight then walk to Hastings (c3ml) to start the event route. Pub lunch stop at Cliff End. Provisional (*not* final) route description for the event is available on request for those attending these social walks only, from leader at: m.pursey@sky.com. **L:** Mike Pursey

Sun May 8 Cinque Ports 100 Social 2: Legs 3/4/5 Rye to Appledore. c19mls. Meet 09.00 in c.p. (free) behind Appledore Village Hall GR TQ956297 Map: Exp 125. Arrange cars to drive to start of walk in Rye. Lunch stop at Tenterden. Provisional (*not* final) route description for the event is available on request for those attending these social walks only, from leader at: m.pursey@sky.com. **L:** Mike Pursey

Sun May 15 Courses for Horses 23ml. Meet 09.40 at Wye rlwy stn (08.10 from Charing Cross; 08.37 from St. Pancras) GR TR048469 Map: Exp 137. One walk, three horserace courses. Pub lunch stop. Joint walk with LDWA London. **L:** Peter Jull

Sun May 22 Half Moon 24 24ml. Start 09.30 at Sandown Castle, North Deal GR TR375542 Map: Exp 150, park at roadside adjacent. Lunch stop at Ramsgate Harbour. **L:** Richard Frost

Sat Jun 4 Elham Valley Way (part of the Elham Walking Festival). 22ml. Meet 08.30 outside Hythe Public Library in Oaklands, Stade Street, GR TR161345 Map: Exp 138. Pub Lunch stop. **C:** Graham Smith

Sun Jun 26 Andredsweald Marshals' Walk For details contact Neil Higham

Sat Jul 2 Summer French Challenge c23 ml. Meet at 05.50 latest at Castle Hill, Dover GR TR323415 to take the 06.40 P&O Ferries sailing from Dover to Calais, then a short drive to Coquelles for a circular walk visiting the viewpoints of Mont de Couple and Cap Blanc Nez, having a lunch stop at Wissant and hopefully finishing with some shopping at the Auchan hypermarket and a meal. If interested, please contact leader Graham Smith **by June 6 at the latest**. Don't forget your passport! **C:** Graham Smith

Sun Jul 10 Andredsweald Main Event See Events Diary

Sun Jul 17 Fish & Chips – Yet Another Helping c21ml. Meet 08.00 in Jefferstone Lane, St. Mary's Bay GR TR090275 Map: Exp 125. Park on roadside nr Village Hall. A circuit on Romney Marsh taking in Dungeness RSPB Reserve. Pub stop (fish & chips optional). **L:** Mike Pursey.

Sun Jul 24 Cinque Ports 100 Social 3: Leg 6 Appledore to Lydd & return. c19mls. Meet 09.00 in c.p. (free) behind Appledore Village Hall GR TQ956297 Map: Exp 125. Lunch stop at Lydd. Provisional (*not* final) route description for the event is available on request for those attending these social walks only, from leader **L:** Mike Pursey

Sun Jul 31 Cream Tea Walk c20ml. Meet 09.00 at Boughton Malherbe church GR TQ882495 Map: Exp 137 - park in field opp. Pub stop (poss). Cream teas at church at finish. **L:** Neal O'Rourke

Sun Aug 7 White Cliffs Challenge Marshals' Walk For details contact Mike Pursey

Sat Aug 13 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

Sun Aug 20 Cinque Ports 100 Social 4: Legs 7/8/9 Lydd to Hythe. c19ml. Meet by Town Hall in Lydd High Street GR TR042209 Maps: Exp 125,138. Parking on local roads. Lunch stop at Dymchurch. After the walk return to main rd (half a mile) to catch bus back to Lydd. Buses at Hythe 16.20 or 17.20. Provisional (*not* final) route description for the event is available on request for those attending these social walks only, from leader at: m.pursey@sky.com. **L:** Mike Pursey

Thu Aug 25 Fish & Chip Walk (part of White Cliffs Walking Festival) c10ml. Meet 17.30 at Walmer rlwy stn GR TR363503 Map: Exp 138. Walk to Dover via the White Cliffs, fish & chips in Dover and return by train or bus. **L:** Graham Smith.

Sun Aug 28 White Cliffs Challenge Main Event See Events Diary

Tue Aug 30 Three Pits Walk (part of White Cliffs Walking Festival) 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 lunch stop. **L:** Graham Smith

KENT GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman - Brian Buttifant
Secretary/newsletter editor - Graham Smith
Treasurer - Neil Higham
Walks secretary - Peter Jull -
Equipment – Sarah Turner
Membership secretary - Roger Dean,
Webmaster - Michael Headley -
Members Phil Butler -
Joy Davies -
Nick Dockree
Stephanie le Men -
Mike Pursey

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.



Ernest Lee Bishop: 19th May 1927 – 6th March 2016

Photo taken by Ken Falconer at the 1990 AGM

OUR ERNIE – A TRUE KENT LDWA LEGEND

It is with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Ernie Bishop, LDWA legend and former national and Kent chairman. Ernie, who was 88 and would have been 89 in May, died on March 6 after a long illness. Ernie served on the national committee for just over 12 years, starting in 1978 with an unassigned role, followed by being membership secretary between 1980-1988 and then as chairman between 1988-1991. He was also the first chairman of Kent Group, having joined the LDWA in 1976 (no 1691).

Several Kent Group members, led by current chairman Brian Buttifant, attended Ernie's funeral, held on March 16, in the Cemetery Chapel at Tunbridge Wells Crematorium.

Ernie was one of the finest walkers we have ever had in Kent Group. He started 20 Hundreds and finished 11, completing his first in 1976 and his last in 2000, and was awarded his 10 Hundreds badge in 1989. His fastest completion was 23 hours 30 minutes on the 1981 Cumbrian Hundred. He was one of just six people who, having completed 100 miles, chose to go out again and do the additional 25 mile loop. He did the 125 miles in 30.52.

On the 1982 Pilgrims' Hundred, he completed the 140 mile route. He did 100 miles in 28:44 and 140 miles in 42:51. On the 1983 Snowdonia Hundred, there was an 'ordinary' route and a high-level 'summits' route (the latter having various

options along the way to give the same total distance but with much more ascent and descent). Ernie did the marshals' walk and was the only person to complete the 'summits' route. On the main event, the weather was so foul that the organisers abandoned the 'summits' option at the start, so all entrants did the 'ordinary' route. Ernie therefore had a unique record in this event. On the 1982 Pilgrims Hundred, Ernie was the main organiser and his sketch maps graced the route description.

He was on the organising committee for the 1992 Invicta and 2000

Millennium Hundreds, both hosted by Kent Group.

He instigated the Hundred Database using record cards in the days before computers. In 1986, he handed over to George Foot, who set up the current computerised system.

Ernie organised the Andredsweald Circuit from Groombridge (and later Forest Row) from 1978 to 1990. He then organised the annual High Weald challenge walks from the mid 1990s until Neal and Jan O'Rourke took over in 2006.

Ernie was born in Wimbledon, his family later moving to Ewell, near Epsom in Surrey, and later Margate. He did two years National Service, and after that trained to be a chef, but later switched to the insurance industry, where he remained for the rest of his working life, rising to become CEO of British Reserve Insurance, based in Tunbridge Wells.

He met Celia, who lived in Westgate-on-Sea, while he was living in Margate, and the couple were married for 64 years. They lived in Flimwell, just over the county border in Sussex, for 30 years, before that living in Tunbridge Wells for 15 years.

National chairwoman Gail Elrick paid tribute to Ernie at the LDWA AGM, held at Buxton on March 13. She said: "Ernie was an LDWA stalwart. He was a great walker and did lots of different jobs for the organisation. He was one of the old guard and it is very sad that members of the old guard are going."

Kent Group chairman Brian Buttifant also paid tribute to Ernie at the start of the Sevenoaks Circular on March 20. Kent Group has made a £100 donation to the Alzheimer's Society in Ernie's memory.

Ernie is survived by Celia, son Peter, daughter Sally and the couple's five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Our thoughts go out to them at this time.



High Peak





**The above photographs are from Ernie's walk (with Peter Barnett)
across France to the Mediterranean**

WALKING WITH ERNIE by Andrew Melling

I will speak of Ernie the walker, of how walking made us friends, and of some of his walking achievements.

It was not Ernie, but Peter Rickards and Brian Buttifant I first remember meeting on entering the Sevenoaks Circular in 1976, having newly moved south of the River.

Peter encouraged me to join the LDWA Kent Group and I found myself one of a (then) small group regularly meeting for social walks. We enjoyed a pre-Christmas meeting at the Bull in Otford which became our AGM although non-members (like my wife) were also there. We had no formal structure for a while but then we needed a chairman and Ernie was chosen. I soon found him to be a good chairman, with ideas for social walks and bigger projects.

I brought years of experience of overnight challenge walks in Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Shropshire and thought I should be a match for any walker, but I could not match the strength and stamina of Ernie in particular. You would not have known that from our social walks because Ernie was a 'clubbable' walker and we always kept together.

The friendship was not just about walking: although not a walker, my wife enjoyed the company of Ernie and Celia, and of Peter and Moira, and Brian and Brenda.

Now for some random memories:

In the days before all day opening, the walks Ernie led seemed to pass plenty of pubs but none at lunchtime.

In 1979, Ernie proposed walking the Kent section of the North Downs Way in two long winter stretches. In January the plan was for some of us to meet at Harrietsham, leave our cars and get to Dover by train. Heavy snowfall stopped the trains so Ernie drove us to Ashford from where trains to Dover were running. Approaching Harrietsham the following afternoon I was flagging so, with Ernie's car keys in my pocket, I hitched back to Ashford to collect his car and meet them all at the station. In February we did much the same, walking from Harrietsham to the county boundary and that started a tradition of winter night hikes.

A new walk had been proposed from Gravesend to Eastbourne to be called the Wealdway. In 1978 we walked the proposed route in three sections, led by Ernie. The route was finalised and opened at a ceremony at Camp Hill in September 1981. Some of Kent Group walked there from Gravesend and a few of us stayed at Ernie's overnight for a pre-dawn start from Eastbourne. Ernie led the way, to have a badger cross the path in front of him.

At this time we were working on Ernie's big project – the Pilgrims 100 – a 100 miles plus event. We had a weekend in Winchester YH to walk out a part of the route while Ernie spoke his route description into a pocket dictating machine.

After some time on the LDWA national committee, Ernie became national chairman. He and Celia had a party on the weekend of a Sevenoaks Circular combined with a meeting of the national committee. Of course the committee members, mostly from the north, had to enter the Circular and grumbled at the mud and the stiles – not the easy walk they had expected. The LDWA ran its first 100 mile challenge event in 1973 and, by 1989, Ernie had completed ten of them. His fastest time was on the 1981 Cumbrian 100. Not content with walking 100 miles in 23:30 hours, he went on to walk another 25 miles, taking just under 31 hours to complete the extended route. (By comparison, the time limits for the 1973 Downsman 100 were: First Class – 36 hours; Standard – 48 hours).

In our own Pilgrims 100 in 1982, we had an extra 40 mile loop. Ernie completed the 100 in 28:44 hours and the full route in less than 43 hours.

The 1983 Snowdonia 100 had an 'ordinary' route and a high-level 'summits' route with the same total distance but much more ascent and descent. Ernie did the marshals' walk and was the only one to complete the 'summits' option. On the main event, the weather was so foul that the organisers abandoned the 'summits' option at the start making Ernie's achievement unique.

On retiring from a career in insurance, Ernie and a friend, Peter Barnett, walked across France from the Channel to the Med, meeting their wives, Celia and Pauline, down there for a more relaxed holiday, camping.

Ernie's energies were applied to organising as well as walking.

He was a main organiser of the 1982 Pilgrims 100 and his sketch maps graced the route description.

He was on the organising committees for the 1992 Invicta and 2000 Millennium 100s.

He instigated the Hundreds Database, using record cards in the days before computers,

In Kent, he organised our Andredsweald Circuit from 1978 to 1990 and our High Weld Walks from about 1994 to 2006.

Another long-standing member of the group has given a picture of Ernie with which I entirely concur. He was a quiet thoughtful gentleman, encouraging of newcomers to long distance walking. He had a steely determination which translated into some amazing athletic performances. He was especially proud of that 1983 Snowdonia 100 completion. He was a good servant to both the Kent Group and the National Committee and we are saddened by his passing.

(This is a tribute made by Andrew – one of Ernie's closest friends in Kent Group – at Ernie's funeral).

NEW FACES ON YOUR COMMITTEE – WELCOME TO PETER AND SARAH

At our AGM, held on January 31, the members of the Kent Group committee were all re-elected. Brian Buttifant was reelected chairman, but he did say this would be his last full year in the role before standing down next year. Graham Smith was re-elected secretary and Neil Higham was re-elected treasurer.

But Mike Pursey has now handed over his duties as social walks secretary to Peter Jull. Mike had done the job very thoroughly for 11 years, and we all owe him a vote of thanks for putting on such a fine and varied programme of social walks over such a long time. Peter is an excellent successor – so please send him the details of your social walks for him to slot into the programme. In fact this year has got off to a very good start in terms of social walks, with some high numbers of walkers turning out – 19 on Peter's Question's From Kent – When (when did we last go this way?) walk on January 24, 17 on Graham's Around the Planet Thanet on February 7 and an almost unprecedented 32 on Peter's Merry in Mereworth on February 21. In fact this is possibly a record turnout for a Kent Group social walk. It was a joint walk with London Group, and it is believed a social walk (also a joint one with London Group) some years ago resulted in 34 walkers. If any Kent member can recall a social walk with greater numbers, please let the newsletter editor know – in fact, please feel free to send over any recollections of such a walk, as he would love to use them in the next edition.

Anyway, Mike is remaining on the committee, along with Phyl Butler, Joy Davies, Nick Dockree, Roger Dean and Michael Headley.

Also joining the committee is Sarah Turner, who has been co-opted as equipment officer – a post we are required to fill owing to the new draft constitution (see separate story in the newsletter). Sarah is going to try and keep a list of all Kent Group equipment, so that we know what we've got and what we need and so that what we've got can be passed on from event to event. So if you've got any Kent Group equipment, no matter how small, please let Sarah know.

Contact details for Sarah, and all Kent Group committee members are above.

NEWS OF KENT CHALLENGE WALKS

Sevenoaks Circular

This year's Sevenoaks Circular took place just before this newsletter went to press, and there are some very nice photos from the event in this newsletter. For the second year, the venue was at West Heath School, just outside Sevenoaks, and the distances were 30, 20 and 15 miles. Roger Dean amended the routes which – by public demand – went through Knole Park.

We had some very nice comments from entrants which started coming in literally with hours of the event, including the following.

'Just to say thanks for a thoroughly enjoyable event yesterday – nice route, great food. Many thanks. Kind regards' – Jim Knight.

'I just wanted to say a massive thank you to everyone who made the event yesterday so enjoyable. The instructions were very clear and easy to understand, all the marshals were lovely and friendly, the aid stations were excellent and even the weather was well-behaved! For my part it was an excellent exercise in time-on-feet for an upcoming 50 mile ultra event. Thank you so much to everyone who made this such a great event. Kindest regards' – Susie Hewer.

News of the 2017 Sevenoaks Circular will appear in the next newsletter. The 2016 Report and Results are on our website.

Sevenoaks Circular Marshals' Times 2016 (where known) - 15 miles: Phyl Butler ?; John Deller ?; **20 miles:** Michael

Headley 6.10; Janet Field 9.30; Cliff Huggett 9.30; Andrew Melling c8.00; **30 miles:** Roger Dean 7.30; Stephanie Le Men 7.30; Jan O'Rourke 8.27; Neal O'Rourke 8.28; Merv Nutburn 8.38; David Thornton 8.59; Sarah Turner 8.59; David Sheldrake 9.18; Keith Warman 9.44; Nick Farrar 10.01; Judy Rickwood 10.01; Robert Wear 10.01; Alan Stewart 10.45; Mike Pursey 10.20; Graham Smith 10.00; Rex Stickland c9.30.

Andredsweald This year's annual Weald challenge walk is the Andredsweald, based at Forest Row and last held in 2012. Organiser Neal Higham is currently working hard on the event, which will have two routes – of 26 and 15 miles – with the event on the second Sunday in July, July 10, with the marshals' walk two weeks previously, on June 26. Anyone wishing to marshal on the event is asked to contact Neil.

White Cliffs Challenge After last year's 52-mile WCC, this year we go back to the shorter version, with routes of 32 and 15 miles. The date is Sunday August 28 – which is again part of the White Cliffs Walking Festival and which has become the annual slot for the event. It will be based at St Margaret's Village Hall, with the marshals' walk on August 7. The route will be the same one we used in 2014. Anyone wishing to marshal on the event is asked to contact Graham Smith.

KSS TRIPLE CHALLENGE This year the Kent Surrey Sussex Triple Challenge of 50-mile challenge walks, taking place in successive years, means the return of the Sussex Stride. As usual Kent Group will be organising a checkpoint, and this will be CP4 - East Dean, where we were when the Sussex Stride was last held in 2013. CP4 will be the dinner stop and will be 28 miles into the route. The event has been set for the weekend of September 24-25, with the marshals' walk set for the weekend of September 10-11. Anyone wishing to marshal at East Dean is asked to contact Graham Smith.

DORSET 100 – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED We are manning a checkpoint on the Dorset 100, taking place between May 28-30. Our CP is at Evershot (49 miles), and as usual, chairman Brian Buttifant is making the arrangements and liaising with the organisers. Anyone willing to help out is asked to contact Brian – his details are above. On next year's North York Moors 100 in 2017, which will be based at Malton, we have agreed to do a checkpoint at Wombledon Hall (17 miles). Brian will be making the arrangements yet again. **STOP PRESS:** The 2019 Hundred will be the Hadrian's 100, being organised by Northumbria Group. Based in Hexham, the route will take in parts of Pennine Way and Hadrian's Wall Path. As usual, Kent Group will be organising a checkpoint.

SURVEY – YOUR GROUP NEEDS YOU On the last two pages of this newsletter – the inside back page and the following page - you will find a survey which we are hoping as many Kent Group members as possible will fill in. The survey is going to be emailed to members, but – for those of you who are old-fashioned (and there are probably still quite a few of you in Kent Group) it can also be filled in on paper. Just fill it in, detach the back sheet of the newsletter, and send it to secretary Graham Smith – or you can scan it and email it to Graham on the email address above. The survey is the idea of Sarah Turner, who has been working with Peter Jull and Michael Headley to produce it. We would just like to get an idea of how people feel about the group, and the questions are self explanatory. When the responses have been sent in, there will be some analysis done and we will try to summarise them in the next newsletter. And, to encourage you to fill in the survey, the names of all members filling it in will be entered into a draw, with the first one drawn winning a £25 Go Outdoors voucher.

CINQUE PORTS 100 Progress is continuing well with the Cinque Ports 100, and national chairwoman Gail Elrick – who is on the event's organising group – and national Hundreds coordinator David Morgan seem happy with what has been achieved so far. But it must be stressed that there is still an awful long way to go. Route coordinator Mike Pursey has finished walking and checking the route, and committing it to a route description. The entire route is now going on our social walks programme as a series of linear walks (see social walks programme above). This will obviously enable Kent members to see the route for themselves and become familiar with it. So please come along on these walks. And well done, Mike, for doing such a thorough job. As previously reported, the event will be based at the Duke of York's Royal Military School, just outside Dover, with walkers being bussed to Sussex Coast College at Hastings, which is the start of the walk. Our chairman and LDWA stalwart Brian Buttifant – who has completed 15 Hundreds – will be leading the walkers on the first few hundred yards from the college to the seafront. HQs at the Dover and Hastings ends of the walk are absolutely first class, and we are very lucky to have found two such

excellent venues. Five members of the organising group visited the Duke of York's Royal Military School in February, and it has been decided that the end of the walk will actually be in the school's extensive dining hall. Showers are in the new sports hall nearby, and we will be able to use the gymnasium for people wishing to sleep before driving home.

Sussex Coast College, which is a modern building, is equally impressive. It has facilities which are absolutely first class. We were planning for the breakfast stop to have been at Brockhill Park Performing Arts College at Saltwood. This would have been excellent, but we were not very impressed with the level of cooperation we received from a certain individual at the school when we visited to inspect the facilities there, and we were certainly not happy at the prospect of dealing with this particular person. So we looked elsewhere, and found Hythe Sports Pavilion, which is managed by Hythe Town Council. The individuals we have dealt with there have been extremely helpful and cooperative, and the facilities at the sports pavilion are just what we want.

Just about all the checkpoints have been booked and visited, and several of these will be either in town halls or town council offices, which have been offered to us for free. Much credit here must go to Neal O'Rourke, who is the organising group's checkpoint coordinator.

As usual with Hundreds, we are trying to keep the route and the checkpoints for the marshals' walk identical. Unfortunately we will not be able to use the Duke of York's Royal Military School, as the school's facilities will be in use for the early May bank holiday weekend. But we have been able to find Burgoyne Heights Community Centre, which has very good facilities and which is near the school. It will require a minor diversion of the route. We have not yet got a venue at the Hastings end for the marshals' walk to start from, but a couple of possibilities have been identified – one by Kent Group member Jane Dicker, who lives in Hastings, and the other by Dave Strachan, a member of Sussex Group who also lives in Hastings. A visit to Hastings is being arranged to inspect both these places, so there should be some news to report in the next newsletter.

But once again, it cannot be stressed enough that the Cinque Ports 100 is a massive project for our group, and it is hoped that all Kent members will be able to help out. And, while the event is two years away, it's not too early for anyone to volunteer his or her services to Graham.

KENT GROUP CONSTITUTION

Members will recall that a draft constitution, as required by the National Executive Committee, appeared with the last newsletter. There was a discussion about the constitution at the AGM in January, with some fairly strong views aired about the criteria for actually being a member of Kent Group. Long-standing member Andrew Melling – who is a former solicitor – was asked to look at our constitution, which he did. There was then a discussion about it at the last committee meeting, held in February. A couple more amendments were made, and it has now been sent to the NEC. There are still one or two very minor points to be cleared up, but we plan to have the definitive Kent Group constitution sent out with the August newsletter.



FAMILY LUNCH – DATE FOR YOUR DIARY (2015 picture above)

In December, for the second year, we went to Chart Hills Golf Club at Biddenden for our annual family lunch. It's an excellent venue, and we are looking at going there again this year. The provisional date has been set for Sunday, December 4 – so put the date in your diaries now. More details – and, of course, the booking form – will appear with the next newsletter.

PLEASE HELP GRAHAM HELP PSA KENT

Some members may recall that in September, our secretary Graham Smith had an operation for prostate cancer. Graham has made a full recovery, and is planning to raise money for PSA (Prostate Cancer Support Association) Kent when he attempts the LDWA Dorset 100 marshals' walk on April 30-May 2.

PSA Kent is dedicated to the support of all those affected by prostate cancer, helping to raise money to purchase equipment to assist health professionals across Kent deliver good prostate care.

We don't usually get involved with sponsored walks at the LDWA, but when Graham had a post operation check-up with the surgeon at Kent and Canterbury Hospital who operated on him, Ben Eddy, the surgeon was interested in Graham's walking. Mr Eddy is involved with PSA Kent and has helped raise several thousand pounds for the charity himself. He asked if Graham would consider raising money for PSA Kent when he takes part in the Dorset 100 marshals' walk, and after what Mr Eddy has done for Graham, it's the least Graham can do in return. Prostate cancer is fairly common among men over 50, and of course Graham is one of a few Kent LDWA members to be affected by it.

Right now Graham is by no means certain he will complete the Hundred, but he is certainly going to try, so if people would like to sponsor him, he is asking them to sponsor him for so much per mile. So for example, if someone sponsored him for 5p per mile and he reaches – say – Evershot (where Kent Group has a checkpoint on the event), the sponsorship figure would be £2.45. If, however, Graham does the entire 100 miles, the figure would be £5. So if anybody would like to sponsor Graham, please email him.

NEW MEMBERS

The following walkers have joined Kent Group since the start of the year: Angie Aldred and Adam Hume, of Guston; Jean Bowers, of Halstead, Essex; Steve and Averil Brice, of Hawkinge; June Edwardes-Evans, of Tonbridge; Nick Farrar, of Folkestone; Janet Field, of Canterbury; Robert Weare, of Folkestone. A warm welcome to them all, and we look forward to seeing and meeting them all on walks.

WHITE CLIFFS WALKING FESTIVAL



The third White Cliffs Walking Festival takes place between August 25-31. Organised annually by the White Cliffs Ramblers, it will include 39 walks of various lengths, including our own White Cliffs Challenge (see article above) on August 28. There will also be two LDWA social walks led by Graham Smith: the annual fish and chip walk on the opening day (or rather evening) of the festival, August 25 – 10 miles starting at Walmer and going to Dover to see the seafront lights, finishing with fish and chips; and Graham's Three Pits walk on Tuesday August 30 – 18 miles visiting the sites of the three Kent coal mines of Betteshanger, Snowdown and Tilmanstone.

There will also be lots of shorter walks, including a Bleriot Walk, taking in places associated with the great aviator; a Western Heights walk; a tour of the Drop Redoubt and Grand Shaft; a walk going over Dover's hills and valleys; and a Fort Burgoyne tour and walk.

The whole programme will appear in a brochure now being produced and on the festival website: www.whitecliffswalkingfestival.org.uk

DOVER WELCOMES WALKERS – OFFICIALLY

Dover is in the process of joining Deal as a Walkers Are Welcome town. WAW towns are required to demonstrate that walkers are welcome through various criteria, including support from local people, the local authority and hotels, pubs and guest houses; maintaining rights of way; and promoting use of public transport. The White Cliffs Walking Festival, which this year will be opened on Dover seafront, is a key part of Dover's application to join the nationwide network of Walkers Are Welcome towns. The application is due to be approved as this newsletter went to press.

Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke will raise the problem of 4X4 vehicles churning up rights of way with Environment Secretary Elizabeth Truss.

This follows the MP donning his Wellington boots and visiting a right of way in the Dover area with members of the White Cliffs Ramblers, the south Kent branch of The Ramblers – to which some Kent LDWA members belong - to see the damage done by off road vehicles.

This right of way, between Guston and Pineham, is a BOAT (Byway Open To All Traffic) and is part of the North Downs Way, the only National Trail in Kent. It is also on the route of our Cinque Ports 100 in 2018. The damage has caused deep ruts which fill with water during heavy rain, making it very difficult for walkers to use. Earlier this year the county council closed the byway to allow it to properly dry out. It was re-opened last week, but there are still

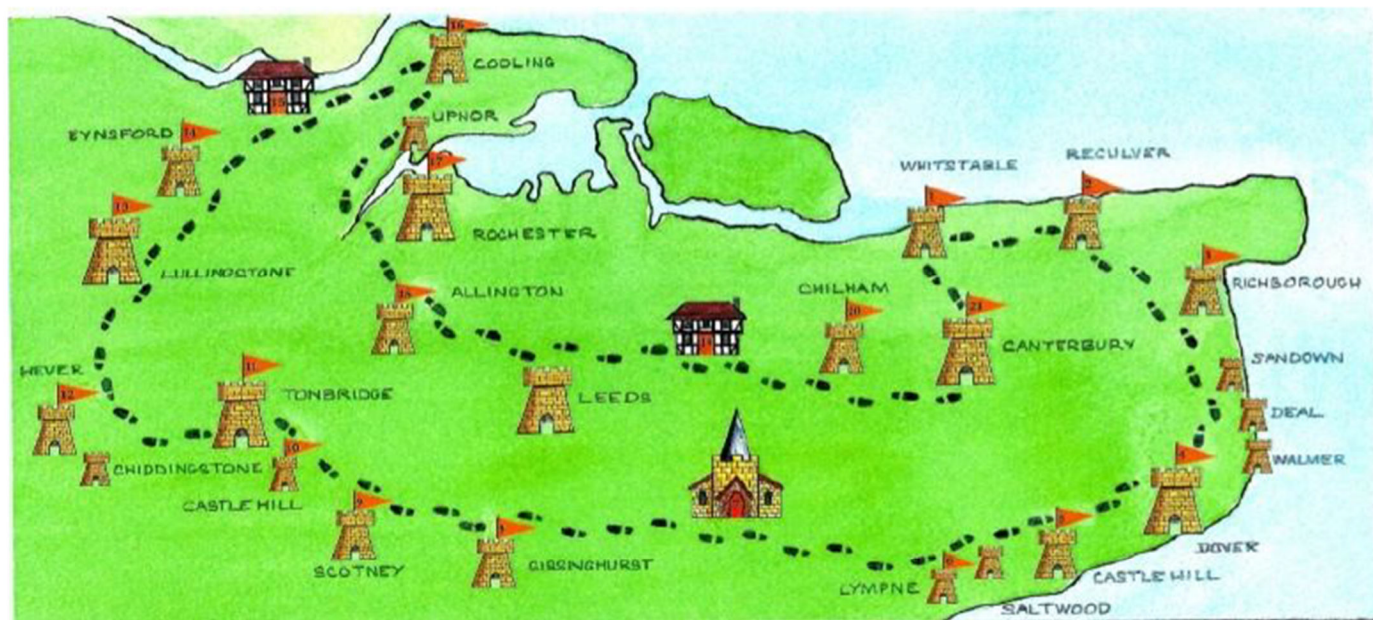
deep ruts along some parts of it, making access for walkers very difficult and almost impassable in places. On the visit Mr Elphicke was accompanied by members of the White Cliffs Ramblers, including chairman Margaret Lubbock, secretary Averil Brice and Graham Smith, Kent LDWA secretary of course. Afterwards the MP said he agreed with The Ramblers' call for traffic to be banned from BOATs, said he would back calls for the government to set up a working party to look at the problem nationally and promised to raise the issue with Elizabeth Truss, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. He said: "I am shocked to see the damage done by irresponsible four-wheel drivers to local byways. Byways are not for cars to churn up irresponsibly. "You can see how deep the ruts are. They fill with water and ruin the enjoyment of dog walkers, ramblers and cyclists. It seems to me the rules on byways open to all traffic –BOATs – need to change." White Cliffs Ramblers chairman Margaret Lubbock said: "The problem has become worse in our area, certainly in the last 10 years. Off road vehicles have proliferated and spoilt the North Downs Way for all other users. The use of 4X4s on this and other similar BOATs means all other users are denied their freedom to use them because of the state of the ground. "Something must be done – hopefully by closing the BOATs to vehicles, with exceptions for maintenance vehicles etc. We are very grateful Mr Elphicke actually came and saw the terrible condition of the BOAT for himself." Group secretary Averil Brice, who last year pressed the county council into closing the right of way at Guston to allow it to dry out, said: "The off road clubs need to know that damage like this is risking the loss of byways for all drivers. The drivers who are causing the damage are clearly there for the thrill of handling their vehicles in difficult circumstances, not to enjoy nature. "Let's hope Mr Elphicke's visit will lead to more action. If only everybody contacted their MPs when they have an issue with BOATs, and invited them put on their boots and to take a look."

BLUEBELL WALK

We have been contacted by Melanie Weild, fundraising assistant for St Christopher's Bromley, asking if any members are interested in taking part in or helping with the Bluebell Walk on Sunday, May 8. Melanie writes: 'As you may be aware, St Christopher's is the hospice which cares for patients and their families across the Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark boroughs. Services from home care to art therapy are provided free of charge, but only a third of our annual funding comes from the NHS. 'The Bluebell Walk starts and finishes at Cudham Recreation Ground in Kent. The hospice also provides kids' entertainment, live music and a BBQ on the day to keep walkers and supporters refreshed. Participants can choose between a gentle 3 mile stroll, 5 or 7 mile walk or a more ambitious 9 mile ramble, with refreshment stops en route at Downe and Halstead village halls. 'In 2014, the 1000+ participants raised £55,000 which enabled the hospice to provide end of life care for 2500 patients, bereavement counselling for parents and children, as well as 750 home visits each and every day. 'We would be very grateful if you could share this information with your members. We are hoping some might wish to volunteer to act as guides or marshals at the critical points on the walk. Any support would be very much appreciated. 'If members are interested, in either walking or volunteering, I would be grateful if they could e-mail my colleague Leo Thon on L.Thon@stchristophers.org.uk More information and registration is available by clicking the link: <http://www.stchristophers.org.uk/bluebell>

WALKING KENT'S CASTLES

Two friends from Whitstable are set to take on a 220-mile charity walk past castles in Kent. Chris Howard, 67, and David Roberts, 71, are aiming to raise £10,000 for Muscular Dystrophy UK and Sands, the stillbirth and neonatal death charity. They will start and finish in their home town of Whitstable and complete staged walks ranging from seven to 14 miles. The pair will set off on their journey on April 27 and finish on May 22. Chris, of Martindown Road, is a former director of photography who has worked on a number of television series, including New Tricks and Doc Martin. He said: "My daughter and her husband lost a child at birth and a close family member of mine has limb-girdle muscular dystrophy, so those charities are close to me. "I wanted to do a marathon but I was told not to for my health, so David and I thought 'let's do a charity walk involving castles'. "There are over 30 castles in Kent, so we set off in September last year and mapped our journey. We finished that in November, by which time we had probably walked over 500 miles to set it up alone." Born and bred in Whitstable David, of Joy Lane, is chairman of the Oyster Festival.



- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Whitstable to Reculver | 8 Sissinghurst to Scotney | 15 Cobham to Cooling |
| 2 Reculver to Richborough | 9 Scotney to Castle Hill | 16 Cooling to Rochester |
| 3 Richborough to St Margaret's Bay | 10 Castle Hill to Tonbridge | 17 Rochester to Allington |
| 4 St Margaret's to Battle of Britain Memorial | 11 Tonbridge to Hever | 18 Allington to Harrietsham |
| 5 Battle of Britain Memorial to Lympne | 12 Hever to Sundridge Place | 19 Harrietsham to Eastwell Manor |
| 6 Lympne to St Mary Kenardington | 13 Sundridge Place to Eynsford | 20 Eastwell Manor to Canterbury |
| 7 St Mary Kenardington to Sissinghurst | 14 Eynsford to Cobham | 21 Canterbury to Whitstable |

He said: "This will see us walking for over 100 hours through the beautiful and varied Kent countryside, linking some of the finest castles in England.

"We need people to put on their walking boots and join us to help raise funds for two very important causes.

"We hope that Walking Kent's Castles will become an ongoing fundraiser for the charities, which can be enjoyed at any time by anybody long after we have completed our inaugural walk."

The walk will wind through areas such as Richborough, Deal, Dover, Lympne, Sissinghurst, Tonbridge, Rochester, Leeds and Canterbury, with some sections of the walk suitable for wheelchair users.

The pair are hoping this will encourage all people to take part and donate to the challenge.

They have also enlisted the help of a friend to drive them to and from starting points, which means they will not have to camp outside any castles and will be fresh to start each daily stroll.

Chris said: "We don't ask everybody to do the entire route, but if you live in the area we have some very professionally laid out maps.

"The longest walk will be from St Mary's Church in Kenardington to Sissinghurst Castle. That one should take about seven hours.

"It will be an enduring walk for us but there are days off in-between."

Muscular Dystrophy UK supports research into more than 60 muscle-wasting conditions and offers support to about 1,400 people.

Sands promotes and funds research helping to reduce baby mortality.

The charity offers bereavement support for families and helplines for parents, carers and health professionals.

Anyone interested in helping Chris and David reach their fundraising target can visit uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/WalkingKentCastles.

Anyone interested in the route can download a map for a £10 fee to Muscular Dystrophy UK at www.muscular dystrophyuk.org/events/walking-kents-castles/

The above article appeared in the Whitstable Gazette in January. Any Kent Group members interested in joining Chris and David on their walk would be very welcome.



CHRISTMAS CRUISE AROUND CALAIS: DECEMBER 12 by Graham Smith

SIX of the usual suspects – Mike Pursey, Michael Headley, Neal and Jan O'Rourke and Sarah Turner - joined Graham for the annual pre-Christmas day trip. Last year we had a record number of takers - 17 - for the 14-mile walk, which has now become one of our institutions. But fears brought about by the terrorist situation in France kept the number low. So it was the Super Six, as Neal O'Rourke dubbed us. And, as usual, we had a great day. We got the 7.35 ferry from Dover (and this time Sarah arrived on time) which was pretty packed with Christmas shoppers. Arriving in Calais, we weren't even required to show our passports. We took our tried and trusted route out through Calais and past the fortifications of Fort Nieulay to Coquelles. We then picked up the GR (Grande Randonee) which we followed to the viewpoint of Cap Blanc Nez. Sadly, this time we didn't have the fine views back across the Channel to our own White Cliffs due to low cloud, but still enjoyable. It was quite blowy, but thankfully it was dry. After reaching the Cap, we found some shelter from the wind to eat our lunches, and we then dropped down to the village of Escalles, our first watering hole (I had my first beer, Sarah had hot chocolate and the others all had coffee). We then followed the road to the next village, Peuplingues, and our next watering hole, where Jan had a glass of red wine and the rest of us had beers. We then crossed the village to pick up the GR again, returning to Coquelles – and our next watering hole. Jan kept to the wine while the rest of us had beers (in fact we all had two – and they were the bieres de Noel, the Christmas beers for which several French and Belgian breweries are famous). We then headed down the main street to do a little shopping in the Auchan hypermarket, by which time it was dark. Carrying our purchases, we kept in the same direction and followed the main road back to Calais. The town's Christmas lights were aglow, and they are pretty impressive, particularly the lights over the theatre, which had been created to look like a curtain draped either side of the building. Time was beginning to press, but we found a nice restaurant in the square at Calais for a decent, well priced meal before walking the last few hundred yards back to the ferry terminal and the ferry back to Dover. Then came the only slight downside of the entire day, as the Channel was pretty rough (although not as rough as on some of the occasions we have done this walk). The ship was swaying, and at one stage there was an announcement advising passengers not to move around on board because of the conditions. This didn't bother Sarah, who had come on the trip

straight from her night shift - so she hadn't slept. The lack of sleep started to catch up with her when we got on board, as she crashed out on one of the on-board settees. But the conditions didn't delay the ship much and we got back into Dover at 10.45.

The Summer French Challenge will be on Saturday July 2, and will follow the 23-24 mile route we have taken for the last few years, but we do plan to have a slight diversion to go up another hill – Mont de Sombre. Graham will need to know who would like to go before the end of May. And this year's Christmas Cruise Around Calais has been set for Saturday December 10 – so put those two dates in your diaries.



POST CHRISTMAS SEVENOAKS STROLL: December 28 by Peter Jull

Those with a long drive and so up early were treated to a glorious sunrise promising favourable walking weather. Sixteen gathered on Shipbourne Common from the furthest ends of Kent and Surrey and nearest Sussex including several LDWA virgins. Only a mile and a half in and a strip stop was needed; to shirtsleeves for some. After looping north to Ightham the route trended south, just where that low sun was bright, right in the eyes. Woodland paths had plenty of squelch and few but us while Knole Park was better and busy and the deer content to stay close. Sevenoaks Wetherspoons was also busy but quick and 14 regrouped after lunch, three locals having gone home but Brian had joined up. The clear skies were going off but Knole was still heaving. The route back being Greensand Way the group safely stretched and waited and dropped Brian off at Ightham Mote for his lift. A short afternoon, distance disputed 16-18 miles, ended as Shipbourne church clock struck 4 in good daylight that gloomier adjacent days would have stolen. The newbies pronounced themselves converted.



NEW YEAR IN SUSSEX AGAIN: January 1 by Graham Smith

Eleven of us turned up at Rye station at 9am on January 1 for our annual New Year's Day walk. This has become a tradition over the years, and of course it is alternated with the 20-mile South Downs loop. This year leader Mike Pursey altered his usual route so that we could visit some parts of the Cinque Ports 100 route he has been painstakingly working on for the last year or so. We were joined by Dave Strachan from Sussex Group – who had just finished his shift as a train driver so he hadn't had much sleep (not that the rest of us had had a lot) who walked with us to Hastings.

From Rye we followed the Royal Military Canal past Camber Castle to the coast near Cliff End (checkpoint 1 on the Cinque Ports 100), and then to Fairlight Cove, from where Mike took us away from the usual route to Hastings, following a more inland course which meant we could approach the Old Town from the north – and very nice it was too. We then had our lunch stop in Hastings, saying cheerio to Dave (who, incidentally, we will be seeing more of, as he is in the process of helping us find a venue in Hastings for the Cinque Ports 100 marshals' walk) and then took the steps (which walkers on the Cinque Ports 100 will be taking) up to the 1066 Country Park. From here Mike had decided that our route would take us over the three Fire Hills, or glens, as that's the CP100 route. The best that can be said is that this was certainly an experience. We were faced with some climbs and quite a lot of mud (which you are obviously going to get in January). There are handrails by the steps on most of these ascents and descents – apart from one part where the handrail was broken, so we had to

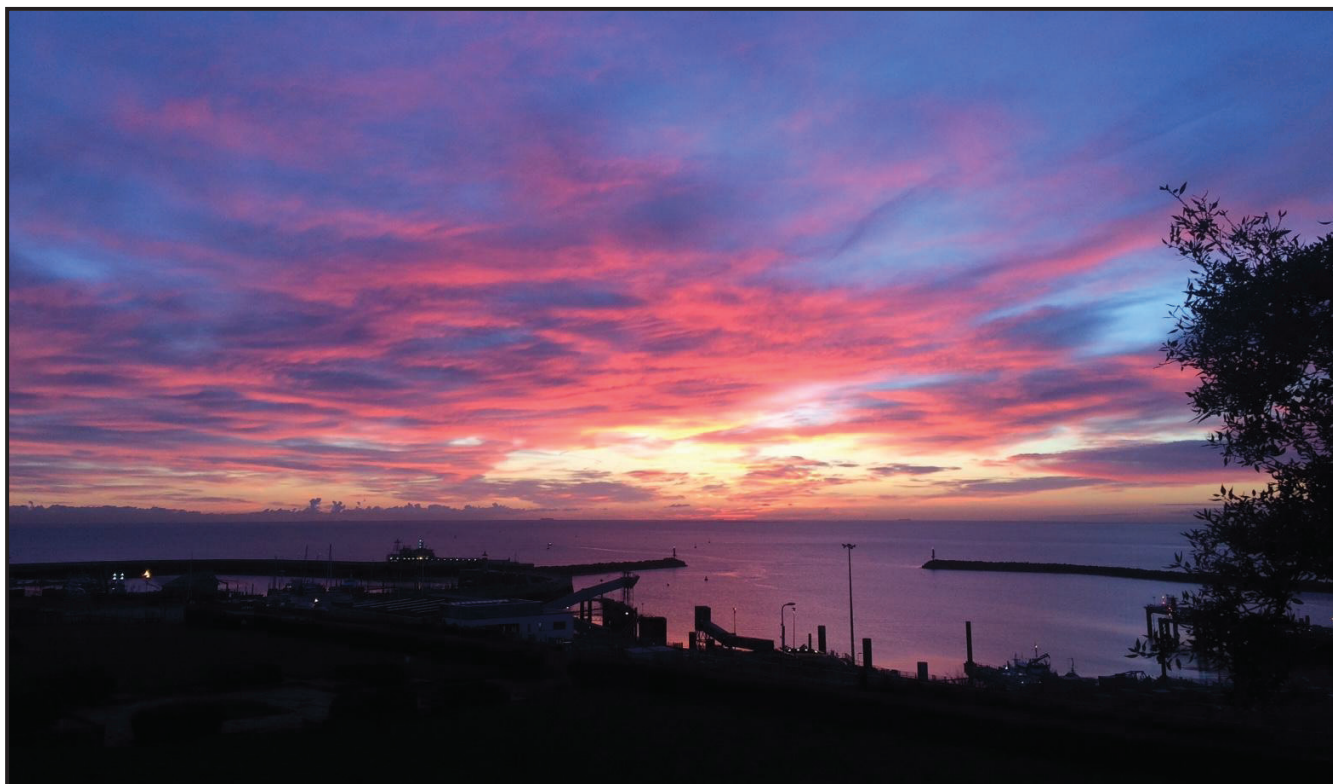
carefully go down, trying to keep what balance we could. It was not good, and a bit unsafe - certainly too dangerous for the Cinque Ports 100. But this is an issue which is to be raised with the people responsible for running 1066 Country Park, and it is hoped (and I do expect) that the handrail will have been replaced by 2018. If it isn't, then there will be an alternative route. Our ordeal in the glens over, we were rewarded with extensive views from the former Coastguard station near Fairlight. We then went through Fairlight Cove and picked up the canal which we followed to Winchelsea. In the rapidly descending darkness, we followed the 1066 Country Walk along the route before turning right onto a cycle path, which took us into Rye (checkpoint 2 on the Cinque Ports 100). By then we were, of course, pretty strung out, and we arrived at 5.30pm or thereabouts. It had been a good 23-mile start to 2016, we had had very little rain, and we all felt pretty content. Thanks, Mike.



QUESTIONS FROM KENT - WHEN (when did we last go this way?): January 24 by Peter Jull

Arrivals at Hadlow found the toilet block more attractive than The Square meeting place. When prised away there were 19: a Londoner, an Essexer, newbies and guests as well as the usual suspects.* “You’re too early for the 10 o’clock,” said the vicar as we set off past his church. Out into the country the perils of following the most prominent footsteps led to a weir instead of a bridge. Error soon spotted and soon corrected. And with skies overcast but mild a stop was soon required for the shedding of layers. On across the Medway, its flood plain was delusional as to the flatness of the walk. Into the Wealden hills we puffed to a stop at the top of the stiffest climb of the day for recuperation and refreshment. The anticipated lunch at Brenchley was also delusional for those not paying attention to Facebook etc. but the High Weald Landscape Trail soon led to the planned alternative at The Star, Matfield. The afternoon was more wooded and in one a crossing path was reached where the map said straight on. A dogleg remembered but was it left then right or right then left? Not enough left was tried before deciding right was right when it wasn’t. A forestry track led back to the intended path so we could enjoy some clingy field mud instead of the squelchy footpath variety endured for much of the day. At afternoon drinks, close perusal of maps was discouraged as revelation of the question word observation test was at risk. With the group much spread again, those in front claimed to have spotted it without stopping before being called back to gather for a photo at the sign stone to Wenhams Farm. At no one point had the mud been too onerous but in aggregate was draining and delaying and even back on the flat, “Are we nearly there?” inquiries indicated wearying walkers. A democratic decision was taken to finish the walk on shorter roads leading back to Hadlow as dusk closed in.

*One of the usual suspects – the editor of this newsletter – apologises for not being there to make the number on the walk 20, a pretty high figure on a Kent LDWA social walk. He was indulging in another of his passions – watching Dover Athletic, whose game against table topping Cheltenham Town was on a Sunday because it was being screened on BT Sport. For the record, Dover played very well, got a great goal – but sadly lost 2-1.



This spectacular photo of Ramsgate at dawn was taken from her home by Sarah Turner. The photo has nothing to do with the walk below really, but the newsletter editor thought members would like to see it. Sarah says: “It’s the view from mine on Thursday morning - pays to work the night hours to see the beautiful dawn”

AROUND THE PLANET THANET: February 7 by Graham Smith

This was a walk I had been thinking of putting on the programme for years. I do think that the Thanet coast is very interesting. It’s got some fine cliffs (OK – they’re not as big nor as spectacular as the White Cliffs of Dover, but they make for some excellent walking) and it’s quite fascinating going past the seaside towns of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. And it is because Thanet has such an interesting coast that next year’s White Cliffs Challenge is going to be revamped into a linear walk visiting the Thanet cliffs and the Dover cliffs (about which there is more in the August newsletter).

Sixteen of us met at Sandwich railway station to get the train to Birchington, and the day didn’t get off to a good start because the train times had been changed since I had planned the walk. It was planned on us getting the 9.06 from Sandwich to arrive at Birchington at 9.35. Repair work to the sea wall between Dover and Folkestone has led to big disruption of services, which meant there could be no 9.06 train for us. Instead our train was 9.35, getting to Birchington at 10.12. I’m afraid I didn’t realise the implications of the Dover-Folkestone line work until just over a week before the walk, and Michael Headley did put something on the website. But a few walkers got to Sandwich for the 9.06 and had a longer wait than they should have – so if any of them are reading this, please accept my apologies.

Anyway, it was nice sunny day and most of us were able to benefit from a discounted group ticket. This was sold to us by a cheery conductor who, when told we were going on a 19-plus mile walk which would inevitably involve stopping at a pub, said: “I’ve heard of the hairy bikers. I reckon you’re the beery hikers!” We alighted at Birchington, took a road to the coast, turned right and then, more or less, just kept the sea on our left for the next 19.5 miles. We passed Westgate and then Margate and Cliftonville, where we reached Palm Bay (and from where the longer route on next year’s White Cliffs Challenge may be starting). We then rounded the cliffs of Foreness Point and North Foreland – which, not too many people know, is the most south-easterly point of mainland Great Britain according to the Ordnance Survey, the other extremities being Land’s End in the South West, Cape Wrath in the North West and John O’Groats in the North East). Part of the coast at North Foreland is privately owned, so we had to take to the road, which led us past North Foreland Lighthouse (which went out of use in 1998 but is a tourist attraction and is still pretty impressive). We then took a path down to the beach, which we followed to Broadstairs, where we had our lunch stop at the very nice Tartare Frigate pub at Viking Bay. Here we were joined by Sarah Turner, who lives in Ramsgate and who had finished an overnight shift. She texted me to say she was

‘alive and awake’ and would be walking out from her home to join us. Thanet is Sarah’s home turf, so she then led us for the next few miles, along the beach between Broadstairs and Ramsgate – which was very pleasant in the winter sunshine, then through Ramsgate Harbour and on to Pegwell. Sarah then went home as the rest of us carried on, rounding Pegwell Bay – another very fine spot, which I’m sure walkers on next year’s White Cliffs Challenge will enjoy – to go through the Pegwell Bay Nature Reserve and then the cycle path alongside the Ramsgate Road (which walkers on next year’s WCC won’t enjoy so much but at least they will be able to make fast progress). Here the rain, which had been forecast, finally hit us – and it was just as well that we got it on the worst part of the walk. We just donned waterproofs and plodded on, turning left off the A256 into the road leading to Sandwich, going through Discovery Park, and arriving at the lovely old Cinque Port town at about 5pm. I live in Deal, which is about six miles away, and I decided to walk home (well, you do, don’t you?), accompanied by Richard ‘Captain’ Frost, who also lives in Deal.

MERRY IN MEREWORTH

Wow 33! 60% Kent, 4 Sussex, the rest London. For once the first muddy fields were not the shape of things to come. In Platt Wood the paths were nice and bouncy but multifarious and unmarked. After a long loop we emerged back where we had



entered – oops. Then ouch, a pavement trip with flat on face landing and we were down to 32. Not the bloodied fat lip but an unrelated tweaked hamstring, helping back to the station. A detour completed, the wood was re-entered using the Wealdway, expecting it to be better signed. It was and on the other side we were back on track across the golf course, albeit half an hour late. Assorted wees, laces and delayerings spread the field until regrouped at our eastern limit by Offham village green. From there it was straight south but stile congestion spread the field again. We couldn’t make Merry in Mereworth as the village pub had recently closed down so we regrouped for refreshments in the churchyard around the church portico – Mereworth church is 18th century Palladian extravagance in

style. A local lady invited inspection of the interior and many took up the opportunity. The church clock had struck 12 on arrival and then marked the quarter as we departed before getting chilled. Despite overcast skies it was dry and mild but a stiff breeze making it feel less so out of shelter. Noses were assailed by the strong odour of boot crushed wild garlic in one wood leading to a deceptively perspirational climb up to the next. In here forestry work was obscuring the paths and left us crunching and stumbling over and through detritus and undergrowth. The exit track located it was down past Old Soar Manor (NT) and up through orchards to the next available pub, the isolated Golding Hop. At 2, food was finished and the beer queue long with drinkers inside and out. Rested and recounted, which was only practically accurate when passing the counter with so large a group; the size was also slowing the overall pace. Regrouped once more by St. Lawrence church high above Seal, the western extremities of the route were clipped but not the afternoon treat of 600ft high Oldbury Hill, steep steps up and steep gully down. With expressions of hope for catching the 5.25, the next being an hour later, and stamina variances spreading the field again the long loop return on paths was substituted by shorter country roads and in the end we were home in time for tea, actually only coffee was available in the station Co-op, with 20 train minutes to spare.



COMEDY CORNER with Neal O’Rourke

CATHOLIC DOG

Muldoon lived alone in the Irish countryside with only a pet dog for company. One day the dog died, and Muldoon went to the parish priest and asked: “Father, my dog is dead. Could ya be sayin’ a mass for the poor creature?”

Father Patrick replied: “I’m afraid not. We cannot have services for an animal in the church. But there are some Baptists down the lane, and there’s no tellin’ what they believe. Maybe they’ll do something.”

Muldoon said: “I’ll go right away Father. By the way, do you think £5,000 is enough to donate to them for the service?”

Father Patrick exclaimed: “Sweet Mary, Mother of Jesus! Why didn’t you tell me the dog was Catholic?”

CONFESSION

An elderly man walks into a confessional. The following conversation ensues.

Man: "I am 92 years old, have a wonderful wife of 70 years, many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Yesterday, I picked up two hitch-hiking college girls. We went to a motel where I had sex with each of them three times."

Priest: "Are you sorry for your sins?"

Man: "What sins?"

Priest: "What kind of a Catholic are you?"

Man: "I'm Jewish."

Priest: "Then why are you telling me all this?"

Man: "I'm 92 years old ... I'm telling everybody!"

AN A, B, C OF HINTS FOR INTREPID TRAVELLERS Compiled by Ann Tate

All the following quotations are from *Art of Travel* by Francis Galton, first published in 1872 by John Murray and which was reprinted a couple of years ago. Chairman Brian Buttifant thought members would find them interesting. Thanks Brian.

A – ANIMAL, enraged.

'It is perfectly easy for a person who is cool to avoid the charge of an enraged animal by dodging to one side or other of a bush.'

B – BIVOUAC.

'There is no comparison between the hazards of a tent and that of a bivouac. In the former the man's sleep is heavy, and marauders know exactly where he is laying and may creep up unobserved and spear him through the canvas.'

C – COLD.

'A European can live through a bitterly cold night if he buries his body pretty deeply in the sand keeping only his head above the ground.'

'In Napoleon's retreat many a soldier saved his live by creeping within the warm and reeking carcase of a horse that had died by the way.'

'A substitute for firewood is bones. During the Russian campaign in 1829 the troops suffered so severely from the cold that the cemeteries were ransacked for bones.'

D – DOGS and other beasts of burden.

'For Arctic travel each dog requires eight or ten herrings a day.'

'Men rarely make friends with camels; in breaking a stubborn beast it is convenient to physic him until he is sick and out of spirits, or to starve him into submission.'

'Asses can be taught not to bray by lashing a heavy stone to the tail. They elevate their tails when they want to bray, and if they find their tails weighted down they have not the heart to bray.'

'The stubbornness of a half-broken ox is sometimes beyond conception; twisting or biting the tail is the usual way to make him get up.'

E – EMETIC.

'For want of a proper emetic, drink a charge of gunpowder in a tumblerful of warm water.'

F – FLOORS

'Cow dung and ashes make a hard dry and clean floor. Ox blood and fine clay kneaded together are excellent.'

G – GUN.

'When getting sleepy you should return your rifle between your legs, roll over and go to sleep. The barrel rests on the arm and serves as a pillow for the head; the muzzle points between the knees, and the arms encircle the lock and breech, so that you have a smooth pillow and are always prepared to start up armed at a moment's notice.'

H – HIDES.

'All old hides or skins pf any kind that are not tanned are fit and good for food; they improve soup by being mixed with it, or they may be toasted and hammered.'

I – ICE.

'Water that is slightly frozen is made to bear a heavy wagon by cutting reeds, strewing them thickly upon the ice and pouring water upon them; when the whole is frozen into a firm mass the process must be repeated.'

J – JEWELS.

'Before going to a rich but imperfectly civilised country, travellers sometimes buy jewels and bury them in their flesh. They make a gash, put in the jewels and allow the flesh to grow over them as it would over a bullet. A traveller thus provided would always have a small capital to fall back upon.'

K – KINDNESS to feet.

'To avoid blistered feet break a raw egg into the boot before putting it on. This greatly softens the leather.'

L – LATHERING and washing clothes.

‘It is a good plan to boil an abundance of ashes in water, adding the gall of any animal you may have killed, and let the clothes soak in it. Next morning take them to the water-side and lather and beat them with a flat piece of wood.’

M - MUFFS and other useful articles of clothing.

‘To keep the hands warm in very severe weather a small fur muff may be slung from the neck in which the hands may rest till wanted.’

‘Dressing gown. People who travel, even with the smallest quantity of luggage, would do wisely to take a thick dressing gown.’

‘Waistcoats are more convenient for their pockets than for their warmth.’

‘Braces. Do not forget to take them.’

N – NATIVES.

‘A frank, joking but determined manner joined with an air of showing more confidence in the good faith of the natives than you really feel is the best.’

‘Take an abundance of the following cheap beads as they are very generally accepted – dull white, dark blue and vermillion red.’

‘Entrust delicate surveying instruments and fragile articles to some respectable old savage, whose infirmities compel him to walk steadily.’

O – OSTRICH eggs.

‘When a Dutchman wants to carry a lot of ostrich eggs to and from the watering place, he takes off his trousers, ties up the ankles, puts the eggs in the legs and carries off his load slung around his neck.’

P – PEMMICAN.

‘Of all food carried on expeditions, none is so complete in itself, nor containing so large a proportion of nutrient, as pemmican. Pemmican is a mixture of about five-ninths of pound dried meat to four-ninths of melted or boiled grease. It is put into a skin bag while warm and soft. Wild berries are sometimes added. The pemmican is chipped out with an axe when required and would be very palatable if it were not that so often a good many buffalo hairs are found mixed with it through the carelessness of hunters.’

Q - QUILT.

‘Brown paper is an excellent conductor of heat and excluder of draughts. If thoroughly soaked and then dried it will not crackle.’

R – RAFTS.

‘When bamboo is plentiful it is preferable to any other material for rafts. A few bamboos lashed into the shape of an ordinary field gate, but with two diagonals, and with handfuls of grass thrown on to make a platform, is very buoyant and serviceable.’

S – SHIRT-SLEEVES.

‘When you have occasion to take up your shirt-sleeves, recollect that the way of doing so is, not to begin by turning the cuffs inside out, but inside in.’

T – TOOTHACHE.

‘By constant pushing and pulling an aching tooth it will, in time, loosen, and perhaps, after some weeks, come out.’

U – UNDERGARMENTS.

‘The importance of flannel next to the skin can hardly be over-rated. Notes have been taken of the number of names of those who had provided themselves with flannel, and those who had not. The list of sick and dead always included names from the latter list in a very great proportion.’

V – VENOM.

‘Serpent’s venom may always be used with effect when poisoned arrows are required.’

W – WOMEN.

‘They will endure a long journey better than a horse or bullock. Women were made for labour, one of them can carry or haul as much as two men can do. They also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothes, and keep us warm at night. They are maintained at trifling expense, for as they always stand cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times is sufficient for their subsistence. It is the nature of women to be fond of carrying weights; you may see them in omnibuses and carriages, always preferring to hold their baskets or their babies on their knees, to setting them down on the seats by their sides.’

W – WASHING.

‘There is no denying the fact that dirt and grease are great protectors of the skin against inclement weather.’

X – EXPANDING a battered metal flask.

‘Repair a battered metal flask by filling it with dried peas. Pour in water and put the stopper on it. The peas will begin to swell and to force the sides of the flask outwards into their original shape.’

Y – YODELLING and holloaing.

‘The united and holloaing of many voices is heard much further than separate cries. Whistling through the fingers can be

heard at considerable distances; the accomplishment should be learnt.’

Z – ZEMSEMIYAH.

‘This is a porous leather flask which is hung on the shady side of the camel, and by evaporation keeps the water deliciously cool; it is rather a wasteful way of carrying water.’

THE WALKER’S PRAYER

The following was in the Order of Service at Ernie Bishop’s funeral on March 16. It seemed only fitting that, having done so much for the LDWA, and in particular Kent Group, Ernie should have the last word in this newsletter.

Lord, bless all Walkers that they may live long and healthy lives.

Especially, bless our Leaders.

For they are all-powerful and lead us through the wilderness.

Yea, though they lead us down the valleys and over the hills,
we shall feel no pain, for our hearts, minds and muscles are numb.

Let them know the North from the South, and the West from the East.

And Lord, let the sun shine so that they have a faint idea
in which direction we are heading.

Grant, O Lord, that they curb their tongues and not tell us that we have
walked only three miles, when we feel that we have walked six.

Also, Lord, let them know the difference between a gentle slope and a steep cliff,
whether we are ascending or descending, and please give them the ability to count,
so that they know the number of walkers that have gone astray.

Please, Lord, if it is within thy power, prevent the leaders
from restarting the walk the moment everyone has caught up.

O Lord, if it is thy wish, curse the walkers who overtake the leader.

Let the sticks of those who do break in two,
their laces come undone, and their flasks leak. Again, if it is thy wish,
curse also those who disappear into the wood without telling the back-marker.

Spare us, O Lord, from brambles, nettles, mud and other obstructions.

Lead us not down the wrong path, but let us arrive back at our cars,
safe and sound, for we are children of the wilderness,
the blind leading the blind, and we shall be shattered.

Please, Lord, give us the strength to turn up for the next walk.

We ask all this with tongue in cheek,
ever conscious that many a true word is spoken in jest.

Amen

Rest in peace, Ernie – and thanks for everything.

Another couple of Photos from the Sevenoaks Circular Walks 2016

by Bryan Clarke



Name:	Email:	Postcode:
-------	--------	-----------

GROUP MEMBERS' PREFERENCES SURVEY

1. If free on the day, in which local council areas are you likely to join a group social walk?

	Likely	Maybe	Unlikely		Likely	Maybe	Unlikely
Ashford	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Sevenoaks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canterbury	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Swale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dartford	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Thanet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dover	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tonbridge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gravesham	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tunbridge Wells	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maidstone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	East Surrey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medway	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	East Sussex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shepway	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	France	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. What length of group social walk do you enjoy?

	Yes	Maybe	No		Yes	Maybe	No
15-20 miles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	25-30 miles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20-25 miles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	30+ miles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. How often would you like to go on a group social walk?

Weekly ☐ Fortnightly ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐

4. When would you prefer to join a social walk?

Mostly Saturdays ☐ Even split ☐ Mostly Sundays ☐

5. If Kent Group organised weekday walks would you participate?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If so, when? Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed ☐ Thu ☐ Fri ☐

6. Are there types of group social walk you prefer and would like to see more of or dislike and would tend to avoid?

	Like	OK with	Dislike
Linear walk – train/bus transfer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Linear walk – car share	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Railway station start	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Early start – 8.30am and earlier	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Later start – 9.30am onwards (& late finish)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evening/night walks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faster walks >3.1mph average	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Slower walks <2.6mph average	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pub lunch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Picnic lunch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Would you be willing to help out at a checkpoint on any of the following events?

	Yes	Maybe	No		Yes	Maybe	No
Sevenoaks Circular (March)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Surrey Tops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High Weald (July)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Sussex Stride	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
White Cliffs Challenge (August)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Annual 100	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What aspects of helping out with a challenge event do you like or dislike?

	Like	Will do	Dislike	Won't do
Catering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recording	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marshalling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. What influences you when invited to attend the Annual General Meeting?

	Attracts	Deters
Pre-meeting short walk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Free lunch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The AGM itself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Possibility of being given an organisation role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting old friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Kent group organises a monthly pub meet at Wrotham and an annual Christmas dinner. Is there any other type of social or walking event you would like to go to with the group?

11.	Yes	No
Do you Tweet about your walking activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you post on Facebook after a walk?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12.	Weekly	Monthly	Less Often
How often do you visit the Kent group website?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you visit the Kent group Facebook page?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. How did you hear about the LDWA?

Search engine <input type="checkbox"/>	Do you remember the search words used?
Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify <input type="text"/>

14. Why did you join the LDWA?

Challenge walks <input type="checkbox"/>	Group social walks <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Please specify <input type="text"/>

15. Does Kent group meet your expectations?

Fully ☐ Partially ☐ Less well ☐ Please say why

16. How would you prefer Kent group to keep in touch with you?

Email ☐ Text ☐ Twitter ☐ Facebook ☐ None of these ☐