

# ***LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION — Kent Group***

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

## ***NEWSLETTER***



*Jan Wirrmann and Helen Franklin finish the Cinque Ports 100 - the first Hundred for both of them.*

**Number 106**

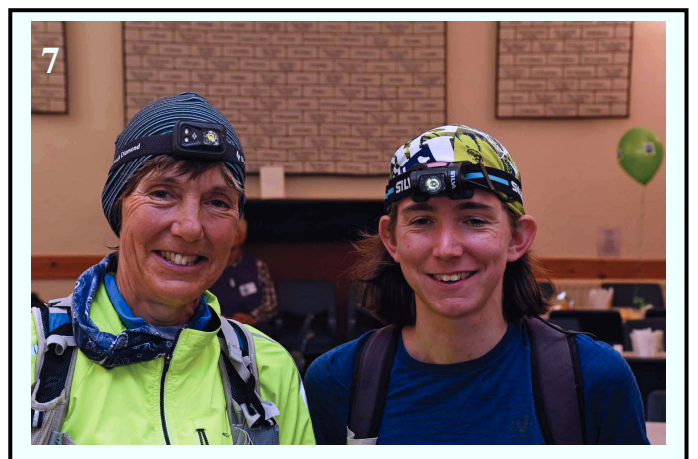
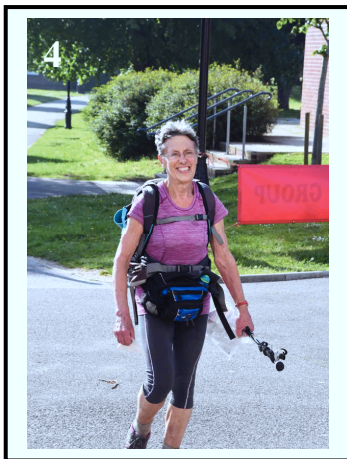


**August 2018**

**[www.ldwa.org.uk/kent](http://www.ldwa.org.uk/kent)**

## SCENES FROM THE CINQUE PORTS 100

- 1) Claire Betts on tea and coffee duty at Sussex Coast College.
- 2) Brian Buttifant, Nigel Cussans and Nick Dockree at the Northbourne checkpoint.
- 3) Graham Smith and Gill Struthers, from Essex and Herts LDWA, at the start.
- 4) Jan Wirrmann finishes.
- 5) Michael Headley checks walkers in at the start.
- 6) Shirlie Gill at the start.
- 7) Wendy Thurrell and Victoria Morris at the finish.



## KENT SOCIAL WALKS – AUGUST-DECEMBER 2018

### **Sat Aug 4 White Cliffs Challenge Marshals' Walk**

52ml. Start 07:00 Car park at junction of Kingsdown Road and Granville Road, Walmer. (GR TR377505).  
**C:** Graham Smith

### **Sun Aug 12 The Best Bits of the Big Blean**

19ml. 9:00 Thornden Wood c.p. west side. (GR TR144633). Most of The Big Blean Walk, through the site of the last armed uprising on English soil. **C:** Cliff Huggett

### **Sun Aug 19 Cream Tea Walk**

20ml. 09.00 Meet Boughton Malherbe Church. Park in field opposite. (GR TQ882495). **C:** Neal O'Rourke

### **Sun-Mon Aug 26-27 White Cliffs Challenge**

See Events Diary.

### **Sun Sep 2 Zoolander**

21.5ml. 10.00 Sturry fire station. (GR TR177602). Circular route passing three zoos. 8:10 from Charing X or 8:37 from St. Pancras. Pub lunch. **C:** Peter Jull

### **Sun Sep 16 In Roman Footsteps**

16ml. 10.00 Meet Dover Priory railway station. (GR TR319417). Linear walk to Sandwich getting train back from Sandwich. **C:** Graham Smith

### **Sun Sep 23 Wye to Dover on the North Downs Way**

23ml. 09.40 Meet at Dover Priory station for 08:49 train or meet at Wye station and train back at finish. (GR TR319417). Linear walk to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the opening of the North Downs Way National Trail. **C:** Graham Smith

### **Sat Sep 29 St. Augustine's Way**

19ml. 08.30 Ramsgate railway station. (GR TR373656). Linear walk to Canterbury following St. Augustine's route beside the Stour. **C:** Peter Sinden.

### **Sun Oct 7 By Election, Bank Holidays and Abolition**

19ml. 09.15 Meet at Orpington railway station c.p. Crofton Road. (GR TQ454658). Pub stop for lunch. **C:** Steve Russell

### **Sun Oct 21 Alliteration C Challock, Chilham and Charing**

22ml. 09.00 Meet in front of Charing church. (GR TQ953494). Lunch in Chilham. **C:** Peter Jull

### **Sun Nov 4 Woodland Wonder**

18m.09.00 Meet at Breach Down, near Barham (GR TR 203484). **C:** Eve Richards

### **Sat Nov 17 Local Groups' Representatives Weekend Walk**

Tba. A walk for those attending the Local Groups' Weekend at the Medway YHA hosted by Kent LDWA

### **Sun Nov 18 The White Horse Walk**

18ml. 09:00 Meet Ulcombe recreation ground. (GR TQ847486). **C:** Peter Jull

### **Sun Dec 2 Family Christmas Dinner**

Family Christmas Dinner at London Beach Country Hotel, near Tenterden, preceded by a seven mile walk led by Neal O'Rourke. **C:** Neal O'Rourke See story below.

### **Sat Dec 8 Christmas Cruise around Calais.**

c17ml. 07.20 By P&O Desk, Dover Eastern Docks for 8.25 sailing. (GR TR331417). A circular walk in the Nord Pas de Calais visiting Cap Blanc Nez, with time for some Christmas shopping in the Auchan hypermarket. Return 9pm local time (approx.) - 8pm British time. Ring P&O reservations 08716 646464 for foot passenger day return. Don't forget your passport! Please ring Graham for confirmation of times and parking recommendations. **C:** Graham Smith



## **KENT GROUP COMMITTEE**

Chairman/newsletter editor – Graham Smith,

Secretary – Stephanie Le Men

Treasurer/walks secretary – Peter Jull,

Membership secretary – Neil Higham,

Website - Michael Headley

Life President – Brian Buttifant,

Members

Joy Davies, Nick Dockree, Helen Franklin, Neal O'Rourke, David Thornton

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.

## **NEWS OF KENT CHALLENGE WALKS**

### **Sevenoaks Circular**

After this year's Sevenoaks Circular was cancelled due to the exceptionally bad weather, the committee has agreed to have reduced charges for the event next year - £6 for those doing the 30-miler and £5 for those doing the 20 and 15-milers, with an extra £1 for all non-LDWA entrants. All on the day entries will be £12 if the entry limit is not reached.

Next year's event will be on Sunday March 17, and will again be based at West Heath School, with David Thornton liaising with David Sheldrake over the route. Routes, as usual, will be 30, 20 and 15 miles. The marshals' walk has provisionally been set for Sunday March 3.

It has been agreed to donate £200 to West Heath School from surplus from this year's event. The school provides a safe haven for children whose mainstream education has broken down.

### **Weald challenge walk**

After this year's Walk With The Smugglers, next year our Weald challenge walk will again be the Andredsweald, based at Forest Row. Distances are likely to be 26 and 15 miles, with the date provisionally set for the second Sunday in July, July 14. There will be more details in the next newsletter.

### **White Cliffs Challenge**

Well, it's almost upon us – the 2018 White Cliffs Challenge is on Sunday August 26 and is the Kent leg of the KSS (Kent Surrey Sussex) Triple Challenge of 50-mile challenge walks, the others being the Surrey Tops, which was held last year, and the Sussex Stride, which will be next year. This year's WCC is 52 miles, with an 18-mile version, and is part of the White Cliffs Walking Festival (see story below).

The event will be based at Deal FC's ground, in Charles Road, Deal, and the route was being walked and checked as this newsletter went to press. There are seven checkpoints – at Langdon Cliffs, Capel, Etchinghill, Elham, Bishopsbourne, Shepherdswell and Maydensole Farm – and we are going to need lots of marshals. If anyone feels they can help, please contact Graham Smith (details above) as soon as possible.

The marshals' walk was taking place on August 4, as this newsletter was being distributed.

## **FAMILY CHRISTMAS DINNER**

This year's Family Christmas Dinner will be on Sunday December 2 and will return to London Beach Country Hotel, just outside Tenterden. Kent LDWA members will recall we went there for several years before switching to Chart Hills Golf Club, near Biddenden, four years ago. Prices are £20.95 for two courses or £26.95 for three courses. Jan and Neal O'Rourke are making arrangements, with Neal again leading a seven-mile walk before the dinner. The walk will start at 9.30am, with lunch served at 1.30pm.

A booking form is included with this newsletter, so please fill it in and return it to Jan, with your cheque, made out to LDWA Kent Group, by November 3.

## **LOCAL GROUPS WEEKEND**

As previously reported in the newsletter, this year's national LDWA Local Groups' Weekend will be held in Kent, being based at YHA Medway, in Gillingham, over the weekend of November 16-18.

Local Groups' Secretary Julie Cribb is planning a full weekend of participation and activity, and Kent Group will be putting on a walk on Saturday November 17, which Stephanie Le Men has offered to lead. Details of this walk will go on our website in due course.

For those representatives who don't fancy the walk, there will also be a visit to a tourist attraction.

## **HELEN JOINS KENT COMMITTEE**

Helen Franklin has agreed to join the Kent LDWA committee, filling one of the vacancies left when Phyl Butler and Mike Pursey stood down at this year's AGM.

Helen, who lives in Beckenham, has excellent IT skills and has already proved a real asset to the group, helping with the PACER tracking system on the Cinque Ports 100 and also the Walk With The Smugglers. She is also a strong walker, completing her first Hundred when she did the Cinque Ports 100 in May.

A very warm welcome, Helen!



## SOCIAL WALKS

Being a social walks secretary is the most onerous job in any walking group, and Peter Jull is doing a fine job – but he needs more walks, particularly in the west of our county. So if you feel you could lead a walk for the group, please contact Peter, whose details are above.

And if you feel you might be able to lead a walk but would like someone to walk it out with you first, then contact any member of the committee, and someone will be able to help you. Leading a walk can be a little daunting, and your committee members are here to help.

## HADRIAN HUNDRED

Brian Buttifant is organising a team from Kent LDWA to take on a checkpoint at next year's Hadrian Hundred in Northumberland. This is going to be at the remote location of Watersmeeting Farm (69.2 miles), near Cross Fell and Cow Green Reservoir. If anyone would like to volunteer then please contact Brian, whose details are above.

We have also offered to run a checkpoint at the 2020 Y 100 Sir Fynwy, in South Wales. The location of this checkpoint has not yet been finalised, but we have requested an indoor one. We have also offered to provide a checkpoint on the Trans Pennine 100 in 2021. We should have more news about our checkpoints on the 2020 and 2021 Hundreds in the next newsletter.

## LOGO

The LDWA has started the process of changing its logo. The association has used the 'walking man' logo since the LDWA was founded in 1972, and new national chairman David Morgan, backed by the NEC – which includes Kent chairman Graham Smith – is backing the plan.

David has written an article making the case for changing the logo in the current Strider. It details David's views on why the logo ought to be changed, and sets out how the LDWA intends to go about implementing the change. Strider will be used for members to view the various logo ideas and also to vote on which one they prefer.

Changing the LDWA's logo is a very important issue, as our association is embarking on a process of modernisation and attempting to appeal to more members. This is a process started by the previous chair, Gail Elrick, which David Morgan is determined to see through.

So please read David's article in the current Strider. The LDWA has had the 'walking man' logo for a long time so please give what he has to say a fair hearing. Hopefully you will like one or two of the suggested logos when the time comes for you to vote on them. If you would prefer the 'walking man' logo and do not see why it should be changed, then you are very welcome to let the NEC know by either contacting an NEC member (and all their details are in Strider) or perhaps writing a letter to Strider.



### PAULINE BARNETT 1930-2018

Several Kent LDWA members attended the funeral of Pauline Barnett at Falconwood Crematorium on April 5.

Pauline Barnett, who died at the age of 87, had been a dedicated Kent Group member (LDWA membership number 3249) since the early 1980s to the end of her life.

She was a great checkpointer and kitchen organiser, proving very versatile on our group events and a very useful team member on the 100s support. For several years, she performed the role of entries secretary on our White Cliffs Challenge, beginning in 2005, when it became an annual event.

She was a great help to husband Peter – one of the Kent LDWA legends, who completed 12 Hundreds and who died in 1999 - making a good partnership to ensure group success. After his death her interest and involvement continued with the group.

Pauline, who lived in Belvedere, leaves a son, Chris and a grandson, Peter. The group has agreed to make a donation to the Demelza House charity at the family's request.

## WHITE CLIFFS WALKING FESTIVAL

THIS year's White Cliffs Walking Festival is on August 23-29, with its highlight our White Cliffs Challenge (52 or 18 miles) on August 26,

The festival, organised by the White Cliffs Ramblers with support from Kent LDWA, will feature 45 walks ranging upwards from special interest/history/heritage walks of two miles.

Kent LDWA chairman Graham Smith is leading his annual Fish and Chip Walk (10 miles) on Friday August 24.

There is also a 13.5 mile walk from Dover's Bleriot Memorial – marking the spot where French aviator Louis Bleriot landed in 1909 after becoming the first person to fly across the Channel – on Thursday August 23. This walk will take place immediately after the opening ceremony, starting at 10am at the Bleriot Memorial and being performed by Vanessa Griffiths, chief executive of the Ramblers.

The walking festival programme also includes a 15 mile Alkham Adventure, exploring East Kent's Alkham and Lydden valleys, on Tuesday August 28, three White Cliffs Coastal Trails, of 7.6, 9.5 and 9.6 miles, and an eight-mile walk from Goodnestone Park Gardens visiting places associated with Jane Austen.

There will be 11 new walks, including the Sandwich Bay Walk and the Hills of the Saxon Shore Way.

Full details of all the festival walks are on [www.whitecliffswalkingfestival.org.uk](http://www.whitecliffswalkingfestival.org.uk)





**Left: Alan Stewart gets in, with Annabel Wood. Right: Stephanie Le Men finishes.**

### **CINQUE PORTS 100 – SUCCESS FOR KENT MEMBERS**

Nine out of 13 Kent LDWA Hundred first timers – members who had not previously entered a Hundred – successfully completed either the Cinque Ports 100 or the marshals' walk.

This, by any standards, represents lots of fantastic achievements, although it has to be said that Kent members like David Thornton and Sarah Turner, who battled on despite severe blisters and reached Dover (more than 70 miles) and Sandwich (more than 90 miles), can be very proud of their own achievements. Walking 100 miles in one go is a massive undertaking, and anyone attempting it is likely to get severe fatigue, blisters, nausea (and maybe all three!) plus other ailments. Sometimes you just have to listen to your body and retire when that is what it is telling you to do.

A total of 27 Kent members entered the main event or the marshals' walk, with 18 of them completing the route. Don Arthurs, Clifford Gray, Helen Franklin, Glen Ridout, Keir Williams and Jan Wirrmann entered the main event and completed their first Hundreds, while Alzbeta Benn and John Gilbert recorded their first Hundreds when they both completed the marshals' walk. John is worthy of particular mention, as after finishing the walk, he got a few hours sleep, had something to eat – and then cycled home to where he lives in Barfreestone. That's true LDWA spirit.

Other Kent members who completed the main event were Jill Green (who has now completed 26 Hundreds) and Jim Catchpole, Stephanie Le Men and Judy Rickwood (who have now both completed 11), Alan Stewart and Andrew Moore.

Ed Barnes, Marshall Elliott, Sarah Turner and Stephen Power had to retire. Stephen is the son of Conrad Power, who lived in Hastings and died two years ago. Stephen lives in Hong Kong and had entered the event in memory of his father.

On the marshals' walk, there were successful completions for Andrew Boulden (his 26th Hundred), Don Newman (his 33rd), Keith Warman (his 28th), Nicola Foad and Malcolm Dyke.

Roger Dean, Peter Jull, Steve Russell, Dave Sheldrake and David Thornton had to retire.

In addition, Graham Smith and Michael Headley attempted the walk three weeks before the marshals' walk. As they were both involved with the organisation of the main event and the marshals' walk, their walks were both granted official status. Graham was able to complete the walk (see story below) while Michael retired at Dover.

### **WALKERS WIN BATTLE OF FAVERSHAM CREEK**

Kent LDWA members will be interested to learn that a significant new stretch of the creek side at Faversham will be opened up to the public, following a public inquiry where members of Kent Ramblers gave evidence.

Two large housing developments had been built on the site of a former shipyard. One was built over a footpath that had fallen into disuse and, while provision had been made for a path along the waterfront in the second, for various reasons it had never actually opened.

This had been a contentious issue in Faversham for many years and, at an earlier public inquiry in 2014, Kent County Council was charged with coming up with a solution. KCC's proposal was to extinguish the old path and have a continuous path along the creek which would link the town to the marshes. This was vehemently opposed by the residents who felt they would lose their privacy. This led to the second public inquiry, held in January, which lasted three days.

At the inquiry Kent County Council was supported by many Faversham organisations and residents and by Ian Wild, the Ramblers' Coastal Access Officer for Kent, who gave evidence from the Coastal Access perspective. Natural England had previously indicated it would include the new path into the England Coastal Path.

Following the public inquiry, the inspector, Barney Grimshaw, concluded that both path orders should be confirmed.

Ian, who has been working with Natural England since 2010, said "This is great news. While this is a relatively small piece of the



Coastal Path it was one of the most contentious. The old creek side in Faversham is one of the town's greatest assets and this will benefit a lot of people."



**Kent LDWA members pictured at The Drum Inn at Stanford, on June 18 for the annual post-100 celebration. CP100 meetings were held at The Drum. Between 40-50 people attended the evening, which included a presentation of a special Strider front page to Gail Elrick – who was on the CP100 organising group – to mark her standing down as LDWA chairwoman (see story in the current Strider).**



**Dale Moorhouse, John Gilbert and Sarah Turner are pictured after they (plus Graham Smith and Marshall Elliott) spent 2-3 hours clearing rubbish from a path leading to the Duke of York's Royal Military School, CP100 venue. The five filled 12 bags of rubbish (and also found part of a car's discarded wing and an empty water container), as well as clearing away some vegetation.**

#### **CINQUE PORTS 100 – SOME REFLECTIONS**

Well, we did it. Kent LDWA staged the Cinque Ports 100, and more than four years hard work – put in by a small group of people – came to fruition in the scorching heat of the bank holiday weekend of May 26-28.

For the record, there were 447 starters, with 309 finishers and 138 retirements. This figure includes Tara Williams who swept the entire event. She didn't intend to walk the entire distance, but she just went on and on and on – and ended up doing the whole distance. Hers was a fantastic effort which had to be made official.

On the marshals' walk – so well organised by Stephanie Le Men and held over the bank holiday weekend of May 5-7 – there were 48 starters, with 34 completions and 14 retirements. A big factor in the number of retirements on the main event and the marshals' walk was the very hot weather.

I have to say that everyone involved with the Cinque Ports 100 can be very pleased with what they did. Everyone's efforts, however big or small, contributed to the LDWA's flagship walking event of 2018 being the success it was.

We certainly had a small team. When the organising group had its first meeting, at the start of 2015, there were 18 people attending. Over the course of the next three years, we had a few people leave the group for various reasons – and we ended up with 14. That meant that as a team we were stretched, with some people doing two, or even three, jobs. There were some minor differences of opinion over some aspects of the project, and that was always going to happen. But we all worked together as a team, fulfilling all the obligations which the LDWA's NEC had demanded – and we delivered the Cinque Ports 100.

We had wonderful support from so many people, particularly Gail Elrick, who earlier this year stood down as national LDWA



chairwoman. The key to the success of any major project like this is people, and we had so many people – from Kent LDWA and from other LDWA groups around the country – contact us in response to requests for assistance. They were all fantastic, as were the radio people RAYNET – who provided us with such a marvellous service, including giving the event its own telephone number, and the White Cliffs Ramblers – who got paths cleared before the event, organised parking at the event HQ and ran such a good checkpoint at Northbourne..

In delivering the Cinque Ports 100, we have created a delightful 100-mile walk which visits some of the finest coast and countryside in Kent and East Sussex and which links the historic Cinque Ports, visiting the five original ports and six of the associate towns. The weekend of May 26-28 did not mean the end of the Cinque Ports 100, as the route remains and can be completed in a series of anytime walks. There is public transport all along the route, as well as accommodation in several of the towns and villages visited, so it can also be done in one walk over four or five days. The walk is planned to go on the White Cliffs Ramblers programme next year as a series of 10 or 11 day walks. And no doubt the whole thing will go on the Kent LDWA social programme in due course as well. After all, we still have the route description, and the excellent souvenir map produced for us by Harveys.

As organising group chairman, and also as Kent LDWA chairman, the Cinque Ports 100 made me very proud to be involved with the LDWA. I would just like to close this article by reproducing an email I had from Sally Adams, one of many walkers who were so pleased with the event that they took the trouble to write to us.

Dear Graham and your team,

I was sitting on a train to Hastings on Friday evening and studying your 'Cinque Ports' souvenir map and thinking.....wow.....what an enormous amount of thought, work and even 'history' has gone into this event!

I was able to just sit on a train and at leisure read not only about how the walk was 'created' for the LDWA 100, but I was also able to see for myself the route marked on the 'very light to carry' map....AND see photographs of places to look out for on the walk.

This really helped me because your photographs on the map prompted me to look for these places of interest on the walk....which I would otherwise have missed!

So, first of all, I want to say a big, big **'thank you'** for your simply fantastic Cinque Ports Souvenir Map.....!!!!!! I love it and will always 'treasure' it!

The walk itself was **fabulous!** We visited such beautiful towns and villages and walked through a variety of gorgeous countryside. For somebody such as myself who does not know Kent, it was a wonderful way of exploring Kent!

I was very impressed by the college at the start of the walk and all your staff there were so helpful! One man at my check-in desk even helped me to find a Millets when my shoelace snapped!

Wow! Each and every checkpoint was simply **fantastic!!!** There seemed to be a cheerful person standing outside each one so that when we arrived we were given a lovely warm welcome. All the venues you provided for a checkpoint were clean and brilliantly managed.

I loved the way the staff in each checkpoint looked so smart in their brightly coloured 'uniforms' representing their particular LDWA club. All the staff were so helpful, kind and friendly too. The food was obviously carefully planned. I thought it was superb. Every checkpoint offered a different 'specialty'. I am a vegetarian and at each checkpoint there was always plenty of food available for vegetarians. Many checkpoints offered hot food too and this was always served so efficiently with a smile! Also, almost all the checkpoints offered hot tea and coffee. It was such a lovely gesture that every time we walked into a checkpoint a lovely friendly member of staff would come up and ask what drink we would like!

The food at the breakfast stop was also.....wonderful!!!! You very efficiently transported our bags too!

We were also very efficiently 'checked in' at each checkpoint and I am told people from all round the world could watch our progress at any time!!!

I was given an excellent hot meal at the end of the walk by lovely staff! Additionally, I am thrilled with the lovely certificate you gave us.....so beautifully designed with Walmer Castle!

The facilities for sleeping on the floor at Dover were excellent. Also, I would like to say a big **'thank you'** to Peter and his staff at Dover for providing transport to Dover Priory Station for me this morning at 6.30 am!

Please pass on my sincere thanks to all members of the team. This walk was certainly one of the 'highlights' of my life and all thanks to you and your **enormous** amount of work!!!

It was simply 'the best!'

Best wishes,

**Sally Adams,  
Mill Hill,  
London**

I think this lovely note says it all. It just goes to show that the annual Hundred shows the LDWA at its best. Many, many thanks to all Kent LDWA members who helped in some way on the Cinque Ports 100. Your hard work made the event possible.

**Graham Smith, Cinque Ports 100 organiser**

## **NEW COUNTY PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY MANAGER**

LDWA members will be interested to learn that Mike Haley has been appointed Public Rights of Way Manager for Kent Ramblers, succeeding Averil Brice, who had done the job for four years.

Mike has taken on the voluntary role after spending most of his career as a solicitor, retiring from Gravesham Borough Council last year, where he was the authority's senior lawyer. He had worked there for 14 years.

He said: "I volunteered for the role to help protect, preserve and where possible enhance the footpath network for future generations to be able to enjoy.

"With my legal and planning background, I will try to work closely with the decision makers at county and district council level and assist them in our common purpose of protecting the network.

"I appreciate the difficulties faced by the county footpath teams in times of continuing budget cuts."

Mike has a very good relationship with the county's rights of way team, as his previous job saw him acting for KCC in various elements of public rights of way law, including footpath inquiries before an inspector.

Mike is a keen walker and runner, being a founder member of South Kent Harriers running club. Like Averil, he belongs to the White Cliffs Ramblers.

He is going to be helped with some aspects of his new role by Averil, who will organise working parties to attend to issues like vegetation clearance on footpaths, while Mike uses his professional experience on issues like planning applications and rights of way.

He said: "I have always liked walking, and I see my job as preserving rights of way.

"Individual ramblers can help by reporting all problems on the network to KCC via their online system so that resources can be targeted where they are most needed.

"KCC have the legal power and the resources but we have the numbers on the ground and it is through all of our members being vigilant and reporting issues that we can best help KCC and preserve the network."

Footpath problems, like blocked paths and broken stiles, can be reported online at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/public-rights-of-way/report-a-problem-on-a-right-of-way>



**Above: the Wye Crown. Photo Explore Kent**

#### **NORTH DOWNS WAY 40th ANNIVERSARY**

The North Downs Way National Trail celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

The route of the trail is based on the ancient Pilgrims Way from Winchester to Canterbury and the shrine of the slaughtered Thomas a Becket. From Canterbury the path picks up the long distance pilgrims' route from Canterbury to Rome on the Via Francigena. With such strong links to Pilgrimage, the trail has been involved in a Europe wide 'Green Pilgrimage' project looking at sustainable tourism on long distance trails.

Following a series of led walks along the trail in the spring, attention focuses on the town of Wye in September for a week of pilgrimage celebrations. The Wye Pilgrims' Festival will take place in the week running up to September 30 which marks the official opening of the trail 40 years ago above the Wye Crown overlooking the town and the sprawling Kent Downs.

The week aims to bring together local businesses and community groups to engage in a series of activities and events celebrating the heritage of pilgrimage. Local eateries will be asked to serve pilgrims' menus including food with a Galician flavour with a nod to the world renowned Santiago de Compostella pilgrim route. Local breweries will be showing off their 'Ales of the Trail', an exciting new partnership between breweries and the North Downs Way to quench walkers' thirsts.

Peter Morris, North Downs Way Trail Manager, said the celebrations were planned to use the memories of Keith Chesterton, a member of Surrey LDWA who walked the entire route in 1977 prior to the official opening and has kept his diaries.

As part of the 40th anniversary celebrations, Graham Smith is leading a 23-mile stretch of the NDW on Sunday September 23 (see list of social walks above).

The week will culminate in a celebratory parade led by local Scouts and Beaver groups to the Wye Crown on Sunday September 30 to commemorate the launch of the North Downs Way .

There will be plenty of opportunities to explore the countryside on foot, with the Kent Downs AONB celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. There will be wildlife and countryside experts to show you around. The charity Refugee Tales will be leading a walk and sharing testimonies of refugees currently at Gatwick detention centre via professional writers. Music, film and literature linked to Pilgrim stories are also well represented. A medieval feast open to all will take place in Wye parish church on Saturday September 29.

As part of the celebration, Peter Morris wants to recruit a team of North Downs Way ambassadors to lead similar walks and events throughout the year. If you, or someone you know is a keen walker and has good knowledge of the trail, he would love to hear from you. Training will take place this autumn. Please contact [peter.morris@kentdowns.org](mailto:peter.morris@kentdowns.org) for further info.

To keep up to date on plans for the Wye Pilgrims Festival see [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way).



**Left: Graham Smith, Sarah Turner and Geoff from Sussex LDWA on the cold, wet and windy South Downs. Right: the party at the end of the walk.**

#### **A SOUTH DOWNS LOOP: Good Friday (March 30) By Graham Smith**

I have been putting on this walk every Good Friday for more than 20 years (goodness me, that makes me feel old – all right, I am old!) and this year, we had by far the worst weather we have ever had. As Jill Green always says, every walk is an adventure - and this one certainly was.

Twenty-six people, plus Meg the border collie, turned up on the end of Eastbourne seafront at 9am, and 13 were still there at the end, having done 24.5 miles (1.5 miles fewer than the advertised 26, for reasons which I am about to relay).

The weather was overcast when we set off, and we all believed (or perhaps wanted to believe!) the weather forecast which had said that the heavy rain was not due to come until the afternoon. But by the time we got to our first stop, Birling Gap, the rain had started, and it got gradually worse as we shuffled over the Seven Sisters. By the time we dropped down to the Cuckmere Valley for our usual mid-morning break, the rain was pretty heavy and it was cold – too cold to stop. Here Dale, John and Richard decided they had had enough, and said they were going to get the bus back to Eastbourne (which they did, and ended up at one of the town's Weatherspoons pubs while the rest of us trudged on). So then there were 23 (plus Meg the border collie).

We then splish-splashed through the mud along the riverbank to New Bridge, and the parting of the ways – with me leading those doing the 26-mile route and Nicola leading those doing the 20-miler. Seven (plus Meg the border collie) opted to go with Nicola. So then there were 16 – and how brave they were.

By now the rain was very uncomfortable (it had penetrated my new waterproofs and I don't mind admitting that I wasn't feeling too good at all). When we got to the open area leading to the South Downs ridge, we were very exposed. When I decided that we would not be going to the usual stop at Firle Beacon – a wonderful viewpoint in good weather – no one complained, particularly as it meant we were taking a good half a mile off the route.

We trudged along the ridge and went down to Alfriston to go into the warm sanctity of the Market Inn (whose landlord could have been a bit more welcoming to a party of bedraggled walkers badly in need of a break and who still spent quite a bit of money in his establishment). Here Jan and Don decided not to stop and to head straight back to Eastbourne, and another member of the party – who was completely wet through – decided to get a taxi back. And so there were 13.

My hands were so cold I could not even undo the zip on my waterproof, and it took me a good 30 minutes to feel something like normal. I had been flirting with the idea of abandoning the walk, and seeing if others were keen on getting a taxi back to Eastbourne. But after a drink (or two for some!) we all felt a little better, and when we emerged from the Market Inn, the rain was easing. My hands were still a bit cold, and as I hadn't had the foresight to pack gloves in my rucksack, I put a spare pair of socks on my hands (which kept them warm – for a while).

I decided we would take the shorter South Downs Way route back to Eastbourne, rather than our usual route over the shoulder of Wilmington Hill, which saved us a good mile. This meant we missed our usual second pub stop, the Eight Bells at Jevington, but no one minded. We pressed on, and the South Downs Way route makes for very pleasant going over those rolling downs. By now it had stopped raining, and we finally got back to Eastbourne just before 6pm, five of us ending the day at Weatherspoons.

Thanks for coming, everyone, and for being in such cheerful spirits despite such atrocious weather. As Sarah Turner said, when we got back to Eastbourne we looked like "Be-draggled.com!" and as Janet Field said, we lived up to our name as "The Crazy Gang!" Let's hope we have better weather on Good Friday next year.

#### **COBHAM - WHERE MR PICKWICK WALKS WITH MR TUPMAN**

##### **- A social walk on Sunday March 25 By Steve Russell**

Peter put out a call for new social walk leaders, especially in the West Kent area. As I lead a couple of old folks walks in mid Kent (albeit of such short distances that Peter had commented previously that they were hardly worth getting out of bed for!), and I particularly like the Cobham area for walking, I thought I could combine a few of these walks to come up with a reasonably long walk suitable for the more active. I therefore volunteered and suggested a couple of dates. "Great," said Peter, and so we agreed on the date. "By the way," he also said, "I need it in the Strider format by the end of the month (September 2017) for the next issue." A look in Strider showed that a social walk needed a distance, theme, location and time. Hence the Dickens theme title, Sole Street Station for parking and railway, and a look at other Social Walks gave the distance and time. Then, apart from the date in my diary I forgot about a walk six months hence.





**Left: photocall on Steve's walk.**

**Right: Steve gives walkers a short talk**



Fast forward to early March 2018. How do I get 19 miles? A look at the map suggested a near figure of eight with Cobham for a lunch break which, with a bit of judicious examination of PROWs, gave approximately two even splits. As it was my walk I decided to include the bits I like and so enhanced the historical theme to incorporate places many people might be unaware of, or not have seen. A week later I time tested it on the ground and it seemed to work out, although in Shorne Woods the paths I chose didn't seem to fit in with the map.

A lady non-LDWA member had somehow heard about the walk and contacted me to ask if she could join it. "Of course," I said. "And if you like us why not become a member?" I gave her some details of the type of walk and mentioned the possibility of an 11 or 12 mile shortened version if it proved too much.

It was just as well that I had made some notes as Brian, our esteemed Life President, said that he would like to meet us for lunch, but at what time? 12.30.

Sunday 25th found me early at Sole Street Station to check parking ticket purchase. It was from a ticket machine on the platform which only took card payments. Apprehensively I waited to see if anybody would actually turn up, and was pleasantly surprised to see 14 people. A couple of walkers came by train, one from London and one from Faversham, both trains arriving just before departure time. Legendary Stephanie had run 10 miles to get there!

I counted heads, but in my nervousness forgot to take names, as we set off just after 9 am. I had explained that there would be a toilet stop/break at six miles, which I was informed would just about be manageable for some, and fortunately recalled that toilets would be available in four miles at the Forestry Commission's Jeskyns site. I think nearly everybody made use of this unplanned stop when we arrived there. Two miles later, at the planned Shorne Woods Country Park stop the benches and tables proved useful for those on a late breakfast.

Over the A2 we entered into Dickens territory, crossing the route he would have taken from Gads Hill, Higham via Cobham Park to Cobham. We took a circular route, skirting the Cobham Woods next to Ranscombe Farm to arrive at a path junction where I led the group off piste to a heap of stones hidden in the undergrowth. This was the site of the Toe Memorial (now vandalised) but erected by the widow of the 5th Earl Darnley in memory of the spot where in February 1835 he decided to show his brother in law and cousin how to trim branches off a felled tree. He took an axe off the woodman, and in demonstrating it the axe slipped on the tree trunk and severed one toe, and nearly another. He died one week later of Lockjaw, aged 39 years. We walked a little further before again deviating off our path to view the renovated Mausoleum. This was designed for the 4th Earl Darnley but never consecrated so not used for burials. It had lain neglected and vandalised for many years but was renovated in 2013 thanks to a consortium of interested public organisations and transferred to the National Trust. On the edge of Cobham village we stopped at the Richard Dadd path. It was down this path that a young artist murdered his father and fled to France before being caught and ending up in Broadmoor. We have a cultural lot in the LDWA, as several walkers knew of him and had seen his paintings. It was at this spot that Peter Jull informed us that he had starred (been) in a film shot in Cobham Park about four years ago! The good news is that Peter doesn't charge for autographs. The bad news is that the film wasn't released in the UK.

We walked through The Ship car park to the Sports ground where a Dads v Lads football match was in progress, and those with sandwiches could sit, into the Street past the Darnley Arms (where Brian would be), and opposite the Leather Bottle (for the Dickens fans to go in) we went into the churchyard. It was here that Mr Pickwick walked with Mr Tupman. This story was eloquently told to us by Rex, our other Legend. For further interest we went behind the church into the 14C Grade 1 listed College.



It was originally built as a chantry of five priests and is now almshouses.

We had now split up for lunch, and in the Darnley Arms at 12.30 was Brian who had the latest copy of Strider for our non-member walker. I told him that she had not turned up, only to be corrected by both Tim and Rex who said that she was indeed on the walk, and they proceeded to tell us all about her! My excuse (a poor one) was that as leader I had to concentrate on the route!

We paused for a group photo in the churchyard before setting off on the second leg.

About a mile later, I asked our non-member if she would like to take a short cut back to Sole Street. She declined the opportunity and wished to continue. It seems that the talkers in the group must have made a good impression. We continued past the lovely setting of Luddesdown Cricket ground and along to near Holly Hill, where we turned down into the hidden valley to see Dode Church. The village of Dode was lost in 1349 due to the Black Death and the church abandoned. It is now used for all types of non religious weddings, including handfasting. We walked parts of Dave's Night Walk via Harvel and back to Sole Street for the forecast 4.30 pm finish, and yes, it was just about 19 miles.

I asked our non-member if she would now be joining the LDWA.

"I'll think about it"!



**Left: coming down off Tolsford Hill. Right: walking into Elham.**

#### **THE ELHAM VALLEY WAY: June 2 By Graham Smith**

The Elham Valley Way is a very pleasant, and extremely well waymarked, 22.5 mile walk going from Hythe to Canterbury, and this was the third year in succession I had led it for the Elham Valley Walking Festival,

This year we had a record turnout of 43. There were actually 42 starting the walk from Hythe Library at 8.30am, but we picked up another as we met a group of walkers on another Elham Valley Walking Festival walk as we were coming off Tolsford Hill. This group had started from Elham, and one of the walkers decided to join us, as he fancied doing a longer walk. Well, the more the merrier.

It was a hot day, although not as hot as it was last year. We had our usual early lunch stop at the King's Arms in Elham and then pressed on. We didn't go too quickly but we certainly didn't dawdle, as my plans were geared to reaching Canterbury to get the 6.15pm bus (the last direct service on a Saturday) back to Hythe.

As it was pretty hot, it took a bit of willpower to avoid going into the Mermaid pub at Bishopsbourne, but I knew that if we did, we might well have been tempted to stay there longer (much longer!) than planned. So we marched on, and instead of a pub, we stopped for drinks at one of the shops in Bridge.

We reached Canterbury just after 5.30pm, and had time for a very welcome drink in the Weatherspoons Sir Thomas Ingoldsby pub before boarding the bus.

Several of the walkers achieved Personal Bests, as they had not walked a distance like that before. Well done to them all.

And a big well done to Peter Corkhill and everyone else involved with Elham Valley Walking Festival, and many thanks to Sue Mott, who was an excellent backmarker.

And I have already offered to lead this walk again for next year's Elham Valley Walking Festival. Watch this space.

#### **SUMMER FRENCH CHALLENGE: June 30 By Graham Smith**

We were joined by four friends from Essex and Herts LDWA on this year's annual summer French trip – Gill and Rob Struthers, Ginny Powell and Wayne Eagle – and what a pleasant day it turned out.

It was also a day in which the mystery of missing Rex Stickland was eventually solved. Rex had signed up to go on the trip, making the party 12. But when we turned up at the meeting place of Dover's Western Heights, Rex was not there. Rex is one of those people who does not have a mobile phone (very commendable really) so he could not be contacted. We waited five minutes, and drove to the former meeting place for this walk – Laureston Place in Dover – but no Rex. So we had to move, as check-in was 45 minutes before sailing, and it was a busy Saturday.



**Left: the group post in the bus shelter at Escalles for the traditional photo:  
Right: the group at Cap Blanc Nez.**

We had a pleasant crossing to France with P&O on the 0725 ferry, then drove to Coquelles, where we parked our three cars at the Auchan hypermarket. Then we started the walk, taking our usual route through Coquelles and the village of Peuplingues before taking the road to Escalles and the traditional photoshoot at the bus shelter in the village. The tradition is that all first timers on this walk pose in the shelter, so there were eight of them there – our four Essex friends, plus Stewart Goodsell, Peter Sinden, Barbara Hutton and Helen Gosling.

Photos taken, we pressed on to our normal lunch stop of Mont de Couple, which offered the usual fine views. Then, coming off Mont de Couple and heading for Wissant, we spotted a familiar figure moving rapidly towards us. It looked a bit like Rex – and it was Rex! To cut a long story short, Rex had gone to the wrong meeting place. Once he realised he was not going to be picked up, he got a taxi to Dover docks and jumped on the next ferry. Then he got a taxi to Sangatte and picked up the normal route where he met us.

With Rex in the group, we moved on to Wissant, where we had a couple of beers – very welcome as it was a very hot day – then headed along the beach to pick up the clifftop path which took us to the foot of Cap Blanc Nez. Here we waited a few minutes for Helen, who had developed some severe blisters. To help Helen, Gill kindly carried her rucksack. We then had the long, quite laborious zig-zag path up to the top of Cap Blanc Nez (it was much better when, years ago, we could take the short, sharp path straight to the top, where we were rewarded by being able to buy very welcome ice creams – but the direct path has been fenced off and the ice cream sellers have been banished). However, Cap Blanc Nez is still a fine, very interesting viewpoint and always worth going to.

Then we descended and picked up GR (Grande Randonnée) 121 back to Coquelles. This was pretty stony underfoot which made it even more uncomfortable for poor Helen, but she bravely battled on. We reached Auchan with time for some shopping and a meal in the hypermarket's restaurant, before driving back to the docks and the ferry back to Dover – where we parked ourselves in the front of the ship, and enjoyed a delightful sunset as we approached home turf.

For the record, we walked 21.5 miles at an average speed of 2.4 mph (well, we did stop for a couple of beers) and our total ascent was 675 metres/2,215 feet.

In the words of Sarah Turner: "France never fails to deliver; annual Kent LDWA Summer trip over Le Channel for French sun, French GRs, French beaches, French beer, moules & frites et Le French Ambience! (and LDWA Essex & Herts came too! Allez.)"

### **CINQUE PORTS 100 SOLO By Graham Smith**

As my good friend Jill Green always says, every walk is an adventure – and I guess that doing a virtually unsupported Hundred is probably a more adventurous walk than most.

I decided to have a go at a solo Cinque Ports 100 last year. I was never going to enter the event, and I felt I ought to be helping on the marshals' walk, but I did want to do the walk, having spent four years working on the project with the other members of the team. Michael Headley felt similarly. Having got my 10 Hundreds badge now, I have no ambition to do 20 Hundreds, so I was happy to make the attempt unofficially. But chatting to Keith Warman before last year's Founders' Challenge, I was informed that the LDWA Hundred rules do allow people to attempt solo Hundreds officially if it is felt they are needed to help out on the event and the marshals' walk. So I telephoned Dave Morgan, now the LDWA's national chairman and then the 100s coordinator – and Dave gave us the green light.

As Dave told me, the pressure would be off. We didn't need to enter the event, we didn't need to get to the start by a particular time, we didn't need to queue up to register and there would be no mass start (not that I have anything against mass starts) – we





**Graham at the end of his Cinque Ports 100 solo walk.**

**The good ladies of Wittersham Knit and Stitch Group, who gave me a very welcome cup of tea.**

**Michael enjoys a drink at the Black Lion, Appledore (after checking the WiFi connections in the village hall, one of the checkpoints on the event).**

were just doing the walk. And I have to say that the idea of a solo Hundred did appeal (having done quite a few solo challenge walks, including some solo Sussex Strides). Apart from anything else, I wanted to prove it could be done. And a great advantage, of course, was that Michael and myself would be familiar with the route (which still didn't stop us from going wrong a couple of times ...)

So on the sunny morning of April 19, I met Michael on the train from Ashford and we travelled to Hastings for our Cinque Ports 100 solo attempt. I have to say, it did feel really good to be stepping out on a walk which we (and the others) have worked so hard on and for so long. We had agreed to walk at our own pace for the first part of the walk, but to keep together during the night section (which, more or less, is how it worked out).

We went to Sussex Coast College and I had a quick breakfast next door at Subway – and we were off. The sun was out and it was really good as we marched along Hastings seafront and ascended those Tamarisk Steps to get onto that lovely greensward leading to the country park. In my view, Hastings Country Park is the best part of the Cinque Ports 100 route, and we were walking it in conditions which could not have been better – lovely sunshine, clear blue skies and good tracks to walk on. We had decided to have our stops at the route's checkpoints, but we did not stop at the first one, Pett Level, as we felt this would be too early at 6.5 miles. So we pressed on, along the Royal Military Canal path, to Winchelsea and then to Rye, having our first stop there and making use of a fish and chip shop which was right on the route.

Temperatures were now well into the 20s, but it certainly was not uncomfortable. I was walking a bit ahead of Michael, as being the meticulous person he is, he needed to check the WiFi connections at all the checkpoints to New Romney. So I reached Wittersham before he did, and was given very welcome tea and biscuits by some of the good ladies from the Wittersham Knit and Stitch Group who I met in the churchyard. We pressed on to Tenterden, where we had a decent stop, making use of one of the town's supermarkets and a pub.

It was evening when we walked to Appledore, and in hot weather that is always one of my favourite times to walk, as the sun is not as strong then and it is generally getting much cooler. Here we had a good stop at the Black Lion pub in Appledore. By now it was dark, and our next job was to cross Romney Marsh by torchlight. This we did (thanks to Neal's excellent route description, with its spot on compass bearings), getting to Lydd shortly after 11pm. The noises made by those happy fornicating frogs made crossing Romney Marsh at night quite interesting. After Michael had checked the WiFi connection at Lydd's Hardy Hall, we did the short stretch to New Romney, and here I was starting to lag behind, as I was beginning to get the nausea which usually affects me at some stage on a Hundred. Also, I was not able to eat anything, but I was drinking so I was not getting dehydrated.

Then it was on to Dymchurch, mainly following the sea wall (and it has to be said that in the dark, with little to see, that section is a bit tedious). Here, once again, we had to rely on Neal's compass bearings to get us across fields to Burmarsh, before taking the canal path to ascend the escarpment at Lympne. By now we were getting the dawn chorus, as it was just starting to get light – and with those extensive views from Lympne, it was an extremely memorable morning. We pushed on to Hythe, reaching the sports pavilion (the breakfast stop on the event) and then Costa Coffee. My nausea was at its worst here, and I tried to eat something, but although I could get food in my mouth, I just couldn't digest anything.

So we moved on, taking the surprisingly hilly section before dropping down to Sandgate, and then reaching Folkestone where we had our next stop in the churchyard next to the St Eanswythe's School checkpoint. By now it was getting on for 10am, and it was starting to get hot, certainly hotter than the previous day. We took the path through The Warren at Folkestone, and the steep climb up to Capel. By now the temperature was a good 27 degrees, and that climb was not easy – but fortunately it is not as steep as the climb from The Warren on last year's White Cliffs Challenge (now whose silly idea was that? Oh – mine!) and at the top there is the Clifftop Café, of which we took full advantage.

The heat was now affecting both of us, which may explain why shortly afterwards we went astray on what should be one of the easiest parts of the route, mis-reading the route description and starting to go in completely the wrong direction to the one we wanted. A road sign showed us the error of our ways, and a bit of road bashing soon got us back on track. The stretch to Church Hougham and then Dover is usually very pleasant, but by then, having done almost 70 miles and with the temperature freakishly hot for April, we weren't really in a state to enjoy it properly.

When we reached Dover, we had a stop in the shade, and agreed that we would split up and walk at our own pace. In any event we were on familiar ground (for me anyway) and I had no worries about navigation. So I pressed on and reached the Western Heights

and the Drop Redoubt (which I did enjoy) and then crossed the town to pass the Bleriot Memorial and reach Langdon Cliffs (which, with its café and toilets, we had earmarked as a checkpoint). I later learned that Michael had decided to finish after the Western Heights. He was generally feeling OK, but it was hot and the lack of sleep was starting to affect him. He had done well over 70 miles – a tremendous effort in that heat, and of course his qualifier for next year's Hundred (should he wish to enter it ..) I pressed on, and had a quick stop at St Margaret's before reaching my home town of Deal. I flopped on to one of the benches by Deal Pier and was able to shut my eyes before my wife Sarah, bearing fruit and drink, came to meet me. Then it was the very straightforward stretch to Sandown Castle and the Sandwich Bay Estate, before heading across Royal St George's golf course to Sandwich. I had a quick stop and then, just as it was getting dusk, I moved on, meeting Sarah (with more fruit and drink) at Northbourne. A quick stop in the car and I was off again on those last 7.1 miles, reaching the Duke of York's Royal Military School at 12.32am.

I must say it felt great to have done it, and I told Sarah on a couple of occasions that that would be my last Hundred (changing my mind a couple of days later – well, I do like Northumberland).

Many thanks to Michael for his company, to Sarah for meeting me en route, and to several Kent LDWA members who sent Michael and myself good wishes during and after our adventure.



**Left: Jane with Vikki Bell at the Dover checkpoint: Right: Jane and Vikki have breakfast at Deal, with Deal Mayor David Cronk and the LDWA's Rex Stickland behind.**

### **THE CINQUE PORTS 100 MARSHALS' WALK By Jane Macefield**

I woke at 6am on the morning of Saturday May 5, Marshal's Walk day! Plenty of time to be in the car for an 8am start on the drive to Hastings. Feet had been taped up the night before so it was just breakfast, dress in chosen kit and remember to breathe. Before I knew it, 7.55, then panic - still to cream feet, water in bottle, pick up mobile, pick up trainers, kiss dog goodbye. On the road at 8.15!

We pulled up outside the college building at about 9am, can't really remember, it was all becoming a bit of a blur. Found my way inside the building and was directed to the control room. There were lots of friendly faces and the usual rumble of conversations, and I was handed an envelope but instructions were difficult to understand! Last minute preparations were executed and snatched conversations with familiar faces all exchanging the same feelings of anxious anticipation. Finally, we were directed outside into the sunshine for the start. After a few words from Graham and Steph, we were finally off, at long last, the agonising wait was over! The walk to the seafront and beyond was easy, chatting to a number of people I knew, and a few I didn't. It was just another walk!!! By the time we got to the Dolphin pub and going up the steps, I couldn't see the guys at the front. From then on it was down to business, just one foot in front of another, keep fuelled, hydrated, but most of all enjoy the moment. The first checkpoint soon appeared - warm sausage rolls a real treat, quick drink and off again.

As I walked into Rye, it was very busy, only to be expected on such a beautiful day, so a mildly assertive stance was taken and I just marched straight ahead walking round the tourists, straight up the beautiful Mermaid Street and through the town to the next checkpoint, where I was greeted by the lovely David Weatherley with a huge hug - not sure he'd have been so keen to hug me 36 hours later!

After leaving Cp2 I was feeling fairly settled, despite the heat I was quite comfortable and well within my very generous schedule. The next few checkpoints were passed through and the heat of the day was dropping, Tenterden checkpoint was reached, a delicious piece of quiche then on to Appledore for supper and my first meet up with my lovely Dave, my supercrew!

Leaving Appledore, darkness had descended, so it was headtorch and jacket time. As I approached the marshes, a remarkable chirruping sound greeted me. I was reliably informed that this was frogs!! The sound stayed with us all night, it became quite comforting and kept spirits up listening out for the silliest chirrup!

As dawn was breaking, a warm red glow lit up the sky I was passing Port Lympne. Sadly nothing more exotic than large patches of mud and brambles to be seen, but a glorious view at the top of quite a steep climb was well worth the effort. To add to the amazing view, supercrew Dave and Daisy dog were waiting patiently.

I knew that breakfast wasn't far away. In addition, my lovely pal, Vikki, had offered to walk with me for the day and she arrived just as I was finishing my breakfast, perfect timing! We gathered our stuff, said our goodbyes to the checkpoint staff, and waved the lovely Dave goodbye.

It was another beautiful warm day and we set off in high spirits towards Folkestone. I was starting to feel a bit tired and my pace was dropping, but it was fairly flat and Vikki's company was a great distraction. We arrived at the Folkestone checkpoint, up the stairs and were greeted by the lovely staff and their hummus crackers!!! After a much needed refuel, it was off up the steps to



Dover!!! I don't think I can adequately describe the complete and utter horror of this stage. It was like being part of some disaster movie - the sun beating down unmercifully, sea breeze drops, children and dogs running out of control everywhere, and finally, THE STEPS!!! Dave very thoughtfully met us with a couple of magnums just before we started the final ascent!!! All I'm going to say about the steps is that there were lots, it was hot, and I never thought I'd see the top. Then it was all over, and Dave was waiting at the top with a big hug.

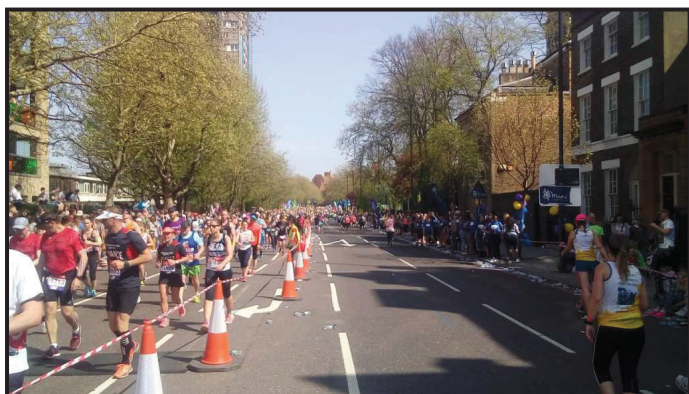
Things started to become a blur now. Every step was difficult and motivation was dropping fast. I was really struggling. Vikki was brilliant, gently cajoling me on and eventually we struggled into the checkpoint. The staff knew exactly what was wrong, and after a short nap, some food and drink, I was rejuvenated. Off we set, passing the castle, took in the amazing view of the port, and finally found the lighthouse!!! (they are very well camouflaged!!!). St Margaret's loomed and Vikki's car.

This is where Vikki showed her true colours!!! She sent the following text to Dave - 'I'm going to deal with Jane'. He assumed that since Deal was the next checkpoint, she was going to continue with me, rather than take any other action!!! Off we set in failing light with only my headtorch to light the way - Vikki hadn't planned on being with me for more than 20 miles. We laughed our way through the woods and along the edge of that never ending field, and eventually we hit Deal seafront. Tiredness came upon me once again, and very quickly, each step was a real effort. Once again, Vikki gently cajoled, guided me past the drunks, and then we were there - Deal Town Hall with my lovely Dave and Mayor Dave to greet us, plus of course the untiring checkpoint staff. Once again sleep was required, so whilst Dave drove Vikki back to her car, I took the opportunity to have some zzzzzzz.

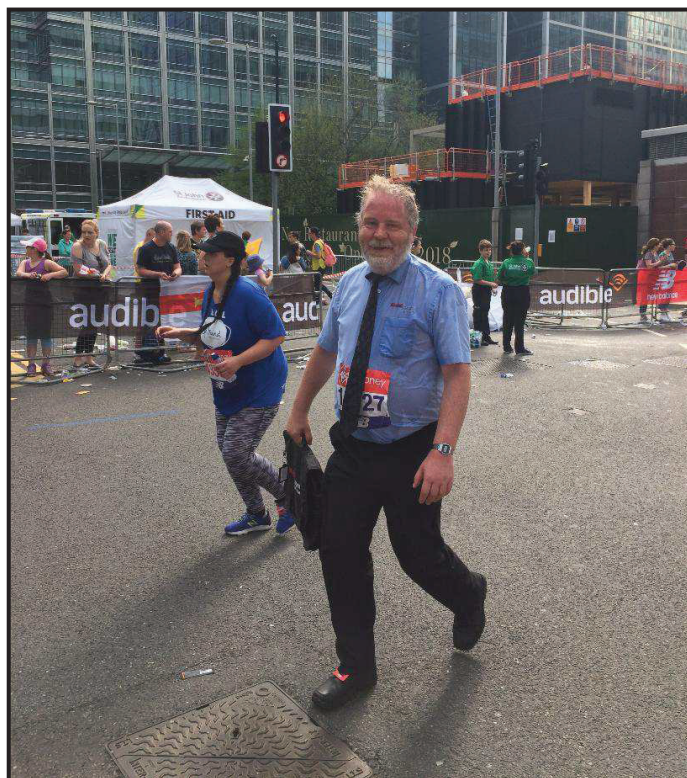
Dave returned and the lovely checkpoint staff advised me that I was close to my time allowed, so needed to leave promptly! Off I set with Dave to Sandwich, along the seafront, across the golf course, the time galloped by, the end was in sight and I was feeling great. Dave returned to Deal to pick up the car and after refuelling, I set off for Northbourne. Just over 10 miles to go, having thought at Dover it was all over, the end was in sight!!! I picked up the pace, this was it, nothing was going to stop me now.

The sun was coming up, another beautiful dawn, a few miles to go and there was the lovely Dave and Daisy dog coming towards me. A piece of toast and marmalade to keep me going and I was off again - just over five miles to go!!!

I was dreading this stage, through Sutton Court farm. In the past the gates have been difficult, electric fences to get through and mud!!! However, apart from one gate dropping on my big toe - couldn't feel it anyway, it was easy. Now it was just up the long track to Maydensole. Once again, the lovely Dave and Daisy suddenly appeared - great to have company up that track, and there it was, the farm. I decided that a beer was in order, a quick chat with the lovely checkpoint staff and I was off. I skipped (well it felt like skipping!) along the road to the NDW marker. Emotions were running high now and I was pleased to be on my own as the enormity of what I was about to achieve was realised. Turn sharp right on the road at Pineham, left at the T-junction, cross the bridge, turn right, pass the church on right and left across the field at the cream house. I could have done the last bit blindfolded. Along the alleyway and I was there. Dave and Daisy were waiting at the barrier, across the car park and into the hall, I'd done it - 100.4 miles, over!



**Left: the London Marathon:**



**Right: Peter in his 'outfit' shirt and tie and black trousers, and his briefcase!**

#### **MY LONDON MARATHON By Peter Jull**

Some years ago I was browsing the internet and stumbled across the list of London Marathon finishers. Out of curiosity I scrolled to the bottom to see who came last and saw finishing times of 10 & nine hours. Methinks I can do better than that across ploughed fields, up steep hills, over stiles and stopping to check navigation; going to the pub even. How hard can it be with no hills, firm tarmac and a blue line to follow?

A few years passed when I missed the entry dates and a few more when a fat magazine dropped through the letterbox full of training tips, adverts for running gear and charity promotions but saying "Not this time". In October the same magazine arrived and I was tearing the cellophane wrapping off to put it straight in the recycling when I spotted it was overprinted "You're in". Social media soon revealed the irony that the front cover picture man finishing last year's marathon wasn't actually in this time.

A flood of emails followed full of training plans, none of which correlated with my feet up on the sofa regime. Eventually one arrived with joining instructions advising that the roads would reopen at seven hours finishing pace and no medal for anyone over eight hours; maybe not so easy for me. It also said I had to go to ExCel in London on one of the four days before the event just to pick up my running number. So on the Friday, to make better use of the travel time and cost, I stopped on the way there to walk out



a route I was to lead later in the year: 24 miles of hot and chaffing hills with clear blue sunshine lightly toasting arms having their seasonal debut rather obviated my sofa based preparations.

I was instructed to go to Blackheath station to get to the Blue start. First train from Deal could only get there, after four changes, 10 minutes before the start so I drove to a station near Dartford and joined the right line in from there. Escaping a heaving station and thronging with the crowd I was on the heath with time to spare. Sitting in the sun was preferred over standing in the shade until 9:50 when I wandered lonely as a latecomer over to the runners' entrance. A security man chased me briefly mistaking me for an errant spectator, confused by my attire of shirt and tie, regular black trousers and shoes and carrying a briefcase. I knew my place at the back of the very long queue and as the tannoy set Mo and his mates on their way my colleagues were making bemused/incrédulous/commending comments on my outfit. Outfit? It's what I wear to work every day.

Eventually we shuffle forward and reach the starting gantry which says 42 minutes gone and Mo is well past Cutty Sark. Everyone but me starts to run and the constant passing incites excessive speed walking causing shin splints to start complaining. After half a mile I'm thinking I've ruined my event but then the first of the runners start puffing to a walk and I'm passing them instead and the pain starts to subside. At six miles in I'm averaging 4mph and get to Cutty Sark so soon my daughter misses me. They say beware strange men giving sweets to children but this event has an unexpected role reversal with children giving sweets to an old man; others are happy to get a high five.

Over Tower Bridge and into Smithfield and the other half of the road is crowded with those 11 miles ahead getting in each other's way while I stroll on serenely, albeit down to 3.9mph. My daughter finds me in Limehouse and feeds me egg sandwiches. They only show the pretty bits on TV, Cutty Sark, Tower Bridge, Big Ben, The Mall. In between there's lots of banal backstreets, bleak office blocks and unattractive underpasses. Other sights included drifts of empty water bottles, ranks of Dalek toilets, armies from St. John in green, sporadic charity cheerleaders and a drumming band under a flyover that surely needed ear defenders.

Without any hills and a breeze on much of the route I'm not finding the record marathon day 75° heat a problem with plenty of water stations and some showers for a bit of head wetting. But by the time us stragglers get there some have run out, their passing marked only by discarded water bottles (more than half a million, I hear) or better for recycling compostable cups, inextricably trampled into the tarmac. Canary Wharf skyscrapers have sent my GPS haywire but in the final miles no one's running more than a few yards at a time and I'm continually passing them. The dreaded get on the pavement van supposedly moving at seven hours pace is never seen down Birdcage Walk and round into The Mall. Over the finish line the electronic shoe tag says I'm 39220th but I've achieved my goal of walking the whole way faster than some of the "runners"; 927 of them. And then the sore feet kick in...

## HADRIAN'S WALL 20th to 24th MARCH 20-24

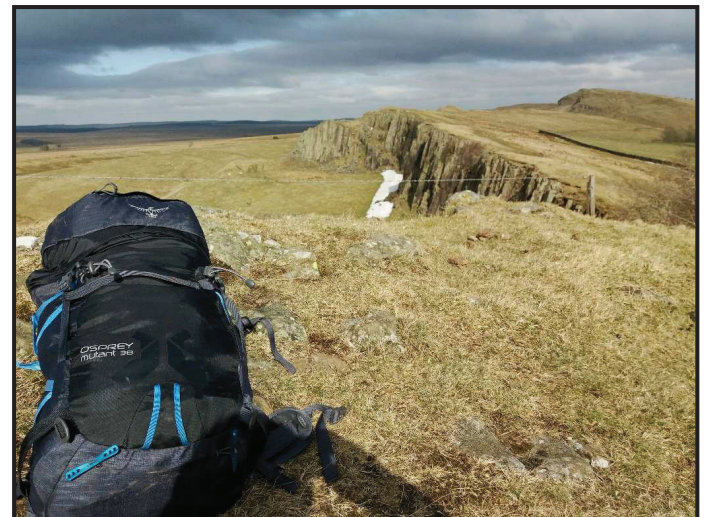
By David Thornton

Having intentionally picked my first six National Trails to start south of Watford Gap, I decided it was time to venture further afield and so chose to do the Hadrian's Wall path in March. A little risky going that far north in March, but as it turned out the weather, once again, was very kind.

With my train leaving West Malling at 10.44, this was to be the first time I would set off on a trail without actually doing any walking on the first day, given that I didn't arrive in Bowness-on-Solway until about 6pm that same evening. This was after a final bus journey from Carlisle to Bowness, during which I sat next to a very pleasant chap, who I found out was an undertaker and who spent the whole journey giving me a detailed blow by blow account of everything there was to see on the path on that 11 mile section. It really was like a guided tour, although

ironically, he confessed he had never actually walked it. That night I stayed at a lovely bed and breakfast, called the Shorne Guest House, run by Alan and Theresa. The room was amazing with a brilliant view across the Solway Firth into Scotland.

I never eat full English breakfasts at home, so I really appreciate the excellent cooked breakfasts that are always on offer during my walks. I was on my way at 7.45, nice and early. 'Millionaires golf' is an expression that's often used when you're having a round in



warm sunshine, with no one in front holding up play and no one rushing up behind you. It seems like it's just you and your playing partners on the course. The problem with golf, unlike walking, is that there is this little white thing which can, and in my case more often than not does, ruin your day. Those first 11 miles into Carlisle were perfect. Solway Firth on my left, views into the Lake District on my right, a light breeze behind and the March sun steadily rising in front, shining warmly on my face. It doesn't get much better. After 25 miles, which took me through Carlisle along the River Eden, I reached my first stop at the Orchard Guest House in Newtown run by George and Penny Beck, which was very comfortable and welcoming.

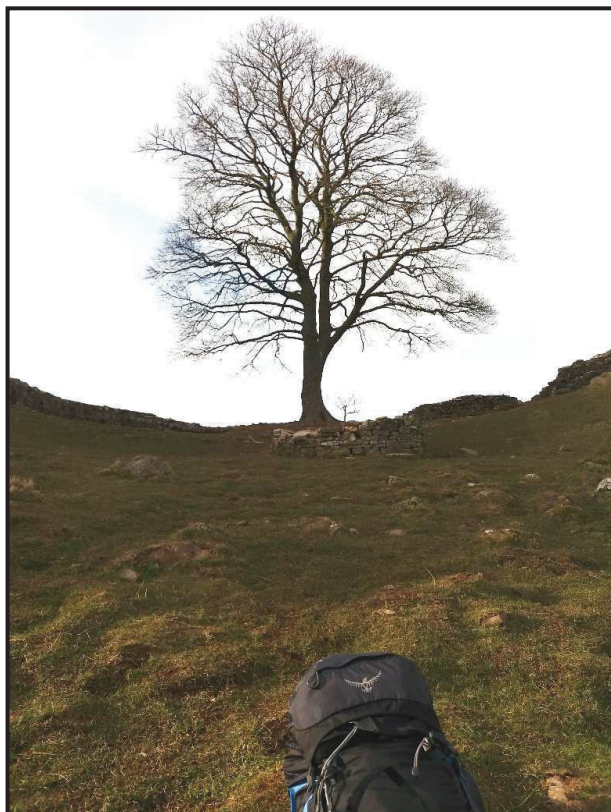
The second day was to take me along the signature section of Hadrian's Wall. The touristy bit and, as I was to find out after four days, really the only bit of any huge interest. The weather was excellent, albeit extremely windy, which, being a bit of a lightweight, threw me around rather a lot. While the wall was



interesting in parts, I was most looking forward to seeing “that tree”- the lone sycamore tree that was catapulted to stardom after featuring in the film Robin Hood Prince of Thieves, with Kevin Costner, Morgan Freeman and Alan Rickman. Now more affectionately known as The Robin Hood Tree. Silly really, but it really did put a big smile on my face when I unwittingly stumbled across it.

When I do a long distance path one of the things I look forward to each day, as much as anything, is either a cold beer or a glass of wine. I regard it as a just reward for a good day’s trekking and despite the relative remoteness of many of these walks, I seem to have this uncanny knack of sniffing out alcohol in some form or other come the day’s end. As I headed towards my next stop at The Old Repeater Station bed and breakfast run by Les Gibson, which was quite literally in the middle of nowhere, I had resigned myself to the fact that I was going to have to tolerate a night on the wagon. Therefore you can imagine my excitement, when, having cheekily enquired as to whether Les had had the foresight to store a few beers in the house, he escorted me to his dining room where he proudly presented a whole selection of locally brewed real ale, neatly displayed in one of his cabinets, with an equivalent selection already chilled in his fridge. Honestly, my eyes lit up like a child stood in front of a pick and mix counter. With two of those poured down the hatch in quick succession, while the rather eccentric Les ran through his repertoire of life stories, I staggered upstairs where a sound night’s sleep beckoned.

The following morning, just as we were about to head in for breakfast, I met the other guests staying over for the night. A couple of ladies from the USA, who introduced themselves in their very broad American accent. “I’m Jan and this is my daughter Melanie”. At this point the door to the dining room creaked open, which prompted Jan to pipe up “Oh and this here is my son in law. His name is August” As I stood to meet August, I was confronted by a giant of a man. Honestly, this guy looked like a mixture of Desperate Dan, Giant Haystacks and ZZ Top. As I crooked my neck sharply upwards in order to make eye contact, he stuck out his hand, which engulfed mine, by way of a greeting. He then sat down and proceeded to



hoover up just about everything edible that was presented to us at the table. After breakfast, I said my farewell and left, but not before clapping eyes on August’s enormous walking boots blocking my path to the front door. I did, rather childishly, contemplate seeing if I could get two of my feet into one of his boots, but feared he would walk out of the dining room and into the hallway at the critical moment, scaring the life out of me as he boomed Fee Fi Fo Fum, or something like that. Day three passed without much excitement, apart from a little light drizzle and a decent overnight stop at a bed and breakfast in Heddon on the Wall. Day four took me into Newcastle, which was pretty dull really, until I actually got into the centre. Here I paid homage to Newcastle Cathedral, also known as St James’ Park, home of Newcastle United Football Club. When they say the city is literally built around this stadium, they really aren’t kidding. I enjoyed my couple of hours in the centre of Newcastle by the river, wandering over the Tyne

and Wear Bridge and the others that crisscrossed close by.

I caught my 14.02 train from Newcastle Central Station and arrived home at 19.15. If I’m honest the Hadrian’s Wall path was one which potentially offered much, but in the end didn’t quite live up to expectations. Still, I can think of worse ways of spending four days and it is another National Trail and a tick in the box and that’s good enough for me.







from Hessle round to Filey on the coast, the views were just brilliant and even when you came inland slightly, away from the ridge the countryside was amazing. It was an absolute pleasure to walk it. I appreciate that you can't really compare these walks, as they are all unique in their way, but were I forced to choose a route up to now that had offered the most enjoyment (and I have many more planned), I would have to pick this one. I'd quite like to go back at some point and walk the Minster Way which crosses the Wolds linking the medieval Minsters at Beverley and York.



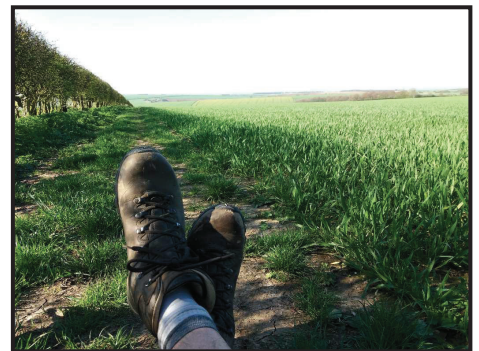
## THE YORKSHIRE WOLDS WAY: APRIL 20-23

By David Thornton

I'm writing this short piece about my Yorkshire Wolds Way walk, sat at my dining room table at midday, on Monday May 7, feeling mildly dejected and slightly frustrated. Just about now, 24 hours ago, at around the 70 mile mark, I pulled out of the Cinque Ports marshalls' 100 mile challenge, struck down with the dreaded multiple foot blisters. Given the state of my feet today, I had aborted my plans to cut the grass or wash the car, so with a sharp and regularly used needle to hand and the World Snooker Championships to keep me company, I decided that this would be as good a time as any to write this. However, before I start, I would like to offer huge congratulations to all of those who successfully completed the 100 miles. I guess the rest of us can take some comfort in the knowledge that we get another bash at it in 2019, if we're up for the challenge.

I chose to start my route at Hessle, having arrived there at 11am after another seamless train journey. Hessle is pretty much built under the Humber Bridge ... or is it the bridge is built on top of Hessle? Either way, when built in 1981, the Humber Bridge was the largest single-span suspension bridge in the world. Even now, 36 years on, it punches at seventh in the league table of bridges and is in fact still the largest in the world which can be navigated on foot or bicycle. With another four days of majestic weather forecast ahead of me, I set off.

What I found with the Yorkshire Wolds Way is that it offered nothing particularly spectacular. But what it did offer was endless, and I mean endless, little gems of beautiful, rolling, idyllic and peaceful countryside. As it follows a horse shoe shape around the escarpment that is the rim of the Yorkshire Wolds



My first night was spent at the Newbald Bed and Breakfast in North Newbald, run by Paul and Jayne Cheeseman. Self contained, it was

more like a mini cottage and extremely nice. Quite a treat really. My third night was spent at the Orchard Lodge Guest House in Flixton, run by Andrew and Lucinda Jenkins. I have never slept in a bed as big and luxurious as the one that was on offer here. I reckon I could have rolled over half a dozen times and still not fallen off the edge. I laughed when I first clapped eyes on it, outwardly saying "Look at the size of that!"

Strategically, the most important stop was my one at The Cross Keys pub, in the very small village of Thixendale, which is run by Steve and Mary Anstey. The strategy was borne out of the fact that it was about 27 miles from my first stop at North Newbald and I needed to be there for 5.15pm, which was the kick off time for the FA Cup semi-final clash between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur, being aired on BBC1. Having set off at 7.30am and after a long and rather hot day's walking, I strolled into Thixendale at 5.05pm. I spent five minutes trying to gain someone's attention, before Steve finally stuck his head out of what I assume was the bedroom window to announce he was finally going to let me in. He escorted me to my room which, much like Newbald, was a detached space, separate from the pub. Having been formally introduced to the bed, shower room and kettle, to which I paid little attention, I



was convinced that he would then reveal to me the location of the TV, which I thought perhaps had been rather cleverly disguised somewhere. But to my dismay, that introduction wasn't forthcoming. Trying to remain calm and composed I casually enquired as to the whereabouts of said TV. He replied, with a startled smile and raise of one eyebrow "Television?! No mobile signal, no internet and no television. Just beautiful countryside and great beer". Shattered by this revelation as I was, even I had to smile at that. However, all was not lost, when I spotted a 1980s Binatone, LED bedside alarm clock ... and radio ... with a tiny wire attached to the back which was looped around my bed post. With a silent prayer, I switched it on and have never been as overjoyed to hear so much crackle. I skilfully tuned into 909 medium wave and listened to Radio 5live commentary, while I made full use of the aforementioned kettle and shower.



As it turns out, my overnight here at Cross Keys was great. The pub, which you wouldn't look at once, let alone twice, was brilliant. Packed to the rafters, with my own reserved table, the food was outstanding, the beer was indeed very impressive and Steve and Mary were great hosts.

If you're planning a National trail you might be inclined to overlook the Yorkshire Wolds Way, as I may well have done. My advice now would be to promote this to the upper section of your list.

### **COMEDY CORNER – A SELECTION OF BREXIT JOKES**

An Englishman, a Scotsman and an Irishman walk into a bar.  
The Englishman wanted to go so they all had to leave.

Why does Britain like tea so much?  
Because tea leaves.

What did Britain say to its trade partners?  
See EU later.

A lot of Leave voters say 'Stop complaining, it's democracy!' Well democracy doesn't always work. If five people democratically elect to take your iPhone, it's a mugging.

I voted Remain, not just for political reasons but because my mum's moved to Spain and I want her to stay there.



**Goudhurst, Kent. Photo by Michael Bennett**



## WALK WITH THE SMUGGLERS

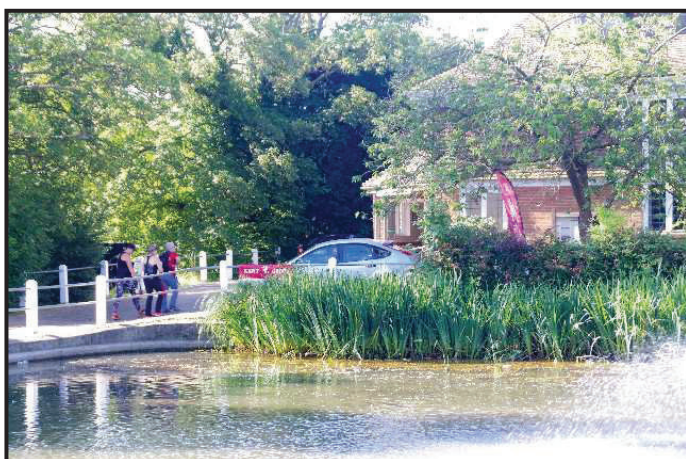
We had 96 starters on the Walk With The Smugglers, on July 8, with only one retirement.

The event, organised by Neil Higham (a great achievement considering his efforts on the Cinque Ports 100 only a few weeks before), was based at Goudhurst.

We had 99 entries, with 21 no shows and 18 entries on the day.

There were 68 people doing the 26-mile route, with 67 of them finishing. Only three people finished the 20-mile route. More people started the 20-mile route but some dropped to the 15-mile route during the walk. So we had 25 people doing the 15-mile route.

The pictures on this page were taken by Eric Rolfe during the event.





## SCENES FROM THE CINQUE PORTS 100

- 1) Judy Rickwood, Chloe Ratcliffe and Jayne Cook at the finish.
- 2) Don Arthurs and Jan Wirmann on the promenade near Dymchurch.
- 3) Pictured at the start are Graham Smith, Admiral of the Fleet Lord Boyce – the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports - Brian Buttifant and the Mayor of Hastings, Cllr Nigel Sinden.
- 4) Helen Franklin at the finish.
- 5) Jill Green and Jim Catchpole at the start.
- 6) Nicola Foad, Joy Davies, Jan O'Rourke and Mary Shillito at the HQ.
- 7) Stephanie Le Men on her way.

