

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

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

## ***NEWSLETTER***



*'The magnificent Joy Davies' at Deal Town FC's ground during the White Cliffs Challenge in August. Photo by Eric Rolfe*

**Number 107**



**December 2018**

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

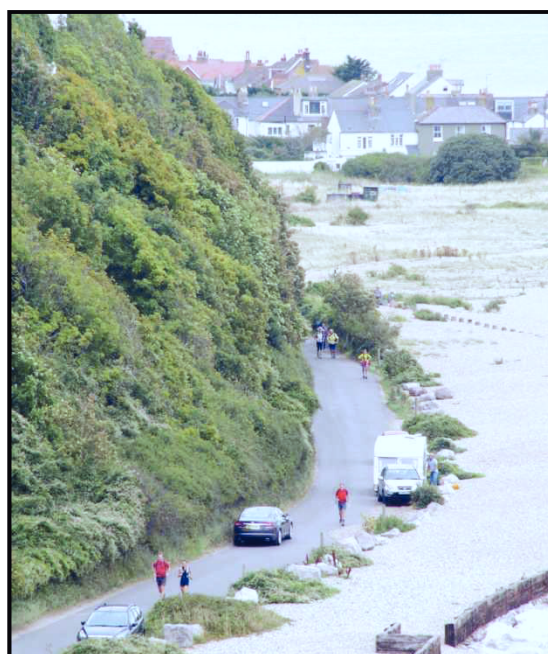


## SCENES FROM THE WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE ON AUGUST 26.

Clockwise, from top left ...

Off they go; along the seafront, with Deal Pier behind; at Kingsdown; Ginny Powell and Gill Struthers; Graham Smith and the Mayor and Mayoress of Deal, Cllr Nick Tomaszewski and his wife Muriel, at the start; Helen Franklin and Don Arthurs at control.

Pictures by Eric Rolfe.



## KENT SOCIAL WALKS – DECEMBER TO MAY

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

c17ml. 07.20 By P&O Desk, Dover Eastern Docks for 8.25am sailing. Recommended parking Langdon Cliffs Visitor Centre & walk down footpath (and up on return). (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 9.45pm local time (approx.) – 8.45pm 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. **C:** Graham Smith

### **Thu Dec 27 Post Christmas Sevenoaks Stroll**

c17ml. Meet at Shipbourne. (GR TQ592522). Park in layby on road opposite church. Map: Exp 147. Pub lunch stop.  
**C:** Dave Sheldrake

### **Tue Jan 1 New Year on the South Downs Again**

c20ml. 09.00 Meet at Eastbourne, W end of promenade (B2103) by South Downs Way marker post, park nr school on left. (GR TV600972). Lunch stop at Alfriston. **C:** Graham Smith

### **Fri Jan 11 Winter Night Walk**

c17ml. 22.30 Meet 21.30 for 22.30 start at Rose & Crown p.h. Wrotham. (GR TQ612592). Bring torch. **C:** Dave Sheldrake

### **Sun Jan 27 AGM**

AGM will be held at Harrietsham Village Hall. Meeting starts at 2pm, preceded by a seven-mile walk which starts at 10am. Pre-AGM buffet meal starts at 1pm. Membership secretary Neil Higham needs to know if people are coming by January 21

### **Sun Feb 3 Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 1 Greenwich to Dartford**

17ml. 09.00 Greenwich Observatory. Start GR TQ388773, Finish GR TQ543743. This is the first of five walks which, in total, cover a 97ml route between the Timeballs at Greenwich & Deal, going over 9 hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood. Linear - finish at Dartford railway station. Pub lunch. **C:** Peter Jull

### **Sun Feb 17 Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 2 Dartford to Rochester**

19ml. 09.00 Dartford railway station. Start GR TQ543743, Finish GR TQ745685. This is the 2nd of five walks which, in total, cover a 97ml route between the Timeballs at Greenwich & Deal, going over 9 hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood. Linear - finish at Rochester railway station. Pub lunch. **C:** Peter Jull

### **Sun Mar 3 Sevenoaks Circular marshals' walk**

Starting from West Heath School at 8am. Please contact David Thornton for details.

### **Sun Mar 10 Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 3 Rochester to Teynham**

21ml. 09.10 Rochester railway station. Start GR TQ745685, Finish GR TQ957630. This is the 3rd of five walks which, in total, cover a 97ml route between the Timeballs at Greenwich & Deal, going over 9 hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood. Linear - finish at Teynham railway station. Pub lunch. **C:** Peter Jull

### **Sun Mar 17 44th Sevenoaks Circular Walk**

See Events Diary in Strider.

### **Sun Mar 24 Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 4 Teynham to Chilham**

19ml. 09.35 Teynham railway station. Start GR TQ957630, Finish GR TR078536. This is the 4th of five walks which, in total, cover a 97ml route between the Timeballs at Greenwich & Deal, going over 9 hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood. Linear - finish at Chilham railway station. Pub lunch. **C:** Peter Jull

### **Sat Mar 30 The Four Pits Walk**

40ml. 08.00 Meet by the bridge over the River Stour at Fordwich. (GR TR179598). Maps: Exp 150,138. A circular walk taking the sites of the former Kent Pits of Chislet, Betteshanger, Tilmanstone and Snowdown (this is an Anytime Challenge and certificates are available for completions, and badges can be obtained for £2). Various stops en route. Likely to be a late finish so bring a torch (or more appropriately miner's lamp!). **C:** Graham Smith

### **Sun Apr 14 Timeball and Telegraph Trail Part 5 Chilham to Deal**

27ml. 09.35 Chilham railway station. Start GR TR078536, Finish GR TR378524. This is the 5th of five walks which, in total, cover a 97ml route between the Timeballs at Greenwich & Deal, going over 9 hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood. Linear - finish near Deal railway station. No refreshments on route, bring picnic supplies.

**C:** Peter Jull

### **Sat May 11 3 Castles**

33ml. 07.30 Sissinghurst church. Parking nearby. (GR TQ795375). To visit Sissinghurst, Scotney and Bodiam Castles. Pub stop @18mls. **C:** Neal O'Rourke

## **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.

## **MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD AT OUR AGM – AND HEAR OUR SPECIAL GUEST**

The annual general meeting of Kent Group of the LDWA will be on Sunday January 27, at Harrietsham Village Hall. The present members of the committee are shown above. Michael Headley and Neal O'Rourke are both standing down from the committee, so there will be vacancies. A nomination form is enclosed with this newsletter and any member may, with his or her consent, be proposed and seconded for the positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer or as a committee member.

The AGM is also your chance to have your say about our group and about the LDWA in general, so please come along and make your voice heard. The group exists for its members, and we need as much input as possible. The address of the hall is Church Road, Harrietsham, Maidstone, ME17 1AP.

The meeting starts at 2pm, and there will be a seven mile walk, led by Michael Headley, beforehand, starting at 10am. There will also be a pre-AGM buffet lunch, starting at 1pm. Averil Brice, who stood down as the Ramblers' Kent Public Rights of Way Manager earlier this year, has kindly agreed to attend our AGM. She will be giving a short talk on her work, and why it is so important for LDWA to support the work of the Ramblers, and will answer questions afterwards. Many Kent LDWA members will know Averil and her husband Steve, as their work has seen them clear vegetation from hundreds of footpaths in East Kent in recent years, including paths on our events the Cinque Ports 100 and the White Cliffs Challenge.

So please fill in the form which is with this newsletter, and send it to membership secretary Neil Higham to let him know if you are coming.

## **CHANGES TO THE WAY YOU RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER**

We are changing the way in which Kent members of the LDWA receive the newsletter.

The Kent Group committee has now decided, after discussion, that we should offer our newsletter online so that all our members who wish will have access to it. We will also continue to print and post the newsletter out to those members who ask to receive it that way. Several other LDWA groups get their newsletters distributed via this dual approach. So this newsletter will be the last one to be distributed purely by post. Starting with the April newsletter, in future those Kent LDWA members who receive group emails will be emailed a link to our website from membership secretary Neil Higham. The link will give them access to the newsletter.

For those Kent LDWA members who would prefer to receive the newsletter by post, they can continue to do so, and will be asked to pay £5 to help cover the printing costs (£7 for families). Cheques should be made payable to Kent LDWA. Alternatively, you can ask Neil for details of paying by bank transfer.

If any Kent members have any queries over these changes to the way the newsletter is being distributed, they are asked to contact Neil or chairman Graham Smith.

## **NEWS OF KENT CHALLENGE WALKS**

### **Sevenoaks Circular**

The traditional first Kent challenge walk of the year will be on Sunday March 17, and will, as usual, be based at the New School at West Heath. The event will use the same routes (30, 20 and 15 miles) which had been planned for this year. Because the exceptionally bad weather meant we had to cancel the event this year, we are offering reduced entry fees for 2019 - £6 for the 30-miler and £5 for the 20 or 15-milers, with an extra £1 for non-LDWA entrants, and on the day entrants paying £12. As usual, we will be donating £1 per entrant to the school which provides a safe haven for children whose mainstream education has broken down and is a registered charity.

The marshals' walk will be on Sunday March 3. We are going to need plenty of marshals, so if you would like to help on the event and/or you would like to do the marshals' walk, please contact David Thornton (details above).



## **ANDREDSWEALD**

Next year's Weald challenge walk will be the Andredsweald Circuit, which will be on Sunday July 14, one of the three Wealden challenges we organise (the others being A Walk With the Smugglers, which took place this year, and the Heart of the Weald, due to go on the calendar in 2020 – with a 'Triple' badge available for three separate completions). Routes will be of 26, 20 and 15 miles. As this newsletter went to press, organiser Neil Higham was in the process of arranging a date for the marshals' walk. This will appear in the next newsletter.

## **WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE**

Next year's WCC will be on Saturday August 24, and as usual the event will be part of the White Cliffs Walking Festival (taking place between August 22-28 – see item below). The event will be based at St Margaret's Village Hall, and there will be two routes – of 32 miles and 18 miles. The 32 mile route will be very similar to the route used on the White Cliffs Challenge last year, but organiser Graham Smith promises it will NOT be going up those steep steps from The Warren at Folkestone (which were even steeper than the steps used on the Cinque Ports 100). The marshals' walk will be on Sunday August 11.

## **TIMEBALL AND TELEGRAPH TRAIL**

Peter Jull is putting his popular Timeball and Telegraph Trail walks on our social walks programme in the early part of next year (see Social Walks programme above).

These are five walks which are being put on the programme jointly with London LDWA. In total, they cover a 97 mile route between the Timeballs at Greenwich and Deal, going over nine hills on which the relay stations of the predecessor mechanical telegraph stood. They are on Sunday February 3 (Greenwich to Dartford – 17 miles); Sunday February 17 (Dartford to Rochester – 19 miles); Sunday March 10 (Rochester to Teynham – 21 miles); Sunday March 24 (Teynham to Chilham – 19 miles); and Sunday Apr 14 (Chilham to Deal – 27 miles).

## **KSS (KENT SURREY SUSSEX) TRIPLE CHALLENGE**

Mary Dumble, from Surrey LDWA, became the latest walker to achieve a Gold Award after the White Cliffs Challenge marshals' walk in August as part of the KSS Triple Challenge of 50-mile walks to be completed in successive years. A KSS Gold Award is given to walkers completing three successive completions of KSS events, the others being the Surrey Tops, held last year, and the Sussex Stride, which we have just heard will be over the weekend of September 21-22 next year. To date five Gold KSS Awards have been given.

KSS Silver Awards are given for two successive completions of KSS events, and on this year's WCC, these were awarded to Helen Abbott, Bryan Darney, Manfred Engler, Marta Kunicka, Andrew Moore and Chris Munt. To date, 21 Silver Awards have been given out.

And KSS Bronze Awards are given to walkers completing one successive completion of KSS events, and on the WCC this year, these were awarded to Jackie Barker, Mick Dodge, Malcolm Dyke, Sonia Edwards, John Gorman, Nina Lambrou, Mike Tuke, David Weatherley and Tara Williams. A total of 121 Bronze Awards have now been given. Certificates to all the Gold, Silver and Bronze Award winners have been sent out by Shirley Greenwood, the KSS Recorder.

Shirley says that on the Sussex Stride next year, we can expect some Platinum Awards (for four successive completions of KSS events).

Kent Group will, as usual, be organizing a checkpoint on the Sussex Stride, at our usual venue of East Dean (roughly 29 miles into the route). The marshals' walk will be held over the weekend of August 31-September 1.



## **FLYING THE KENT FLAG IN SCOTLAND**

Stephanie Le Men, Graham Smith, Don Arthurs and Sarah Turner are pictured at the start of the Laich o'Moray 50 on October 6, a 50-mile event put on by North West Grampian LDWA.

The walk started in Forres – a town some 30 miles east of Inverness – and followed some absolutely stunning coastline

(with a huge “Wow!” factor) to Lossiemouth. After that the route went inland, following largely forest tracks and visiting the very pleasant town of Elgin.

The four Kent members all finished the event, which had a total of 64 starters, with 10 retirements.

Stephanie finished in 13.30, Don came home in 15.36 and Graham and Sarah completed the event in 17.31. Graham suffered from nausea on the event, and had a lot of help from Sarah.

It is hoped that the Laich o’Moray 50 may lead to the annual LDWA Hundred being staged in the North West Grampian region of Scotland in 2023. Further details about this will appear in Strider.

The other picture above, taken by Sarah, shows Lossiemouth in glorious evening sunshine.



### **HADRIAN HUNDRED – WE NEED YOUR HELP**

Brian Buttifant is organising a team from Kent LDWA to take on a checkpoint at next year’s Hadrian Hundred in Northumberland on May 25-27. Our checkpoint will be at the remote location of Watersmeeting Farm (69.2 miles – pictured left), near Cross Fell and Cow Green Reservoir, and will be open between 2am and 7pm on the Sunday. We are sharing checkpoint duties there with Wiltshire LDWA, with us doing the second shift (9am-7pm) and Wiltshire doing the first. 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.

### **YOUR CHANCE TO VOTE FOR THE NEW LDWA LOGO**

As many LDWA members know, the LDWA logo is going to change. The LDWA’s National Executive Committee – which includes Kent LDWA chairman Graham Smith, as editor of Strider – has decided to stop using the ‘walking man’ logo which has been used since the association came into being in 1972.

National chairman David Morgan outlined the case for changing the logo in the August Strider. The old logo has served the LDWA well, but it is felt that a new logo will help our association develop in the modern age.

The NEC has now decided on a choice of two logos, which are both being presented to members in the current Strider. LDWA members are being asked to vote for which logo they prefer, and let national secretary Madeleine Watson know which one is their favourite. The one which gets the most votes will be the one chosen, and the results will appear in the April Strider.

It is appreciated that many Kent LDWA members, particularly those who have belonged to the association for a long time, will have an understandable attachment to the ‘walking man’. But it is hoped that everyone will understand the reasons for change, and that as many people cast their votes as possible.

### **DIARY DATES**

Graham Smith will be leading the Elham Valley Way again on Saturday June 1. This 22 mile walk will start from Hythe Library and end at the Wetherspoons Thomas Ingoldsby pub in Canterbury, in time to get the bus back to Hythe. The walk is part of the Elham Valley Walking Festival on June 1-2.

Next year’s Summer French Challenge will be on Saturday July 6. As usual it will be a walk in the Nord Pas de Calais area of 22 miles, and we are likely to be joined by some of our friends from Essex and Herts LDWA, who came on this year’s summer French walk.

More details about both these walks will be in the next newsletter.

### **WINNIE WARMAN**

Many Kent LDWA members will be sad to learn of the death of Winnie Warman (pictured), mother of Keith. Our thoughts go out to Keith and his family at this time, and the following tribute has kindly been written by Jill Green.

“I was sad to learn that Keith’s mother has died. The last time I saw her was on a checkpoint, with Shirlie and Keith, on the Sevenoaks Circular. That was the year our laces were frozen solid so we couldn’t get our shoes off at the end.

Winnie often helped at Kent group events but I will never forget the Wealden Waters in 1987. It was **bad** – thunder, lightning, rain and more rain. The River Medway burst its banks. My own mother was





worried about me because she heard the news and she knew I can't swim! It was Winnie who brought me a cup of tea while I lay in a bath at the finish at Tunbridge Wells Tennis Club."

**Keith writes:**

Thank you Jill for your lovely memories of my mother, who passed away peacefully in October, aged 89, after a long illness.

My mother had family membership of the LDWA and Kent Group with my father Roy from about 1983 to 1994. Although not a long distance walker, she took great pleasure in helping on checkpoints at many Kent Group events and often popped up on other groups' events. I have in mind her marshalling at a late checkpoint in an open tent in driving rain during the first Daffodil Dawdle in 1989, while my father and I were 'enjoying' walking the event.

She completed one challenge walk, the Rottingdean Windmill in 1986. I think the routes that year were 26, 16 and eight miles. While my father did the longest route, my mother ambled around the eight-mile offering. I remember her telling me that she felt a little apprehensive because, as the eight-mile walkers were gathering for their start at 11am, the first runner on the 26-mile route (which had started at 8am), cheerfully ran past them to the finish!

My father, Shirlie and I have been consoled by the cards, letters and messages received from Kent Group members at this time and I would like to thank them all for their kindness.



**Left: Eve at John O'Groats. Right: the rugged coast at Dunbeath.**

**OUR EVE COMPLETES HER WALK FROM LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS**

Kent LDWA member Eve Richards has finished walking the British coastline from Land's End to John O'Groats.

Eve, who lives in Walmer and has been an LDWA member for six years, reached John O'Groats in October. It was the last of three trips in which she walked the entire Scottish coastline, a total of 537 miles.

This followed Eve walking the entire coastline of England and Wales, which she finished two years ago and which had taken her eight years in several trips, passing Land's End in 2009.

She started her Scotland coastal walks in May last year when she walked from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Lunan Bay (182 miles, which took her 12 days). The other two trips involved walking from Lunan Bay to Findhorn (174.5 miles in 11 days) and from Findhorn to John O'Groats (180.5 miles in 15 days). Her entire coastal trek has seen her walk almost 3,500 miles.

Eve was accompanied on her Scotland walks by husband Jock, who provided invaluable back-up, dropping her off at the start of the day's walk and picking her up at the end.

She says: "I walked alone and Jock was the most brilliant back-up finding me in the most isolated spots not on his road map. I only stuck to the coast and not estuaries and firths.

"I very much enjoyed the Fife Coastal Path and Moray Coastal path, especially as they were well defined. Otherwise it was what the Scottish call 'find your own way' which roughly translated means climb over a zillion barbed wire fences, leap hundreds of burns and chance your arm (or leg) down steep overgrown ravines.

"The coastal cliffs were stunning and the golden sands could go on for miles with not a person in sight. Hundreds of geese pass overhead in the autumn and fill the skies with their honking.

"The last section in Sutherland and Caithness was the most remote and hardest part of all. I spent most of my time avoiding sliding down the cliffs due to long wet grasses and many miles (or so it seemed) of bogs covered in heather,



and sometimes clinging onto the barbed wire fences in high winds. I also picked up two ticks, most unpleasant.” But Eve won’t be walking any more of the Scottish coast. She says: “Some parts getting near John O’Groats were a bit wild and overgrown and a bit of a battle, and I didn’t really enjoy them. “I will not be doing any more wild walking in Scotland, it’s all too much of a challenge that I do not want. “I’m very pleased with what I have done. I have walked from Land’s End to John O’Groats, but I have done it differently!”

## LOST WAYS

BIG strides are being made on a project to find lost pathways in Kent.

LOST WAYS is Kent’s response to legislation which, broadly, means that if a path has not been recorded or is not in the process of being put on the definitive map by 2026, it will be lost.

The project is part of DON’T LOSE OUR WAYS, the national response to the legislation by Ramblers GB.

Coordinator Neville Machin, from Kent Ramblers, has set up an IT system to manage the project by establishing a distributed database containing the mapping data, photographic evidence, anecdotal evidence and any other relevant data.

As at the end of August he had reviewed the definitive maps for the whole of the Ramblers Kent Area, comprising the Highways Authorities of Kent County Council, Bromley, Medway and Bexley and all ‘route anomalies’ identified have been entered into the database.

This data is then used to produce a template for each ‘route anomaly’ which is used by the volunteer surveyors to conduct the physical Preliminary Field Survey (PFS). This brings together, in a common format, a visual record of what is on the ground, a comparison with the Definitive Map, Map Statement and any other relevant information collected at the time of the survey.

As dossiers are sent out to volunteer surveyors for completion, a short description of the route being surveyed is published, as a rolling review on the Ramblers Kent Area website - <http://www.kentramblers.org.uk/> - to enable anyone interested to comment on the route in question. Neville urges members to visit the website page on a regular basis and provide any information they think is relevant by way of the dedicated link.

The relevant highways authority will be invited to comment on the findings of the PFS and to assist in any clarifications. KCC has been very helpful. Other highways authorities have yet to be approached.

The total number of ‘route anomalies’ identified and recorded in the system is currently 215, for which 55 dossiers have been prepared, with 43 currently subject to active PFSs by volunteers. Fourteen of these have been returned completed and three are subject to further survey work.

Neville comments, that the success of the project depends entirely on volunteers.

He says: “We are vulnerable to a failure in continuity if anything happens whereby I am unable to service the system. “We are looking for someone to volunteer to act as back-up support, to become knowledgeable about how the management system works and to hold the back up security files.”



## WHITE CLIFFS WALKING FESTIVAL

A total of 1,200 walkers went on walks during this year’s White Cliffs Walking Festival, which of course included our White Cliffs Challenge. This figure was 52 short of last year’s record number of 1,252, and festival organisers, the White Cliffs Ramblers – to which some members of Kent LDWA belong - were very pleased, considering two days of the event were affected by rain, with one walk having to be postponed.

The weather was particularly bad on the Sunday of the event, when the White Cliffs Challenge was held. But the WCC still saw only 16 retirements out of 125 starters (100 on the longer route and 25 on the shorter one), a lower figure than we had feared.

It was the fifth year of the event, which comprised 44 walks ranging from special interest ones of one or two miles to longer rambles.

The festival was opened in a ceremony at Dover’s Bleriot Memorial by Vanessa Griffiths, chief executive of The Ramblers.

Mrs Griffiths said: “This wonderful festival is a great example of Ramblers volunteers creating something amazing to bring communities together, help people get fit, make new friends, discover more about their

local environment, bring new money into the local economy and champion local green spaces and our precious path network.

“It has been brilliant to be back here at the start of the festival and to see it continue to go from strength to strength and give so much pleasure to so many people. This year I joined the walk to South Foreland Lighthouse, and enjoyed the spectacular views and the welcome cup of tea that should come at the end of every great walk”.]



She had attended the opening ceremony with four members of The Ramblers' management team - Rachael Bayley, director of delivery and development who heads volunteering and operations; Sarah Marfleet, director of membership and fundraising; Beatrice Saint Matthew Daniel, director of services, who heads up finance, HR, IT and facilities; and Laura Scarlett, director of digital and data transformation.

Next year's White Cliffs Walking Festival will be held between August 22-28, with the White Cliffs Challenge on August 24 (see story above).

### CHALLENGE IN WALES

Graham Smith and David Morgan, national LDWA chairman and also South Wales chairman, are planning for members of our two groups to attempt the Welsh 3,000s challenge next summer.

This is a fantastic trek which involves walking up all the mountains of more than 3,000 feet in Snowdonia. There are 15 Snowdonia peaks of more than 3,000 feet and the challenge includes three major ascents (not 15!) in a total ascent of some 14,000 feet. It's a linear walk of approximately 30 miles, and the idea is to do it in 24 hours. It must be said that this is a very tough mountain walk, and anyone attempting it should be properly prepared.

Graham did it with Mike Pursey back in 2001, with marvellous back-up from Pat and Jacqui Clay, former Kent LDWA members who live in Deal and who many current members will know. Graham and Mike started the walk at something like 5-6am, and finished between 10-11pm, and it remains one of the most satisfying walks both of them have ever completed.

It's a linear walk so it would therefore involve transport being arranged and/or car sharing to the start/finish. Currently the rough plan is that the walk would go from north to south and start from Bethesda and the last major climb would be the biggest mountain of the lot – Snowdon (3,560 feet). The finish would be at Pen-y-Pass, after the descent from Snowdon, and there would then be transport arranged to take us back to Bethesda.

There is a good level of interest in this from members of South Wales LDWA, and so far from a few members of Kent Group. The date for the challenge has been set for the weekend of July 20-21, so if any other Kent LDWA members are interested in tackling it, let Graham know as soon as possible.



**B is for ... Benenden and Biddenden**

### ALLITERATION B: July 29 By Peter Jull

The weather gods smiled kindly on a stalwart seven after endless weeks of oppressive heat and scorching sun with cool clouds and spittles that induced waterproof wearing.

After posing in front of the Biddenden sign, we left through the churchyard and with no sun to guide general direction queries had to be answered where we were headed first (it was west). Hemsted Forest was successfully navigated on the intended paths, then through Benenden School. Work on a new footpath diversion had progressed since

reconnaissance the week before but we still used the old route. The village bus shelter provided shelter for eleven of us before posing under the village sign across the road to prove our passing.

Steam engine toots ahead hinted at our lunch destination where Tenterden trees were increasingly insufficient shelter for picnicking. As the afternoon progressed precipitation predominated, interfering with attempts to photograph the harder to photograph anyway Bethersden village sign. Presumably this was responsible for the advertised dog show which should have been across our route being conspicuously absent. An indiscernible cross farmstead path required a longer than desirable busy road section but further on a stretch of almost impassable undergrowth had not recovered from reconnaissance trampling and on the day was not an impediment to getting back to Biddenden.



**Zoolanderwalkers by Howletts and Wingham Wildlife Park.**

### **ZOOLANDER: September 2 By Peter Jull**

Start delayed not so much by a late train but a premature level crossing closure next to the station which caused a queue of traffic which took so long to clear we would have waited longer than the good five minutes we did if one kind driver hadn't paused to let us cross the road. London grouped up with Kent, there were 11 to cross that still busy road again but this time with a button to turn the lights red, eventually.

Once through Britain's smallest town, Fordwich, the climb out of the Stour Valley was gentle and soon we were within smell of the first zoo and some free views of its elephants. The Clouded Leopard enclosure next to the path through Howletts though offered views only of ... the Clouded Leopard enclosure. A rural route led to the first orchard of Bramling apples, only because they were by the hamlet of Bramling. Through Wingham village and more orchards led to zoo 2, Wingham Wildlife Park, although the only exotic beasts spotted bar the dinosaurs by the car park gate were two llamas in a field across the road, not part of the zoo.

Powerful binoculars may have picked out some of its speciality birds in the distantly visible aviaries. A naked orchard awaiting its pear trees was intriguing and the purpose of the structure of wires, canes and posts only discernible because we had just walked through its older sister. All their effort to keep the right of way clear through the labyrinth was spoilt by wires for new hedge saplings right across the exit point. Hot and sunny (but not as hot as early summer) it was the pub garden for lunch in the Half Moon and Seven Stars at the north end of Preston. With Grove Ferry the only point at which to re-cross the Stour, more road than ideal was needed to get back west with a re-grouping drinks stop at Hoath church. The mixed pace group spent much of the day well strung out but without losing the tailenders.

Not really zoo 2.5 but more birds were seen passing a private aviary just before real zoo 3, Wildwood. Leaving the main track through East Blean Woods allowed glimpses through the back fence of deer but not the wolves. The last stretch back to Sturry was covered just in time to catch the train with the guard holding on for a few extra seconds.



**Refreshments  
facility on the  
Hadrian Hundred  
recce by  
Sarah and Michael  
in October 2018**





**Walkers by Richborough Castle.**

### **IN ROMAN FOOTSTEPS: September 16 By Graham Smith**

Engineering works on the railway between Ramsgate and Folkestone and delays on the M20 played a bit of havoc with the travelling arrangements, but 12 walkers – a very nice mixture of LDWA people and ramblers – turned up at Dover Priory railway station at 10am to follow in the footsteps of the Romans.

The route follows the Roman Road from Dover, and it is quite amazingly straight for a good 12-13 miles until it peters out shortly before Richborough Castle. The castle was built by the Romans after the invasion in BC55, and is now managed by English Heritage (you can certainly look at most of the castle by following the footpath around the castle, which we did – although if you pay to go inside, you do get the benefit of the information boards).

From the station we soon picked up the North Downs Way, and shortly after that the Roman Road itself started at Charlton, on the outskirts of town. It's a fairly long, laborious climb but that is really the only climbing to speak of on the walk. When the climbing ended, it was the NDW/Roman Road to Pineham and then Maydensole Farm (used as a checkpoint on the White Cliffs Challenge and the Cinque Ports 100).

After that it was a bit of tarmac bashing (which couldn't be avoided on this walk) before taking more paths to the smaller Betteshanger (a hamlet close to Northbourne Park school – the larger Betteshanger is the village, near Northbourne, which served the coal mine of that name). After that we couldn't follow the straight line so we had to take a road left and then right to cross the A256 for what is the worst part of the walk – a three-quarters of a mile slog up to Eastry along what was the main road before Sandwich bypass was built.

We had a very pleasant lunch at the Five Bells, where we were looked after very well by landlady Mary, and then it was back to our straight road, which we took to Woodnesborough – with pleasant views across to Thanet – and that's where the Roman Road came to an end.

So we took nice paths through orchards to cross the A257 near Ash, followed by more orchard paths and minor lanes to Cooper Street, where we picked up the Stour Valley Way which took us very close to what was a Roman amphitheatre, after which we turned left to cross two fields before turning right – to find Richborough in front of us. After the obligatory photocalls, we followed the aforementioned path around the castle before dropping down to follow the River Stour into Sandwich. We had done just over 17 miles.

People either got the 5.43pm replacement bus back to Dover, or they had arranged lifts. As I live five miles away in Deal and I had a few miles left in my legs, I decided to walk home via the Cinque Ports 100 route – for old time's sake.



### **NORTH DOWNS WAY WYE to DOVER: September 23**

**By Graham Smith**

Best laid plans ... this walk was to help mark the 40th anniversary of the North Downs Way, and was part of the celebrations centred around Wye, where the National Trail was launched in 1978. And the 23.25 miles from Wye to Dover is, in many people's view, the best part of the North Downs Way and one of the finest walks in Kent. It's a high level march offering fine views virtually all the way.

To meet the Strider and Kent newsletter deadlines, it was organised in May. But months after Strider and the newsletter appeared, it was announced that there would be engineering works on the railway line in east Kent, disrupting the line between Dover and Folkestone. Also, part of the M20 was closed on the Sunday of the walk, making it more difficult for anyone to get to the start. And then came the weather forecast – heavy rain until the afternoon. So it was going to be a walk for masochists - or, in the inimitable words of Rex Stickland, for walkers who had had 'full frontal lobotomies'.



Despite all this, six of us turned up at 9.40am in the grim weather at Wye railway station – Rex, Nicola Foad, Don Arthurs, Tony Barter, Peter Jull and yours truly. Peter decided to turn back after a mile, due to chafing caused by his waterproof trousers (perhaps proving that the lobotomy operation could be reversed ...)

The rest of us plodded on in the rain, which although persistent, was certainly not heavy. And at the top of our first climb, onto the Wye Downs near the famous Crown, we still had decent views. It certainly wasn't too pleasant walking in that weather, but at least the rain was blowing behind so we weren't walking right into it. And also, in those sort of conditions, we didn't want to hang about, so we pressed on pretty rapidly.

And the first part of our high level march was very good – on good paths (as you would expect on a National Trail), with reasonable views. We dropped down to Stowting, but at 11.45am it was too early to stop for lunch. So we pressed on, going up Cobb's Hill to reach the fine viewpoint of Farthing Common. By now the rain was easing, and by the time we got to Tolsford Hill, it had actually stopped. We paused for a few minutes to eat our sandwiches in a spot beneath the trees just before the descent to Etchinghill, and then pushed on up that long coombe just after the disused railway which is the steepest part of the walk.

Shortly after that we were overlooking the massive Eurotunnel site, and not only had the rain stopped, but blue (yes, blue) sky among the clouds had started to appear. We now had clear views out across the Channel as we pressed on above Folkestone, going over Castle Hill and Round Hill to follow Crete Road East to Capel-le-Ferne – and the Valiant Sailor pub, where we had a much deserved drink.

After that, the last few miles were excellent, marching along those famous White Cliffs in glorious sunshine (oh yes) with Dover and its castle and port gradually coming into view. It was fabulous walking, and I have to say that after what we had endured at the start of the day, we certainly deserved it.

We got back to Dover Priory railway station seven-and-a-half hours after we had started the walk. It had been a memorable day. In the words of Jill Green, every walk is an adventure – and that one certainly was. And as I always say, if you don't like getting wet, then don't go out walking.

The photo shows Tony, Rex, Don and Nicola by the World War 2 Sound Mirror near Capel.



**C ... is for Chilham, where the walkers are pictured on a glorious autumn afternoon.**

#### **ALLITERATION C: October 21 By Peter Jull**

As Charing church bonged 9, ten plus saluki set off a bit late as the clock was a bit slow. A planning oversight quickly became apparent in that walking east in the morning in October under clear blue skies, the sun was eye annoyingly positioned and would be again walking west at the end.

Wooded parts of the North Downs Way provided some respite, as did climbing steadily northwards, and by the time we were crossing Challock's goose fair open grass it was high enough anyway. Into the vastness of Kings Wood, taking some narrower paths to break up endless gravel forest tracks, then rejoin the NDW into Chilham - swarming with Canterbury Ramblers and Medway Ramblers - where we took lunch.

Looping north round to Perry Wood, a steep climb up The Mount deserved a pause for the fine views. Orchards and fields to Molash church where sore toes and a busy Monday took advantage of a prepositioned car to finish early. Eight



continued as rubbing boots contributed to varied flagging and a spreading field with two downs then ups, followed by two short downs and two long ups to get to the windmill above Charing. Back in the village everyone was warm enough to treat themselves to an ice cream from the shop after 22 miles, 2100ft+ climbing and 8+ hours in the Autumn sun



**Clockwise, from top left: the view to Loch Tay from Sron a' Chlachain;  
Ben Vorlich from the summit of Stuc a Chroin;  
the summit of Beinn Heasgarnich, with Creag Mhor behind to the right; the summit of Ben Challum.**

#### **POSTCARD FROM SCOTLAND 2018 By Graham Smith**

This year it's a shorter Postcard from Scotland than usual, as I was only up there for a few days, squeezing in my annual visit after the Cinque Ports 100 and between Strider and White Cliffs Challenge commitments. But it was still a very pleasant little trip.

For this trip, between July 16-22, I was not accompanied by my good friend Mike Pursey, with whom I have been going to Scotland to walk the hills almost every year since 1990. As many Kent LDWA members know, Mike had a nasty illness last year which severely curtailed his walking. He felt this year that doing some more Munros (Scottish hills of more than 3,000 feet in case anyone does not know) was beyond him.

After camping overnight at Annan – a few miles over the border – I drove up to Killin, a few miles beyond Crianlarich, which is where the Highlands really start. I arrived at Crianlarich in the afternoon, and as it was too late to drive and attempt any Munros, I went up Sron a' Chlachain (at 1491ft less than half Munro height) which overlooks Killin and which offers fabulous views over Loch Tay. It was the third time I had been up Sron a' Chlachain and it's a good hill to do at the start of a Scottish trip.

The next day I drove down to Loch Earn to have a go at Ben Vorlich (3232 feet) and Stuc a Chroin (3199 feet). Mike and I have done Ben Vorlich twice before and both times planned to go up its neighbour, but on both occasions we had to turn back because of rain and low cloud. The walk starts from Ardvorlich House and initially follows grassy fields before you cross a burn and approach the summit. Here the gradient steepened, and it was also here that I started a new (for me) way of going up big hills. In the past, I have used the '100 step' method – counting 100 normal steps when I start to get tired, resting and then taking another 100 normal steps. But, approaching the summit of Ben Vorlich, I found the 100 normal steps method was really taking it out of me. So instead, I just took short (often very short) strides, which I found much less tiring. I must be getting old!

So, using that method, I reached the summit, with wonderful clear views. Most importantly, I could see Stuc a Chroin and the way to it, so off I went, following a line of posts to a bealach (a bealach is, basically a mountain pass) and then taking a path on the right to avoid a scramble over the buttress. The path to the ridge on Stuc a Chroin was very steep, but I managed it using my new-found 'short step' method. It was then a short walk to the summit and then down that steep path back, followed by contouring round Ben Vorlich to pick up the outward route and back to the car. It had been a very satisfying day, and so good to have done both those hills at last.

The next day was very tough, with two Munros - Creag Mhor (3453 feet) and Beinn Heasgarnich (3573 feet). Doing those two involves a long drive along Glen Lochay to the walk's start point, and then a 5km walk along the glen before you actually start ascending. After following a zig-zag path from the glen, I had a bit of trouble, as I either got confused by the directions in the Scottish Mountaineering Club's Munro guide or these directions were not sufficiently accurate.



As I was pondering what to do, another walker – a chap from Ayr, who must have been well into his 70s and who had got up at 5am to do the walk – arrived. He was as confused as I was, but we decided to take a path we could see which led into the open hillside and was going in the direction we wanted. It was almost certainly not the path we should have taken, but it was a path. After a good mile, the path seemed to peter out, and I had to free-range over untracked heather to reach the track leading to the summit ridge. This was very tiring, and was compounded by a long slog, going over four or five false summits (where you think you are reaching the summit but when you get there, you realise you aren't) before the actual summit.

There was then a pretty long walk down to a bealach and a steep slope to the ridge of Beinn Heasgarnich. I just plodded on, using my '100 steps' and 'short steps' methods, as well as having a few sit-downs when I rested. But it was a good, fairly flat summit. It then took me a good two hours to get back to the start on a route which involved following two burns – often over untracked heather - down the hillside to a road linking Glen Lyon with Glen Lochay. I had been out for nine hours and it had been hot. When I got back to the delightful camp site I was staying at just outside Killin, I just had a shower and collapsed into my tent – which is where I stayed for the rest of the evening.

The next day I went up one of the most enjoyable Munros I have ever done - Ben Challum (3363 feet). This involved a good, straightforward ascent on a clear, not too steep path before the pull to the South Top, and then a delightful summit ridge to the summit, which offered panoramic views across to Glen Lochay, where I had been the previous day. It was the same paths back. It's a shame that all Munros can't be that straightforward – but, of course, if walking up all Scotland's 3,000 foot-plus mountains was always going to be easy, it would take away much of the challenge and enjoyment in doing them.

So after Ben Challum, I drove to Glencoe where my plan was to stay for a couple of days, walking some of the Munros in Glen Etive and the only Munros in Glencoe I have not yet done – the two on Bidean nam Bian (at 3773 feet, the highest hill in that region). I have been waiting to do Bidean nam Bian for several years, but I am going to have to wait a bit longer, as a few hours after I arrived ... down came the rain and cloud. In the morning I couldn't even see the hill. Years ago, when I started going to Scotland, I would usually go out on the hills in all weathers – but not now. Doing big hills in the rain and low cloud means you are going to get very wet (maybe saturated), cold and miserable, you are hardly going to see anything, and you are very likely to have navigation difficulties. So I don't mind admitting that I am a fair weather Munro-bagger.

So I took a drive out to Fort William and then Loch Lochay, and did a very enjoyable low level walk. The following morning, although it was not raining, there was still very low cloud – so I packed up my tent and headed south, staying at Moffat and doing a very pleasant Southern Uplands walk in that area, before driving back to Kent the next day.

To be honest, it would have been nice to have done some more Munros, but as Mike always says, they won't go away ...



**Left: Portpatrick, the start of the Southern Upland Way.**

**Right: Hill of Ochiltree looking east towards Bargrennan.**

#### **THE SOUTHERN UPLAND WAY: September 22-October 3 By David Thornton**

While going through the long process of organising the travel and accommodation for this walk, I calculated that since February 2017 I had so far completed seven of the National Trails, covering 775 miles over 35 days and had suffered just one day of rain. That was in Llangollen on the Offa's Dyke trail, which my neighbour had warned me would be the case before leaving. However, this was to be my first foray to Scotland, where supposedly it rains consistently. In fact it is widely believed that had Noah announced the building of his ark in this part of world, proclaiming that 40 days and nights of persistent rain was looming, it would have caused barely a ripple of interest among the residents of Dumfries and Galloway.

However, I wondered what all this rainy fuss was about after I had completed the trail, as over the 12 days I suffered no more than about four hours of rain ... that's four hours, not four days. It would seem that the weather gods were

looking down upon me once again. It had, of course, been raining extremely heavily for many days prior to my arrival, and also did over several nights I was there. This made things extremely wet underfoot and my poor old boots did take a bit of a bashing. I was certainly glad for the religious cleaning and waxing that had been applied to these over several months and the extra love and attention paid dividends over the course of the walk.

Taxi to Gatwick, flight to Glasgow, train to Ayr, 60 mile bus replacement service to Stranraer and then one last local bus, I finally arrived in Portpatrick on the west coast at 5pm, for an overnight stay at the Mount Stewart Hotel.

Recently refurbished, this was a lovely hotel and Portpatrick really is a picture postcard mini port. I get quite giddy at the thought of my first day of walking when doing a trail, with the prospect of what enjoyment and challenges may lay ahead, and that first morning walking out of Portpatrick was no exception. A five mile stretch along the coast before turning inland where I would skirt around Stranraer for 15 miles before arriving at New Luce, which was a mile or so from the path, to stay at a place called Navad's Shed. The clue is in the name of this place, as it really was just a

glorified shed, a luxury one mind, supplied with a power cable at the back of Harry and Marlene's garden. Very basic, but very adequate, which was made all the more enjoyable by the supply of their own freshly laid eggs, which had been boiled for breakfast. Harry, it turns out, is a retired army officer, who is regularly called upon to rescue people who have been trapped outdoors by the weather. A voluntary role which he took great pride in telling me about and which he clearly loves.

The next day took me 18 miles to Bargrennan, passing what looked to me like the world's largest inland wind turbine farm, which were a recurring theme along the entire stretch of the SUW. It also took me past what is called the Beehive Bothy. I'd not seen a bothy before, so I was intrigued

to see what these were all about ... not a lot, as it turns out. It's just a shed with some benches to sleep on, one up from a tent apparently, although I'm not entirely convinced\*. I arrived late morning, so sat inside for a bite to eat and decided to have a flick through the journal in which visitors write, describing their walk so far and overnight stay at the bothy. What struck me more than anything were the recurring and desperate, almost Armageddon like stories of midges, mosquitos, neither of which I was confronted with



**Lowther Hills looking east.**

for the entire walk, and resident bothy rats. I did contemplate making an entry myself, along the lines of "Hi everyone. Just stopped off for 10 minutes, to tuck into a big wedge of homemade fruit cake from my well stocked packed lunch, before moving on to Bargrennan and the House 'O' Hill Hotel, where a hot shower, cold beer and a very comfortable bed awaits" ... and it did. But I decided it might not go down too well, so I didn't.

I had to be away pretty sharpish from the House 'O' Hill Hotel on the third morning, as I had a longer 25 mile stretch to do, so they kindly packaged together a couple of breakfast rolls early doors and I was out and walking at 8am. This was an enjoyable day, which took me initially along the River Cree, the Water of Trool, past Loch Trool, Loch Dee and Clatteringshaws Loch until I reached St John's Town of Dalry. Here I stayed at the Brookford Bed and Breakfast, run by Ronnie and Annie Brookford and their star host, Bracken, the resident Yorkshire Terrier. Brookford was voted the best B&B in Dumfries and Galloway for 2018 and I can see why. It was immaculately run and extremely friendly. Coincidentally, on the same award evening, the local pub, the Clachan Inn, was given equally high acclaim, resulting, according to Ronnie, in a rather heavy night of celebration between the two. I can also concur that the pub was excellent, with an outstanding menu. The walk from Dalry to my next stop Sanquhar, at 28 miles, I decided was too much to do in one day, given the terrain, so I organised two nights at Brookford, with Ronnie kindly doing pick-ups and drop-offs around half way. Of course I had to pay for this privilege, but was nevertheless extremely grateful. In Sanquhar I stayed at the Baron Court Bed and Breakfast, run by Angus and Josephine Clark. A strange little place, but very pleasant, made more so by the rather large complementary single malt presented to me upon my arrival, which I thought was a lovely touch from a very warm couple. Having had two days of around 14 miles, I then had an even shorter 10 mile day into Leadhills, in the heart of the old lead mining area, to stay at what is claimed to be the highest residential guest house in Scotland, the Hopetoun Arms. Another great location, they also kindly made me



**Cloud Hill looking west towards St Johns Town of Dalry**



**Daer Reservoir.**





**Blake Muir looking towards Innerleithen.**

breakfast on the run, in order that I had plenty of time to complete the 24 miles into Beattock, my next stop.

To this point, all of my six days walking had been very enjoyable, with some tough hills and outstanding views. However, the whole walk could have been condensed into the three hours I had that morning, walking away from the Hopetoun Arms and up into the Lowther Hills. What a morning that was, as high up as I'd been all week, with crystal clear skies and not a breath of wind, it just made you want to stop, stare and absorb, which I did at regular intervals. I was loathe to leave it all behind, as I headed towards Beattock, passing the halfway point of the SUW along the way. After a comfortable night in Beattock at the Stables Inn, run by Peter and Hazel Dutton, I was off to St Mary's Loch, 22 miles via some extremely steep woodland climbs, before the final picturesque six mile walk across what is known as the Captain's Road, towards the

loch. That was a really good six mile stretch of walking. Accommodation had proved surprisingly difficult to locate here, despite its attractive location, with all former B&Bs having closed, along with the local loch pub, the Tibbie Shiels Inn. Luckily, I located a pub and inn about six miles away from St Mary's Loch, called the Gordon Arms, which kindly offered a pick up and drop off. Great location this, with the inn seemingly quite a significant landmark, to the point that the name of the pub is actually shown on the OS map. Strangely, my lasting memory of this overnight stop was while I waited for my morning drop off vehicle, during which I examined all the photos displayed around the bar area, showing its rich history and for some reason a selection of rams that had been auctioned locally. There was one which had sold in 2016 for a princely sum of £60,000.00!! With that hefty price tag, I should imagine he could have strutted into a field of ewes with some significant swagger.

Day nine was a gentle 16 mile stroll to Innerleithen, for a really good stay at the Glebe Knowe Guest House. As I approached the outskirts of Innerleithen on that Sunday afternoon, I was surprised by the number of mountain bikers in the town. It seemed to me that everyone there was either riding one or driving a car with one or two attached. I learned from the guest house that there are seven designated mountain bike routes in Scotland called stanes and it turns out that Innerleithen boasts two of them. This has put Innerleithen firmly on the Scottish map and is clearly a thriving small town as a result. Melrose was my next stop, sitting under the three Eildon Hills, which you can see from miles around on a clear day, which mine was. Melrose is a lovely little town and is very popular for tourists, and as the River Tweed runs alongside it, is also a magnet for salmon trout fishing enthusiasts. Here I stayed at the very pleasant Dunfermline Guest House run by Brian and Alison Bell.

My next stop was Longformacus, a good 27 miles away, via Lauder, so I had to be on my feet at 7am, with all food provisions purchased the night before. The 12 mile run into Lauder was quite flat and straight, so I made good time early on in the day. However, the afternoon took me over the extremely blustery Lammermuir Hills, so my progress slowed a little. That was quite a walk across those heather covered hills, with black grouse popping up everywhere, a sign that the shooting season was still in full swing. I finally reached Longformacus at 5pm, for a pick up to stay at the very remote Green Hope Guest House, run by Bill and Alison Green ... what a super couple they were and who made my stay there one of the best of my trip.

Last day and feeling really quite excited at the prospect of completing the walk but also a bit sad that it was soon to be at an end, I covered the final 20 miles into Cockburnspath. Here, at the path's end, I treated myself to a packet of cheese and onion ridge cut crisps (I had champagne in the fridge at home) purchased from the establishment which is affectionately known among some members of the Kent LDWA as the shop that doesn't sell a great deal.\*\* Having collared a local chap for a little photo shoot outside, I was back on a bus to take me to Dunbar, for an overnight stay at The Royal Mackintosh Hotel. Up early Thursday morning, train to Edinburgh, bus to the airport, a plane to Gatwick and a taxi home for about 6pm, whereupon I immediately and deservedly tucked into the champagne with some relish.

The Southern Upland Way took some organising, but as with all the previous trails, the accommodation website proved invaluable. The route is extremely well signposted. Even walking across the open featureless moorland, you're regularly provided with yellow topped wooden posts every 100-150 yards, which you can just make out and



**David at the end of the Southern Upland Way**



which provide you with that bit of confidence. I confess I'm a bit old school and prefer to carry a full OS map, but with 13 maps required for the route, I needed to organise onward posting of two batches to the overnight stops, who would then kindly post my prepaid envelope back home. That aside, I would say you could probably walk this route without a single map, it was that well waymarked. September/October is slightly late in the season to be walking the route, but the main benefit in doing so was the complete absence of midges. You just need to get a bit lucky with the weather, which I was and that made for super 12 days walking.

\*Mike Pursey and Graham Smith took refuge in the Beehive on a very wet day when they walked the Southern Upland Way in 2003 – and it certainly did its job: editor.

\*\* This is not quite how Graham described the shop to David: editor.

### **COMEDY CORNER with Neal O'Rourke**

A cowboy rode into town tied his horse to a rail outside the saloon.

Walked in and up to the bar and ordered a shot of Red Eye, finished his drink went outside to find his horse was missing.

He went back into the saloon and he was really mad, in a very loud voice he said to everyone if his horse was not returned by the time he finished another drink the same thing will happen as it did in Tucson.

So he ordered another shot of Red Eye, finished it and went back outside and the barman followed him to find his horse had been returned.

Whereby the barman whispered in his ear: "Say, what did actually happen in Tucson?" "Well, I had to walk home!" said the cowboy.

This is set in World War 2 on an American aircraft carrier.

One of the pilots was bit of a Jonah - something always went wrong!

The siren would go off and either he would sprint down the runway and possibly trip over something, or slide the cockpit shut and crush his fingers, or take off and land in the sea out of fuel.

This particular day the siren sounded and he sprinted down the runway, did not trip over anything, slid the cockpit shut and did not crush his fingers.

Made a beautiful take-off and shot down 30 Japanese planes, then he came into land.

Feeling pleased with himself, he thought should he go and see the captain, or go to his cabin.

Then thought "Hey, I have just shot down all these aircraft, I will go and see the captain." So he knocked on the door and walked in.

He said to the captain "Hey, I have shot down 30 Jap planes." The captain said: "So what, Yankee pig!"

### **THE LAST WORD FROM THE EDITOR**

Well, what a year 2018 has been for Kent LDWA – easily the busiest, most demanding and also the most rewarding in the 22 years I have been involved with the group.

In March we were ready to go with our Sevenoaks Circular, and were prepared for our usual entry of up to 200 – and then the 'Beast from the East' stepped in and meant we had to cancel it at the last minute, in common with a few other LDWA events planned for that weekend.

Then in May we had the big one – the Cinque Ports 100. And that was the culmination of four years hard work put in by a small number of people: all those meetings, all those emails (what on earth did we do before emails?), all those phone calls. But the LDWA's flagship event – and the top walking event in the country – happened, and that was mainly down to the efforts of that small number of people in Kent LDWA who worked so hard to ensure it was the success it was. Because I was so involved with the Cinque Ports 100, I have to say that I didn't realise what we had achieved until I saw some of the comments from satisfied customers which started to come in after we had packed up at the Duke of York's Royal Military School on the morning of May 28. We put on a very good Hundred, with a route full of variety and interest, excellent checkpoints, two fabulous venues in Sussex Coast College and the Duke of York's school, and we had the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Admiral of the Fleet the Lord Boyce, to come along and start it off, even walking the first 100 yards.

It has to be said that the event received wonderful help from throughout the LDWA, with people coming from all over the country to do their bit. One of the things that stands out for me is Madeleine Watson – secretary of our association who lives in Leeds – cheerfully coming down to Lydd (somewhere she had probably never heard off before the CP100) to run the kit check, the most thankless task of all on a Hundred. Then we had John Stewart who came down from Scotland to help at HQ, Janet and John Whiteman came over from the Isle of Wight to sweep part of the route – the list goes on and on, and just goes to show what a wonderful organisation the LDWA is.

Of all the people from Kent LDWA who were involved with the Cinque Ports 100, I really must mention two: 'the magnificent Joy Davies' and Stephanie Le Men. Joy organised the catering, with Jan O'Rourke, and even in her 80s, I don't think there is anyone better in the LDWA than our Joy at preparing menus and getting huge numbers of walkers fed. Stephanie, as well as being secretary for the CP100 and Kent LDWA, organised the marshals' walk just about single-handedly, getting to grips with every aspect of the event. We are very lucky to have Joy and Stephanie in our group.

It seemed that almost as soon as the Cinque Ports 100 was finished, we had the Walk With the Smugglers in July,

organised by Neil Higham (who had been treasurer and Hastings start coordinator for the CP100). Then a few weeks after that we had another big one – the 53 mile White Cliffs Challenge, the main event in the annual White Cliffs Walking Festival. When the 2018 WCC was discussed at our committee just over a year ago, I did ask if we were happy to put on another big event so soon after the Hundred – but our members were unanimous that we should still organise it, as if we did not, we would have been letting down the LDWA, particularly our neighbouring groups in Surrey and Sussex, with whom we work on the KSS (Kent Surrey Sussex Triple Challenge). So the WCC went ahead, and despite some dreadful weather on the day, it was a success, with 125 starters.

And as I write this, Kent LDWA members are just about to help national Local Groups Secretary Julie Cribb with the Local Groups Representatives' Weekend in Gillingham, something with which Stephanie Le Men has been involved. Added to all this, Kent LDWA continues to have a fine and very varied programme of social walks, and thanks to Michael Headley, we must have one of the finest LDWA websites in the country.

So, all in all, it has been a great year for us, one which has made me very proud to be group chairman. Our walking events and social walks would not happen if it was not for the support and work put in by you, our members. So thank you all so much.

Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas, and good health, happiness, and lots of good walking in 2019.

**Graham Smith**



**Hadrian's Wall by Sarah Turner – see more pictures on next page**



**THESE PHOTOS WERE TAKEN BY SARAH TURNER WHEN SHE AND MICHAEL HEADLEY DID A SIX-DAY RECCE OF THE HADRIAN HUNDRED IN OCTOBER.**

**Clockwise, from top left ...**

**Hadrian's Wall; leaving Dufton; a Hadrian's Wall Path sign; Michael manoeuvres over mysterious misty moors (Little or Great Dun Fell to be precise); Lambley Viaduct - a superb piece of engineering; Sarah and Michael at the finish.**





## SCENES FROM THE WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE ON AUGUST 26.

Clockwise, from top left ...

Melissa Butcher at Kingsdown; on the cliffs at Kingsdown, with the 'Planet Thanet' behind;  
familiar faces in the early stages;  
the tent is up at Maydensole; new location at Maydensole after the tent is blown down;  
Phil and Elaine Todd not far from the end; Phyl Butler, Don Arthurs and Helen Franklin at HQ.

Pictures by Eric Rolfe

