

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

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

## ***NEWSLETTER***



*This excellent photo of the South Foreland Lighthouse  
was taken on a snowy, icy January morning by Sarah Turner.*

**Number 108**



**April 2019**

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



***PHOTOS TAKEN BY EVE RICHARDS AND ERIC ROLFE  
ON THE SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR ON MARCH 17***



## KENT LDWA SOCIAL WALKS - APRIL-AUGUST

Please check Kent group website for any late changes to the details below

### **Sun Apr 14 Timeball & 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 and Deal, going over nine 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.

### **Fri Apr 19 A South Downs Loop**

26/20ml. 09.00 Meet in Eastbourne at western end of promenade (B2103) by South Downs Way marker post, park nr school on left. (GR TV600972). The 20ml is a circular route on the South Downs via Beachy Head, the Seven Sisters and the Cuckmere valley; return on the South Downs Way. The 26ml visits Firle Beacon before rejoining the 20ml route. **C:** Graham Smith

### **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

### **Sat May 18 Kent Cliffs**

20ml. 09.30 Folkestone Central Stn (St Pancras Intl 08:37). Buy return to Deal. (GR TR221362). Linear walk from Folkestone to Deal via Capel, Dover, and St Margaret's. No dogs. **C:** Rod Smith

### **Sat Jun 1 Elham Valley Way**

23ml. 08.30 Hythe Public Library. (GR TR161345). Part of Elham Walking Festival. **C:** Graham Smith

### **Sat Jun 8 Otford Circular**

18ml. 09.00 Meet at Otford Station outside the station building. TN14 5QY. (GR TQ532593). A brisk paced and pleasant walk with a mixture of hills, woodland and farmland. Lunch will be at Ightham Mote NT. There will also be chance to grab a drink or an ice cream in Knole Park in the afternoon. N.B. This walk will be lead at a brisk pace, if you are in doubt about your fitness or suitability, or if you are a new member, please contact the leader in advance. **C:** Helen Franklin

### **Sun Jun 16 Alliteration D - Dunkirk and Doddington**

24ml. 09.00 East end of Dunkirk where Canterbury Road becomes London Road dead end. (GR TR079588). Pub lunch. **C:** Peter Jull

### **Sun Jun 23 Andredsweald marshals' walk**

For details contact organiser. **C:** Neil Higham

### **Sun Jun 30 Bough Beech Brisk**

21ml. 09.15 Hildenborough railway station. (GR TQ556485). Flat walk circling Bough Beech across Low Weald. **C:** David Thornton

### **Sat Jul 6 Summer French Challenge**

c23ml. 05.50 latest (tbc) Western Heights c.p. Dover (TR 323415), to arrange cars. Take the 06.40 (tbc) P&O Ferries sailing from Dover to Calais, then a short drive to Coquelles. (GR TR314407). A circular walk in the Nord Pas de Calais visiting the viewpoints of Mont de Couple and Cap Blanc Nez. Lunch stop at Wissant and hopefully finishing with some shopping at the Auchan hypermarket and a meal. If interested, pls contact leader by June 6 at the latest. Don't forget your passport! **C:** Graham Smith.

### **Sun Jul 14 Andredsweald Circuit**

See Events Diary in Strider.

### **Sat Jul 20 Long Man Stride**

22ml. 08.30 East Dean c.p. Gilbert Drive. (GR TV556978). Pub Stop at Arlington @13 mls. **C:** Neal O'Rourke

### **Sun Jul 28 Deal to Canterbury**

20.5ml. 09.00 Meet at Walmer rlway st – pay parking by station or free on road parking in nearby streets. (GR TR364503). Linear. Train back from Canterbury. Pub stop at Shepherdswell. **C:** Graham Smith

### **Sun Aug 4 Cream Tea Walk**

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

### **Sun Aug 11 White Cliffs Challenge marshals' walk**

32ml. 8.30 From St Margaret's Village c.p. (GR TR359447). For further details contact Graham Smith.

### **Sun Aug 18 Alliteration E - East Farleigh and Sutton**

20ml. 9:05 East Farleigh railway station. (GR TQ734536). Pub lunch. **C:** Peter Jull.

### **Fri Aug 23 Fish and Chip Walk (part of the White Cliffs Walking Festival)**

10.25ml. 17:00 Walmer railway station. (GR TR363503). LINEAR - Walk to Dover via the White Cliffs. Fish and chips in Dover and return (at your own expense) by train or bus (after an optional drink in a very nice Dover pub!). **C:** Graham Smith.

### **Sat Aug 24 White Cliffs Challenge**

See Events Diary in Strider.

### **Mon 26th Aug 26 Three Pits Walk (part of White Cliffs Walking Festival)**

c18ml. 9:30 Meet at Northbourne Village Hall. (GR TR334523). Maps: Exp 138, 150. A walk visiting the former Kent mines of Betteshanger, Tilmanstone and Snowdown. Pub lunch stop. **C:** Graham Smith.



## **KENT GROUP COMMITTEE**

Chairman/newsletter editor – Graham Smith,

Secretary – Stephanie Le Men,

Treasurer/walks secretary – Peter Jull

Membership/data protection secretary – Neil Higham,

Life President – Brian Buttifant,

Members

Don Arthurs, Joy Davies, Nick Dockree, Helen Franklin, David Thornton

Sarah Turner, while not on the Kent committee, is group equipment officer (see story below).

Michael Headley although having come off the committee, is happy to maintain our excellent website.

Group gatherings are held on the first Monday in each month (except if a Bank Holiday when postponed to the second Monday) at the Rose & Crown, Wrotham, GR TQ612592.

## **DON JOINS THE COMMITTEE, WITH MICHAEL AND NEAL STEPPING DOWN**

At the Kent Group AGM, held at Harrietsham Village Hall on January 27, a new committee was elected. Don Arthurs, who has very strong IT skills and is already proving a real asset on registration at our walking events, has joined, with Michael Headley and Neal O'Rourke standing down. Chairman Graham Smith thanked Michael – who will continue to look after the group website – and Neal for all their work over the years.

Before the AGM, Michael led a very pleasant seven-mile walk, and Joy Davies and Eve Richards prepared a nice lunch for the attendees. Guest speaker Averil Brice, Kent Ramblers Area Footpath Maintenance Officer, formerly Kent Footpath Officer, gave us a very good talk about her work. Averil explained the importance of the Ramblers in maintaining our footpaths and defending our rights of way and how crucial it is for LDWA members to join to support their work. Averil explained that, among other things, the Ramblers are campaigning to maintain subsidies to farmers after Brexit (sorry to use that word in the Kent newsletter – editor!), so that they maintain the rights of way crossing their land (this is currently financed by the EU). The Ramblers are also fighting against footpath closures. Averil was very pleased with the response she had from attendees and sent the following message to Graham when she got home:

Thank you so much for inviting me to speak yesterday at your lovely meeting and for providing Steve and me with a very enjoyable lunch. I am so pleased that Joy has been selected for an award. She is an amazing woman.

I was delighted when I received an email from Nick Goodwin last night asking to be the PFO (Parish Footpath Officer) for his home parish of Dunton Green. That really was the icing on the cake. What a wonderful surprise. I don't know if he was at the meeting, but if not, it was quite a coincidence.

With ENORMOUS THANKS

Averil and Steve

In fact, Averil and Steve were so pleased with their reception that they have rejoined the LDWA (they had allowed their membership to lapse because they were so busy with other things). So we hope to see them on some walks.

During the meeting Graham displayed the Colin Wormauld Cup and the Kent LDWA trig trophy. The Colin Wormauld Cup is held by the group hosting that year's LDWA Hundred, and changes hands at the national AGM. Graham and Life President Brian Buttifant collected it from North Yorkshire Group last year, and they handed it over to Bill Milbourne, from Northumbria Group, at this year's national AGM, held in Gloucester. The trig trophy, bearing the names of Kent LDWA members who have completed 10 Hundreds, was donated by Jane Dicker in memory of her late partner, Keith.

## **NEWS OF KENT CHALLENGE WALKS**

### **SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR**

Our first Kent challenge walk of the year was on Sunday March 17, and attracted 174 starters (96 on the 30 mile route, with five retirements, 35 on the 10 miler and 43 on the 15 miler), with 57 no-shows. We reached our maximum number of 200 entrants by early February, so after consultation with catering queen Joy Davies, it was decided to up the number to 225, with no on the day entries.

As usual, the event was based at the New School at West Heath, with the same routes (30, 20 and 15 miles) which had been planned for last year. Because the exceptionally bad weather meant we had to cancel the event last year, we offered 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. As usual, we are 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. See the excellent photographs on the inside front cover and back page of this newsletter.

The marshals' walk was on Sunday March 3, with four people doing the 31-mile route and seven doing the 20-miler. Excellent



support on the day was provided by Neal and Jan O'Rourke and Helen Franklin.

Organisers David Sheldrake and David Thornton are planning a new route and a new venue. Details in the next newsletter.

### **ANDREDSWEALD**

This year's Weald challenge walk is the Andredsweald Circuit, which will be on Sunday July 14, based at Forest Row. It is one of the three Wealden challenges we organise (the others being A Walk With the Smugglers, which took place last 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. The marshals' walk will be on Sunday June 23. Marshals are needed, so if you can help, please get in touch with organiser Neil Higham, whose contact details are above.

### **WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE**

This 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 marshals' walk will be on Sunday August 11. Marshals will be needed, so if you can help, please contact Graham (contact details above).

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

This year's Sussex Stride, part of the KSS Triple Challenge of 50-mile events, will be held over the weekend of September 21-22, based as usual at Longhill, near Brighton. The other KSS events are, of course, are our own White Cliffs Challenge (the 50-mile version of which was held last year) and the Surrey Tops, which takes place next year.

Kent Group will 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. We are going to need marshals to help at our checkpoint, and so if you are interested and would still like to do the walk, please give some thought to entering the marshals' walk. Any volunteers are asked to contact Graham Smith.



**Left: Joy on last year's White Cliffs Challenge;  
Right: Joy and Jan O'Rourke during the Cinque Ports 100.**

### **AWARD FOR 'THE MAGNIFICENT JOY DAVIES'**

Joy Davies has received a special LDWA Volunteers award for her fantastic work organizing the catering on all Kent events – particularly, of course, last year's Cinque Ports 100.

Her award was presented at the LDWA AGM on March 10 by chairman David Morgan.

Joy was proposed for the award by Kent LDWA Life President Brian Buttifant, who said in his nomination: "For more than ten years Joy has organised and served food at the headquarters of our groups challenge events – the Sevenoaks Circular in March, our High Weald walks in July, and the White Cliffs Challenge in August. She also did this at our checkpoints on our Triple Challenge (the Surrey Tops and the Sussex Stride).

"Joy, who is in her 80s, shows no sign of slowing down. In 2018 she was insistent in heading the catering team on the Cinque Ports 100 (with wonderful assistance, of course, from Jan O'Rourke), organising the checkpoint menus as well the headquarters food and, of course, serving meals throughout the event and marshals' event.

"She has catered at our checkpoints on a number of Hundreds and will be at the Hadrian100.

"So it is no surprise that in Kent Group she is known as the 'magnificent Joy Davies'."

Joy was one of three LDWA unsung heroes nominated for awards. The others were Deidre Flegg from Dorset, Michael Godfrey from Wessex, and Peter Shick from South Manchester.

## **HADRIAN HUNDRED AND FUTURE HUNDREDS**

Brian Buttifant is organising a team from Kent LDWA to take on a checkpoint at this year's Hadrian Hundred in Northumberland on May 25-27. Our checkpoint will be at the remote location of Watersmeeting Farm (69.2 miles) 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. Several members have already signed up to help, but if anyone would still like to do so, please get in touch with Brian, whose contact details are above.

Twenty-six Kent LDWA members have entered the Hadrian Hundred and one has entered the event's marshals' walk. Lots of luck to them all on what is going to be a tough, challenging route.

And on the Y100 Sir Fynwy (pronounced Fun-We) 100, in 2020, it has been arranged for us to man a checkpoint at Treadam (70 miles). This will be an indoor checkpoint – a converted barn but properly done up, with heating etc. The spot is near part of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail. It is actually a wedding venue, so that will make it quite an interesting location.

## **GDPR– WE NEED YOUR DETAILS (SORRY ABOUT THIS!)**

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) has come to the LDWA, as it is coming to just about everywhere else. The issue has been discussed by our committee and, as requested by the association's National Executive Committee, we have appointed a data protection officer. This is Neil Higham, who is the group's membership officer (and I didn't have to twist his arm too much!)

There is no need to go into great details here, but rest assured that the NEC has been informed that we are complying with GDPR guidelines (to the best of our knowledge). For example, because of GDPR, we are no longer allowed to send out a list of Kent LDWA members, with their telephone numbers and email addresses, with the December newsletter, as we have done in previous years.

There is one important aspect of implementing GDPR which will affect members and which must be explained here: it has become necessary to collect information about those taking part in our social walks. This is for insurance liability purposes (although the LDWA's insurance liability will not cover you for personal liability). So in future, walk leaders will be asking walkers to put their names and membership numbers on a form which will be circulated before the walk starts. Leaders will then be asked to scan the form and send it to Neil, who will upload it onto the national LDWA website – where the information will be treated in strict confidence.

Members of the Kent committee apologise for any inconvenience which may be caused by this, but we would ask members to understand that the matter is out of our hands, and we are required to comply. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

If any Kent members have any queries about this, or any other aspect of GDPR, then please contact Neil in the first instance and he will do his best to answer, and if he cannot, he will contact the LDWA's new data manager, Stuart Bain. Neil's details are above.

**Graham Smith**



**Above: Sarah Turner and Dale Moorhouse 'model' the Kent LDWA T-shirts and sweatshirts.**



### SMART KENT LDWA T-SHIRTS AND SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE

Thanks to our equipment officer Sarah Turner, we now have T-shirts and sweatshirts for sale, with the Kent LDWA logos on. Sarah has been in touch with the Southend-based Ballantyne Edwards company, which produces and supplies embroidered sports and leisurewear.

The T-shirt was 'modelled' by Helen Franklin, with Graham Smith 'modelling' the sweatshirt at our AGM (see pictures above). Several orders were taken at the AGM, which Sarah has been able to dispatch to people who ordered them. Various colours and sizes are available, and if anyone else would like a Kent LDWA T-shirt or sweatshirt, please email Sarah, whose email address is below. Prices are £8 (including VAT) for Wick-away T-shirts and £15 (including VAT) for cotton sweatshirts £15. Delivery postage from Sarah's address to the recipient's address is not included and would be worked out according to customer's wishes. Payment is 'non cash' via direct payment (cheque/deposit/internet banking) to the LDWA Kent bank account. So if you are interested, please email Sarah.

Many thanks for doing this, Sarah.



### WHITE CLIFFS WALKING FESTIVAL

THIS year's White Cliffs Walking Festival, which of course includes our White Cliffs Challenge on August 24, takes place between August 22-28.

The festival, now in its seventh year, will feature 42 walks, including two walks put on by Graham Smith, who is on the festival's organising committee. These are his annual, 10.25 mile Fish and Chip Walk – on Friday August 23; and the 18 mile Three Pits Walk, visiting the sites of the Tilmanstone, Snowdown and Betteshanger coal mines, which all closed during the 1980s, on August 26 (see Social Walks Programme above).

The festival will be opened, in a ceremony on the memorial bandstand on Walmer Green, by Kate Ashbrook, vice-president and chairwoman of The Ramblers, general secretary of the Open Spaces Society, vice-chairwoman of the Campaign for National Parks and patron of the Walkers Are Welcome towns network. She is known as "Campaigner Kate" for her work. The opening ceremony will be at 10am on Thursday August 22, with a choice of three walks immediately afterwards.

The festival will feature special interest and history/heritage walks, with the full programme on the festival website [www.white-cliffswalkingfestival.org.uk](http://www.white-cliffswalkingfestival.org.uk), as well as on a full colour brochure being produced for the event which should be available in June. Most walks will be in the Dover and Deal areas, both towns having Walkers Are Welcome status.

A total of 1,200 walkers went on the festival's walks last year.



### IT'S CHRISTMAS!

Kent LDWA members are pictured at the London Beach Country Hotel, just outside Tenterden, at our Family Christmas Lunch on Sunday December 2. A great time was had by all, and sincere thanks go to Neal and Jan O'Rourke for once again organising the event, and for leading the pre-dinner walk.

Details about this year's Family Christmas Lunch will appear in the next newsletter.



## NEW LOGO FOR THE LDWA (oh yes!)

As you may have heard, the LDWA is in the process of choosing a new logo for our association. Two possible logos were presented to members in the December Strider, but due to the number of comments these logos produced, the National Executive Committee decided to abandon that particular vote. The general consensus was that members wanted more choice. So members were asked to send in their ideas. All logos submitted, which complied with the criteria previously set out, were put to a members' workshop at the AGM weekend in Gloucester on March 9. There were 31 logos discussed, from which 10 have been selected and they are being presented in the current Strider for members to vote on. So please have a look at the logos being presented in Strider and cast your vote.

The NEC – on which Kent LDWA chairman Graham Smith sits, as editor of Strider – decided unanimously not to include the 'walking man' logo in the vote. The 'walking man' has served our association very well, but it is felt a new logo is required as the LDWA modernises.

So please have a look at all the logos presented in the current Strider, and cast your vote for the one you like best. You can vote manually or electronically.



**LDWA group representatives are pictured outside the youth hostel before setting off on the short walk, led by Jim Briggs.**

## LDWA LOCAL GROUP OFFICERS' WEEKEND: NOVEMBER 16-18

It was Kent's turn to host the LDWA's annual local groups' weekend, and last year it was based at YHA Medway, in Capstone Road, just outside Gillingham. There were a total of 29 delegates, including six members of the NEC. The weekend was organised by LDWA Local Groups' Secretary Julie Cribb, who lives in Inverness (so organising a weekend almost 600 miles away from where Julie lives was no mean feat, and is of immense credit to her).

The groups represented were North West Grampian, Wiltshire, South Wales, Heart of Scotland, Cornwall and Devon, North Yorkshire, Kent, Lakeland, Surrey, Dorset, Beds, Bucks and Northants, Essex and Herts, Thames Valley, Wessex, Staffordshire and London.

The weekend started with some low-key workshops on the Friday evening, and two walks on the Saturday – Kent secretary Stephanie Le Men leading a 20.4 mile one and Kent's Jim Briggs leading a shorter 11.75 mile one – with delegates instructed to 'walk and talk': talk about LDWA matters while walking.

Both walks were very interesting, in a part of the county we do not visit very much on our social walks. Both parties kept together while following a nice country route to Chatham and then Rochester, where they split up. The longer walk went along the River Medway to leave the Medway Towns and then returned to the countryside, visiting Bluebell Hill and the nearby Kits Coty

prehistoric burial chamber, following nice paths back to the youth hostel. It was an excellent walk, which Stephanie plans to put on the Kent Social Walks programme. The route may also provide the basis for a new Kent challenge walk – so watch this space! An excellent meal was prepared by Julie and her talented daughter Hannah, with more low-key workshop sessions, then on the Sunday we had the formal meeting, topics including the LDWA logo, data protection, managing and maintaining long distance paths, insurance and collection of emergency details, and rules of Hundreds. It was very good and useful weekend, and – following on from the Cinque Ports 100 in May – another good opportunity to showcase Kent to LDWA members who had come from around the country. A full report of the weekend, with another photo, is in the current Strider.

### **HIKE TO HELP NATALIE**

KENT LDWA members are being asked to help on an 18-mile walk to raise money for a young mum suffering from cancer, taking place on Saturday April 27.

The walk will start from the big Kingsdown Road/Granville Road car park in Walmer at 9am, and will be using the route of last year's White Cliffs Challenge.

The walk is to raise funds for Natalie Havill and her family. Natalie, who lives in Ashford and comes from Sittingbourne, is a young mum who has been diagnosed with cancer for the third time.

Ten years ago Natalie spotted a cyst in her mouth, which turned out to be cancerous. After several rounds of chemotherapy and an operation to remove part of her lung, Natalie was in remission for several years.

But last year, she received devastating news that the rare cancer had returned for a third time and spread across her spine and shoulder. Doctors have told Natalie that her condition is untreatable.

To raise sponsorship, go to

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/hikefornatalie](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/hikefornatalie).

And if any Kent LDWA members would like to either join the walk or help out providing refreshments en route, please contact Jade O'Leary via the page for the event on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1216189545197831/>



### **READ MY WALKS BLOGS By Andy Clark**

It is now about a year since I joined the LDWA. One of my immediate concerns, which I suspect applies to most new members, was whether I'd be able to keep up with the rest of the group during my first few walks. Although there turned out to be no real worries on this account, I think I probably spent too much time or energy making sure I could keep up, rather than enjoying the walk and scenery.

After several months, I had improved my stamina levels and began to realise that I could (and should) be paying more attention to my surroundings. So I decided to do something about it!

I had already entered the Elsecar Skelter Challenge in South Yorkshire, and having been provided with the route description, set about investigating the route.

It soon became apparent that there was a lot of historical information available and also (probably useless) trivia. The logical next step was to write this down, not only for now but for in the future when I can look back on where I have been and what I have seen. At the time of writing this article, I have managed to produce just short of 20 Walk Reports, the vast majority of which have been as a result of LDWA walks.

I assumed that these reports would be of no or little interest to anybody else, apart maybe from those taking part in the walk, but I have had readers from as far afield as Madagascar and Mexico.

When I was considering entering the Hadrian Hundred, I wanted to make sure I knew what I was getting myself into and what started off as a 'virtual tour' of the route, turned into an eight part series. Having talked (written) the walk, I now have to walk the walk in May.

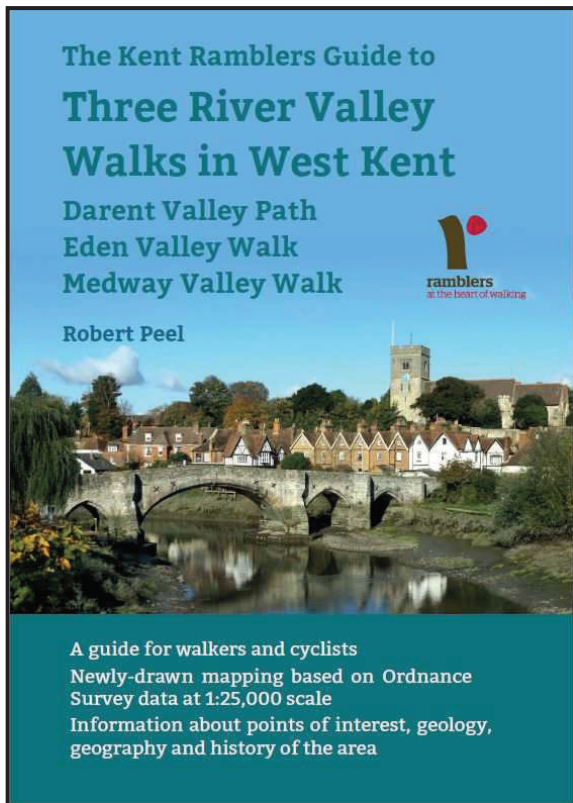
The blog can be read at <https://andyclarkwalks.wordpress.com>

### **VANGUARD WAY – Kent, Surrey, Sussex**

A sector of the 67-mile Vanguard Way that links Croydon in South London to Newhaven in East Sussex has been redirected in the Edenbridge area, due to increasing levels of traffic on what were quiet country lanes past Haxted Mill when the route was first launched in 1981. The new route passes further east.

[www.vanguardway.org.uk](http://www.vanguardway.org.uk)





## GUIDE TO THREE KENT RIVERBANK WALKS

A new guide to three fine walks running for more than 60 miles along Kentish rivers the Darent, Eden and Medway has been published by Kent Ramblers.

The 19-mile Darent Valley Path starts at Sevenoaks railway station, or alternatively at Chipstead, and finishes on the bank of the Thames just north of Dartford; the 15-mile Eden Valley Walk starts a few miles south west of Edenbridge and finishes at Tonbridge Castle; and the 28-mile Medway Valley Walk starts near Tonbridge Castle and finishes at Rochester, passing through Maidstone.

The 80 page guide book has been written by Robert Peel, secretary of Kent Ramblers, who has used his huge experience of walking in Kent and lifelong interest in maps.

The book offers full-colour maps at 1:25,000 scale, more than 90 colour photographs, detailed directions, descriptions of points of interest and background information about geology and landscape.

The walks go through some remote-feeling countryside, passing stately homes, medieval halls and manor houses, woodland, lavender fields, historic bridges, riverside meadows, locks, marinas, old churches, castles, former water mills, nature reserves and farmland. On or nearby the route are picturesque villages and small market towns.

'Three River Valley Walks in West Kent: Darent Valley Path, Eden Valley Walk and Medway Valley Walk' is published by Kent Ramblers. It has

ISBN: 978-1906494766 and is priced at £7.50 (including p&p). The book is available from Kent Ramblers, 15 Woodland Way, Petts Wood, Orpington, BR5 1NB, [www.kentramblers.org.uk](http://www.kentramblers.org.uk) with cheques payable to Kent Ramblers, or email [books@kentramblers.org.uk](mailto:books@kentramblers.org.uk) for bank transfer details.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURE AT CHECKPOINTS

As some members may recall, we had an unfortunate incident on the White Cliffs Challenge two years ago, when the people manning a checkpoint on the event left while a walker had not been accounted for. The walker had got lost, and it turns out she was also suffering from asthma. She was later found, and in good health, so we were very lucky that the incident was not worse than it was. Steps have been taken to try to avoid a repeat of this incident.

Stephanie Le Men and Graham Smith have drawn up the following emergency procedure which is to be followed by checkpoint personnel in the unlikely event that a walker does not turn up at a checkpoint. It will be sent to all checkpoint leaders on our events, and forms part of general checkpoint guidelines, put together by Peter Jull, which can be found on our website (go to Dates, Details and Documents, found under the Group News tab).

### IF A WALKER IS MISSING AT A CHECKPOINT

Marshal in charge at the checkpoint should inform walk HQ – **and should ensure checkpoint remains open until the walker is accounted for.**

HQ should:-

Check the walker's timing at the previous checkpoint.

Check if the walker has reached the next checkpoint.

Get the walker's mobile telephone number and try to contact the walker.

Try to contact any walkers who were with the missing walker (if any).

Telephone the walker's emergency contact.

If the walker is still missing, a search party should be sent out to try to find the walker – possibly two search parties, one from the previous checkpoint and one from the checkpoint where the walker has not arrived.

If the walker is still missing, the emergency services should be alerted.

**Checkpoint should not be closed until the walker has been found.**

## LEN WILSON

Kent LDWA members will be saddened to hear that longstanding member Len Wilson is in poor health. Len, who is in his 80s and lives in Acrise with wife Anne (who, sadly, is also in failing health), has a long-term illness and has to walk using a walking frame now, although by all accounts he is still very alert mentally. One of Len and Anne's sons is giving them support.

Len lived in Tonbridge before moving to Acrise, and his local group on the LDWA Hundred Register is Sussex. He joined the LDWA in 1972, the year we were formed – so he may be Kent Group's longest serving member, after Andrew Melling. His membership number is 147.

In his time, Len was a marvellous walker, starting eight Hundreds – including the first, the Downsman in 1973 – and finishing six of them. He finished that Downsman in 31.38, having parted with the princely sum of £1.50 for his entry fee ('to cover the cost of



providing refreshments along the way'). He was one of just 66 finishers from 123 starters.

He finished the next Downsman Hundred, in 1986, in 28.00, the 1987 Snowdonian in 34.45, the 1988 White Peak in 32.01, the 1993 Cleveland in 43.16 and the 1998 White Peak in 38.55. He retired on the 1992 Invicta and the 1995 Shropshire.

Len was happy to support Kent events, and came down to Dorset to help at our checkpoint on that year's Hundred.

Our thoughts are with Len at this time, as he fights his illness.

#### KEITH NOBLE

Kent LDWA members will be saddened to hear about the death of Essex & Herts stalwart Keith Noble. Keith, who was 89, will be remembered as a gentle man, a gentleman – and an amazing walker to boot. An obituary will appear in the August Strider.

#### DOGS ON WALKS

Kent LDWA members who are dog owners, and who (like the chairman!) occasionally take their four legged friends on walks, may be interested in being reminded of the association guidelines about the subject. These were agreed after consultation with LDWA insurers and considering relevant health and safety and environmental law.

The decision to allow dogs on walks rests with the walk leader or walk organiser.

If dogs are excluded from a walk solely because that is preference of the walk leader then 'Assistance Dogs' must be allowed, except where dogs are prohibited on permissive paths, in wildlife protection areas, or where there are over-riding health and safety issues.

If the walk leader decides to accept dogs on a walk then he/she should check with the dog owners that each dog is covered by liability insurance. If the dog owner confirms verbally that this is so, then the dog may be allowed on the walk. If there is no liability insurance then the dog will be excluded (for this purpose, verbal confirmation of having such liability insurance is treated as a binding agreement to this stipulation, thereby waiving any liability of the LDWA resulting from or related to any dog without such liability insurance).

If dogs are not allowed, this will be made clear in all published information, including *Strider*. The terms 'No dogs allowed' where all dogs are excluded, and 'Assistance Dogs only' where it is the walk leader's preference to exclude dogs, are usually used.

If there is no notification about dogs in *Strider* then members attending do so on the understanding that dogs are allowed on the walk.

The walk leader can insist that the dog be on a lead for all, or certain, sections of the walk.

**'No dogs allowed'** means no dogs at all. This can only apply where there is a valid reason, for example access rights that prohibit dogs, terrain (for example if there was a rock scramble using ladders) or nature (for example nesting birds on moorland). For the purposes of clarity, this is not an exhaustive list.

**'Registered Assistance Dogs only'** demonstrates that the walk leader does not want dogs on the walk, but assistance dogs will still be permitted.

These guidelines are given on the basis of discussion with LDWA insurers, who have summarised their position in the notes reproduced below:

'It is the responsibility of the walk leader to make certain the dog owner keeps his or her pet under close control, especially on farmland, and on a short lead near livestock.

'Assistance Dogs', such as hearing or guide dogs, are allowed on all suitable walks.

As stated above, dogs may be permitted on walks where there is no problem with terrain or livestock and if the leader is comfortable with dogs.

Some walks won't be suitable for dogs (for example when the route covers a particular type of terrain, young farm animals are present, subject to quarantine i.e. Foot & Mouth) and the ultimate decision on whether to allow dogs lies with the individual group or walk leader.

Kent follows the national LDWA recommendation that we encourage leaders to allow dogs wherever possible.



**Blustery conditions on the French walk.**

## **CHRISTMAS CRUISE AROUND CALAIS: December 8 By Graham Smith**

Ten of us went on the annual Christmas Cruise Round Calais walk, including two members of LDWA's Irregulars group, Mike Askey and friend Jenny, who had come down from Leeds.

We had a good breakfast on the P&O ship *Pride of Canterbury*, with a slightly delayed crossing because of the strong winds and choppy Channel. The weather forecast had not been too good, with rain and blustery conditions. But luckily, when we started the walk, it was still sunny, and we were also walking into the wind, which meant we would be walking with it behind us in the second half of the walk.

So we took our usual route through Calais to Coquelles, and then the GR (Grande Randonnee) to Cap Blanc Nez. Luckily the weather didn't really get bad until we had reached the Cap, which prevented the usual fine views across to Cap Gris Nez. But then the very gusty winds and heavy showers came down, and we descended to take refuge in a nice bar in Escalles. Fortified by a nice strong beer (well, I did - others had chocolate, tea, coffee or cognac) we pressed on, taking the road to the village of Peuplingues. Then it was back through Coquelles, where a couple of us did some shopping at the Auchan hypermarket. By then it was getting dark, and we pressed on along the road and saw the always spectacular Calais Christmas lights.

After that we had a splendid meal at the town's excellent *Histoire Ancienne* restaurant, where we had gone the previous year on the same walk.

Our ferry back was delayed by 45 minutes due to the even choppier Channel, and we finally got back to Dover at 11.30pm. The only downsides were Peter Sinden, who had found the *Histoire Ancienne* restaurant for us last year, not feeling well and returning early, and the ever ebullient Rex Stickland losing his passport (after filling in the necessary paperwork at British border control in Calais, he was able to stay with us for the journey back, rather than having to take a later ferry).

So all in all, it was another very good day on this walk, which I have now been putting on for at least 20 years. The 23 mile Summer French Challenge will be on Saturday July 6 (see Social Walks Programme above).

One last thing, which may (or may not!) be of interest. And after much discussion on board, we eventually found out that the fastest time for rowing across the Channel was 2h 41m by an English team – which was faster than our ferry (but obviously in better weather conditions). Go to [http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/fastest-crossing-of-the-english-channel-rowing-by-a-team-\(male-quad\)](http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/fastest-crossing-of-the-english-channel-rowing-by-a-team-(male-quad))



**The party, with Brian Buttifant, in Knole Park.**



## **POST CHRISTMAS SEVENOAKS STROLL December 27 By Graham Smith**

Nineteen of us – including some very welcome visitors from Surrey and Essex & Herts groups – turned up in the frost at Shipbourne Church for our annual post-Christmas walk, led by Dave Sheldrake.

Dave's route was very well planned, the morning's 11 miles taking us through very pleasant West Kent countryside before we went into Knole Park and then Sevenoaks itself, where we met Kent LDWA Life President Brian Buttifant and group stalwart Ivan Waghorn at the Wetherspoons pub. After lunch Brian accompanied us for a few hundred yards back to Knole Park, after which we parted company, Brian walking to his home in Kemsing and the rest of us doing the six miles – largely following the Greensand Way – back to Shipbourne. The only small hiccup was when Dale Moorhouse and Graham Smith – who had fallen behind the other walkers – took a wrong turning into Ightham Mote. The pair quickly realise the error and turned back to where they had gone wrong – to find a search party already on the way to find them.

It was very nice winter walk, so many thanks, Dave.



**LEFT: coffee break at the end of the Seven Sisters, with Cuckmere Haven behind.**

**RIGHT: the walkers at the top of Wilmington Hill, about to start striding along the ridge.**

## **NEW YEAR ON THE SOUTH DOWNS: January 1 By Graham Smith**

Eight of us from Kent and two from Sussex shrugged off the effects of any New Year's Eve excesses to get to the South Downs Way sign on the end of Eastbourne seafront at 9am on January 1 – and what a wonderful day we had.

The weather was absolutely ideal: sunny, not too cold and with fine clear views – the best weather we have ever had on the New Year's Day version of this walk. The weather was, of course, in stark contrast to the heavy, cold rain we had endured on the Good Friday version of this walk last year – which was the worst we had ever had.

We took our usual route, going up the hill from the South Downs Way sign and then moving rapidly along on that lovely short grass, past Beachy Head to Birling Gap. Then it was the Seven Sisters, at the end of which we had a short break in a nice little hollow we found offering fine views across the Cuckmere to Cuckmere Haven. Then we crossed the Cuckmere to follow the river to the A259, and then the riverbank all the way to Alfriston, passing the White Horse carved into chalk on the hillside at Cradle Hill, on the opposite side of the river.

After lunch in Alfriston, it was decided to go for the slightly longer return route over Wilmington Hill, rather than following the South Downs Way (which we had done on Good Friday last year, as we had wanted the quickest way back to Eastbourne). The Wilmington Hill route involves initially taking the riverside path and then forking off to Milton Street. Then it is a steady, fairly laborious slog up the hill, passing the Long Man of Wilmington, carved into the chalk below us. At the top we passed a trig point (which of course I had to touch) before turning right to follow a very nice ridge, offering tremendous views east to Hastings.

Coming down off the ridge, we followed some nice paths past fields (one containing some alpacas) to Jevington, where we had our second pub stop at the Eight Bells (well, it was New Year's Day – and the leader is only human ...).

After the Eight Bells, we followed our usual South Downs Way route back to Eastbourne, arriving at 4.30pm, just as the sun was beginning to set.

We had walked 20.5 miles and climbed approximately 4,200 feet. It had been an ideal start to 2019.





**Pictured clockwise, from top left: Leggers Inn - the start of the Hangover Hike; Canal Basin; towards Pool-in-Wharfedale; looking towards the set of Emmerdale.**

#### **NEW YEAR IN YORKSHIRE By Andy Clark**

Having already decided to travel to Yorkshire to take part in the Hangover Hike Challenge event on New Year's Day, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the West Yorkshire group had organised a Social Walk for New Year's Eve.

With the Hangover Hike starting in Dewsbury and the social walk being from Bramhope, I discovered that the two places were only about 25 miles apart, so it seemed a reasonable idea to take part in both walks.

So having booked my five star hotel (in reality probably the cheapest Travelodge on the M1) for two nights instead of one, I hot footed it up north on the Sunday afternoon.

As 'Tim's Annual Hootenanny' was due to start at 8.30, it was still pitch black as I left. During my drive I saw places I'd remembered from my childhood but had never visited such as Batley, Dewsbury and Hunslet. I'd only heard of these places from Grandstand on a Saturday afternoon as the announcer always gave out the rugby league results before the teleprinter jumped into life with the football scores.

Arriving half an hour before the scheduled off time, I was a bit perturbed to be the only one in the car park but soon it began to fill up.

The West Yorkshire group benefit from members of other groups joining them. In addition to myself, there were members from the Nidderdale and the North Yorkshire groups. In all, there were nearly 30 walkers starting out for the advertised 12 mile walk.

It transpired that 'Tim's Annual Hootenanny' has become a bit of a tradition and although it always starts from Bramhope, the route is tweaked each year. The idea of a shorter walk than usual is so as people can gather for a drink having finished the walk before returning home to prepare for their New Year's celebrations.

My hosts explained that this part of Yorkshire was regarded as 'lowland' but although it may not have the stunning scenery of the Yorkshire Dales or the ruggedness of the North York Moors, there were still some pretty good views.

The first of these came quite quickly into the route but was arguably spoiled by the intrusion of Leeds Bradford airport.

We then walked through fields above the Bramhope Railway Tunnel, built in the 1840s, where the shanty towns for the workers and their families lived in probably squalid conditions. Poignantly, there were at least 24 deaths during construction of the tunnel.

We headed towards Golden Acre Park, which was a short lived, American style Theme Park in the 1930s. As one of the group members said to me, it was probably the equivalent of Alton Towers in its heyday. The park is now owned by Leeds Council and is laid out to more formal gardens. Although at this time of year, they did look a little sparse, I would imagine that they would look pretty spectacular in the spring and summer.

By the time of our next break, the sun had come out and it turned out to be quite warm, certainly by Yorkshire standards. However I was still glad of my 'big coat' at times when walking into the fairly strong wind on a couple of sections.

The next stop was near to the set of ITV's Emmerdale, in the grounds of Harewood House. Although the inside shots are filmed in studios in Leeds, most of the outside scenes have been filmed in this purpose built 'village' since 1997. The houses are timber-framed and stone-faced. But the village is built on green-belt land, with its buildings classified as "temporary structures", and

planning has to be applied for every ten years. If permission is not granted, they will have to be demolished. It appears old habits die hard in Yorkshire as I heard plenty of references to Emmerdale Farm, despite the suffix being dropped in 1989!

Heading back towards Bramhope, we were treated to some really special views to the north, over Wharfedale. The walk turned out to be just short of 13 miles and nearly everybody popped into the Fox & Hounds for a drink afterwards. Fortunately for me it appears that a motorway service station is not the most raucous place to see in the New Year.

With only about a 15 minute drive to the Leggers Inn in Dewsbury for the Hangover Hike, it was still pretty dark when I arrived at the start for my tea and toast. You do have to drive through a pretty run down industrial area to get to the start but the Leggers is set in the canal basin, certainly a more pleasant environment.

If I was lucky with the weather on the previous day, I was even luckier now. An (almost) balmy 10C meant that I could get away with just a fleece. Any doubts about a mandatory hangover test or inspection, which I obviously would have failed, disappeared and the whole set up of The Irregulars' volunteers was extremely laid back (or they were all hungover!). 'If you've done the hike before you know where to go. If it's your first time, follow someone else'. The first and the last few miles of the challenge are on the footpath alongside the canal.

Although the challenge could not really be described as tough, there was still about 2000 feet of ascent for the 21 miles but as the canal walking was very much on the level, this is all compacted into about two thirds of the route.

Having turned away from the canal, we headed uphill and although the views were not spectacular, they were very pleasant. To the north, you could see the hills around Leeds and Bradford. To the east, the power station at Ferrybridge was clearly visible despite being about twenty miles away. West, showed Huddersfield basking in the sunlight and to the south you could see as far as the northern parts of the Peak District.

The route then headed towards the village of Emley before heading back towards the canal to return to Dewsbury. For a possibly shorter than normal challenge event, there were still four checkpoints serving refreshments, although all of these were outside and only the third of these, just after halfway, had hot drinks. However, with the weather being as it was, cold drinks were more the order of the day.

All in all, an extremely satisfying few days; Yorkshire was very welcoming. I would heartily recommend this 'double header' for the same time over the New Year period of 2019/20, although I suspect the weather may not be as kind.

Alternatively, The Irregulars have three further challenge events in 2019; Marsden Moor Meander (May); A Foot In Two Dales (July); and Regular Irregular (December).

West Yorkshire have one Challenge event in September - One Foot In The Gargrave.

From my experience, any of these events would be worthy of consideration.

My full Walk Reports for both days can be found at <https://andyclarkwalks.wordpress.com>

## COMEDY CORNER

Teacher: How old is your father?

Kid: He is six years.

Teacher: What? How is this possible?

Kid: He became a father when I was born.

(Logic! Children are quick and always speak their minds).

Teacher: Maria, go to the map and find North America.

Maria: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Now, Class, who discovered America?

Class: Maria.

Teacher: Glenn, how do you spell crocodile?

Glenn: K-R-O-C-O-D-I-A-L.

Teacher: No, that's wrong.

Glenn: Maybe it is wrong, but you asked me how I spell it.

(I love this child).

Teacher: What is the chemical formula for water?

Donald: H I J K L M N O.

Teacher: What are you talking about?

Donald: Yesterday you said H to O.

## FACEBOOK

I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles.

Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom.

I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch and doing what anybody and everybody does every day.

I also listen to their conversations, give them the 'thumbs up' and tell them I like them. And it works just like Facebook! I already have four people following me: two police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist.



## THE EDGE OF LIECHTENSTEIN By Peter Jull

### DAY 1: Projects 2 & 3

Having arrived after dark, the view from the village of Triesenberg was one for skiing down not walking up. Before you ask why the day/project mismatch, the weather forecast for the valley on Day 2 was 82° so walking the length of the country was swapped forward to Day 1, anticipating it would be less than 82° up a mountain. After driving to the bottom of the hill, I drove back up to the hotel to remember my passport as I'd been stopped at the border from Austria the evening before and would be crossing the border again later.

Set off again to the northernmost bus stop in Ruggell, parked nearby and got on a Liemobil lime green bus. Only when it came to a stop and the destination screen changed back to where I'd just come from, did I realise I mixed up bus 13 serving my destination stop and bus 31 which I'd gotten on. After some pidgin German and driver gesticulation I swapped to another bus and then another before I worked out how as yet unfamiliar place names were connected by the bus routes. Arriving at the southern town of Balzers, I was dropped by the church and choosing to have a quick look stumbled on a funeral. The Lord's Prayer has the same cadence in German as in English. My path out of town was across flat farmland before climbing



through woods and out into meadows. When the gradient turned downhill, I recognised I was in Switzerland even though there was no sign of a border on the ground. The true southernmost point of Liechtenstein is to the east and 150 yards further south but many many more yards further up, so this would satisfy as the starting point of Project 2.

Retracing back into Balzers, Gutenberg Castle, the 2nd most popular tourist attraction in the country, was prominent on its isolated rocky outcrop and demanded a visit. Although restored, only the outer bailey is open for inspection and disappointment was tempered by a water tap for an early quenching and refill in sunny high 70°s. After the unintended bus tour of the north and sightseeing stoppages, it was midday before I set off north in earnest. It would have been easy to

follow the flat bank of the Rhine but that would have been boring with the buzz of a cross river Swiss motorway, so the plan was to follow foothill paths. Climbing up the map to the forest edge led to a clearly signed T-junction but after that there were more paths than signs and it took a bit of guesswork to match map and path. After passing through the top end of a valley village, the path turned up that ski down view below the hotel. It didn't go all the way before trending down again past some man in a red circle roadworks sign. It said something was "verboten" but my German's not good and doesn't it mean "no one's looking – go on quick"? It was only a few yards eroded to rocks, much less challenging than later mountain routes, and after ducking under some builder's tackle continued my gently downwards stroll. Emerging by "No Drone" signs the Prince has provided a car park (with welcome again water tap) for people to stare at his No1 tourist attraction, but not open to the public, castle walls from lower down.



Proceeding on the route is briefly a not very Alpina part of the Via

Alpina, being a doggy do bin punctuated park like path above the capital. It does lead to a sting in the tail I hadn't spotted from the contours by climbing to the country's only other real mountainside village of Planken. An accordion playing bar is tempting but instinct tells me that even at midsummer I should be mindful of the light. So far the map has shown paths as a solid line but the descent from a viewpoint is dotted and signs, instead of yellow, are red for Alpine path. It's no worse than, for example, the routes down into Folkestone Warren - but being 200m, it goes on rather longer. The route flattens onto the plain but as the ridge cutting off the northern border grows closer, it grows increasingly less insignificant than it looked from on high in Planken. Passing this morning's bus stops, signs point to places in the right direction but as the climb continues they're no longer mentioned and it's guesswork again to find the right path down the other side. This turns out to be equally as time consumingly steep as the last descent and before the path is plain again the sun is closing in on the distant mountains.





I've worked out that map black lines are dog walker used tracks so avail myself of a shortcut leading to the final turn to northernmost Liechtenstein. Joining the Rhineland path, marker posts are mistaken for the Austrian border until an unambiguous sign is reached and Project 2 - walking the length of the country in one day - is complete. Project 3 is to collect the Austria-Liechtenstein-Switzerland tripoint which is in the middle of the river. To do it properly it's a few minutes further to a bridge into Switzerland and back down the other side to view the tripoint from there as well. Project 3 completed it's 2 miles to the upstream bridge opposite Ruggell along a banal cycle path in fading light marred by motorway buzz to the right. But round a bend the bridge soon comes into sight and there's minor satisfaction in seeing it creep closer step by step. Crossing back the queuing traffic is found to be caused by roadworks lights with no sign of a customs post so I needn't have gone back for my passport this morning. 31 miles and 4500ft of ascent in about 11 hours.

## DAY 2 Project 1

The daily mass o'clock bell outside my window (6am) ensures I'm up in good time to turn uphill from the hotel and though a tunnel which emerges in a



settlement of much more traditional wooden

houses before the road ends at much less traditional Malbun ski resort. Germans cars have nicked all the best parking places which makes me feel like a slugabed. American pensioners are boarding a coach and I'm perplexed at why here is on their itinerary as I see nothing to do but climb and their fitness level is challenged by 100 yards to coo at the herd of cows clanging down the other side of the valley. I find my path and despite being dashed on the map its appearance as a gently ascending farm track is confirmed by a farmer driving down it. Above the cow line, by the avalanche fences, a turn becomes steeper rockier footpath. Following a ridge line there are downs as well as ups and

significant downs close to left and right. But it's a maintained path and fairly well frequented today. Despite the temperature there's still a snowfield across the path to negotiate.

Bryan's donated walking pole is having its first outing with me today and is a confidence boost to ensure I carry on. The path climbs to cross topped Augustenberg at 7700ft. A pause to admire Malbun valley views with only 700 more feet to climb. The path away starts down a grassy slope, finally out of earshot of those cow bells carried right up here, then through a small metal gate in fencing keeping Austrian sheep in place which feels belittling of my exertions. The path continues down more steeply trending towards a mountain hut now in view below and at one point needing fixed hand cables where the ridge is particularly sharp and rocky. Before starting I had imagined the hut would be more bothy like but it turns out to be a fully fledged eating & drinking establishment. £5 for a pint of Coke feels like it's worth £10. Instead of gaining 700ft I've lost 700ft so there's 1400ft to go again. The sign says my target mountain Naafkopf 1¼ hours. It also says Via Alpina and the path is more befitting of the name until it disappears into Austria. Initially sight of Augustenberg is a depressant as it seems higher than the altitude I've regained. A wider steeper snowfield has to be crossed before losing sight of it round a corner which brings into view another cross topped peak. It's reached so readily



and quickly I'm half expecting another mountain beyond. But no, there's a summit book attached to the cross and quickly scanning from its 2009 start I see no England or LDWA, mostly local locations. After standing in Switzerland and Austria and Liechtenstein for a while, there no indication which is which, Project 1, their southern tripoint, is completed and it's back down the same way. Uneventfully apart from a chilled hand leaning into the snowfield for balance I'm back at the hut after three hours; about right given the number of overtakers. A work party strides up the mountain, drill box in one hand, others pulling pushing a double ended barrow. Map planning had suggested a scenery changing alternate route back and this is encouraged by thoughts of those hand cables the way I'd come. It's easy vehicular access for hut supplies and being mountain biked today. I'm descending into a different valley so it's no surprise when there's a turn uphill. Underfoot and gradient could be Dartmoor but the views are deeper. The gust of breeze on topping the ridge is welcome not least for blowing pestering flies away for a couple



of minutes. Down below I can see my car frying in the sun. The descent is more steppy this side and later joins the line of a ski lift. Back in the resort I treat myself to an ice cream then fried banana from the car. Similar ascent to yesterday but in less than half the distance and about nine hours.

#### DAY3 Project 4

Before mass o'clock, drive to Balzers. From the car park repeat the route out of town to the T-Junction but this time turn right. Despite the early hour the gradient soon has me perspiring freely. The target is Liechtenstein's highest mountain Grauspitz, only three miles as the crow flies but well over a mile up, Unseen in the woods Switzerland is entered and the path zigzags up getting so steep hand cables have been fixed. It then levels off to cross a ravine by a substantial footbridge. Passing signs of civilisation the path turns back to meet the much diminished ravine and cross its river by a much less substantial footbridge. Take the chance to refill and continue climbing only to realise I've left the pole behind. Back down then back up 200ft and then some more, meadows open up again. Sitting on a path side bench is so much nicer than toiling uphill on a hot day.



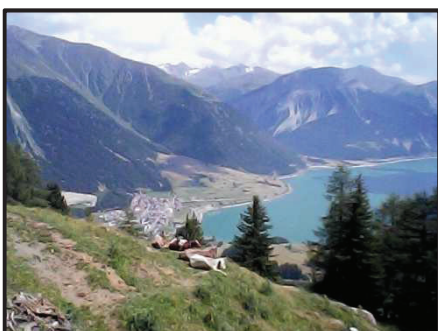
The path I'm following leads to Faulknis from where Grauspitz is only 80ft higher but 800 yards further on with no marked path. Other reported climbs have started from different directions but I'm restricted by only having a Liechtenstein map. If I get to Faulknis it's at best going to be a long scree scramble if possible at all. Before travelling there was doubt over the feasibility of this project and these doubts come to the fore now. Proving that much of long

distance walking is down to determination I abandon, having climbed 3500ft in two miles. Back at the stream I refill again and forget the pole again; not so far back up this time. With time to spare and unattracted by retracing the way up with its no stop drops protected only by cling on cables I look for the alternative shown on the map. By approaching a cross on a viewpoint spied on the way up I spot parasols and a faint path leading that way. Other walkers are beer drinking but discouraged by the lack of a menu or price list I pass by and follow its access track down.

The track reaches the plain and a road with sign to Balzers. I'm off the map but have gathered a good idea of the geography from higher viewpoints; there's a range of mini mountains between me and the river. A footpath ahead I suspect will repeat the path I used on Day 1 so look for a route round the back of the mountains. A GPS check reveals I'm still 600ft above the Rhine so a plain rather than the plain and find a nearby turning heading down hill leading to the Swiss village of Flasch at the southern end of the mountains. Plentiful water spouts for head drenching then find signs for a vineyard walk heading north. The mountains are much more sheer on this side and the cliffs squeeze me towards the Rhine. An easy going track joins the river flowing faster than I'm walking. Reaching the roar of rapids I'm back on the map as the climb above the river is shown. Back down again the locals are kayaking in the river and rock climbing the cliffs as they fall away. A level walk back to the car and refried banana.

#### DAY 4 Project 5 & 5a

The next most popular tourist attraction is the football stadium so Liechtenstein is clearly done and I tunnel my way into Italy (Arlberg 8½ miles and several shorter ones) to stop at Reschen. Park by the lake and a sign pointing to Piz Lad, the mountain that towers over the pass looking nice and rounded rather than pointy. Follow that sign and then a second set but the cycle path starts to descend the pass rather than climb the hut dotted meadows that look the right way. Try a bear left which turns into a road zigzagging up the mountainside. Find a sign pointing to Drielandenstein, three-quarters of which is the real target of the day. After passing the sign posted restaurant, tarmac become track then signs point up steeper paths. Having worked out that the three-quarters earlier was not a distance but routes 3 & 4 sharing the path, for now it's straightforward navigation, later with Italian and Austrian style signs competing for attention. If only the bloodsucking bugs would leave me alone I could enjoy an easy enough walk which was only really steep for the last few yards to the Austria-Italy-Switzerland tripoint. Nearby boundary markers are dated 1920 it only being the post WW1 settlement that granted Italy this still German speaking part of Tyrol from Austria. The actual tripoint is a random lump of mountain rock to which some stonemason has had to drag his tools and black paint to mark its sides with O, I and S and lines on the top showing the exact point. The original plan had been to climb Piz Lad and from there descend to this point but from this side the mountain is too rugged and scree strewn to consider climbing. Return to the last signposts and take path 4 rather than 3 which leads across the pass facing side of the mountain. A nice



(apart from the flies) levelish walk eventually comes out onto the meadows seen from below earlier and signs including path 5 to Piz Lad. At the bottom it had said 4 hours and I reckon I'm half way up. Another 2 up and 4 down is pushing the time available. At 9200ft it would be the highest mountain of the expedition but was only planned in because it was on the way to the tripoint and has no other significance. I'm a walker really not a climber, so look for something more like the paths I've found so far. Walk 10 has signs pointing in two directions, a circular walk returning beside the lake perhaps? Looking level from the signposts it starts to climb gently and climbs and climbs. After an hour it turns a corner and I can see it continues to climb round the end



of a valley leading away from the lake with no indication of when it might drop down again. Return to the signposts and take the path that does lead down. I'm half hoping that Reschner Alm which many signs have pointed to might be a mountain restaurant and round the corner come to a - large cow shed. But behind that there is indeed a restaurant with car parks and mountain bikers. Stop for a pub lunch. A sign says path 5 is closed to bikes. It's unclear whether walkers can still use it but cows sitting across the path suggest maybe they think not. Choose the vehicle track which descends gently, almost imperceptibly at times, so that when long zigzags bring the lake into view it still seems a long way down. Passing a chapel improves the surface to tarmac and there are numbered roadside shrines below. I didn't spot the numbers to start with and think there were more than 12 for the stages of the cross, I wasn't going back up to check. A route option that looks like it might meet the lake sooner leads through a farming community, haymakers and piles of what cows turn hay into. A further diversion is still needed to get to the lakeside before I get to the car first. Drive a bit further on to the next village to view the local tourist attraction. When the lake was filled with hydro-electricity a village was drowned leaving only the church tower protruding. But the water level is low and despite the bund that should keep some back the tower is unphotogenic in a muddy puddle. Wander about a bit then bore my way back through Austria for a night in Bregenz on Lake Contance.

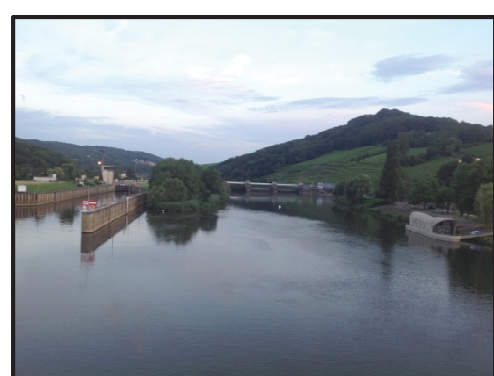
#### DAY 5 Projects 6, 7 & 8

Drive into Germany, park near the lake and start on a lakeside path. Soon a campsite and then boat moored inlets divert me inland. Crossing a bridge into Austria a beaver warning sign is more prominent. I see none and no trees fall on me. The route becomes more promenade like and at a point where it does join the lake, with swimmers, I dip my hand in and find it far from the icy it must get in winter. Through Bregenz an "interesting" set design for an outdoor production of Carmen is eye catching then distant rumbles spawn spatters that have waiters scrambling round their tables.

Beyond Bregenz, city park becomes more country park and spatters become something more shelter demanding. The protective capacity of trees is exceeded and nature takes its revenge for four days of sunny weather with a good drenching leaving only a bum bag covered patch partly dry. A river forces a turn inland to find a suburban railway station. A plan to walk on into Switzerland had been dropped at the planning stage as the Rhine is silting promontories out into the lake meaning any potential route would be too urban and too long for the time available. A train take me to Rorschach which has three stations. Guess the right one and the lake



being logically downhill arrive at the harbour as the ferry is approaching. The Austria – Germany – Switzerland tripoint is in Lake Constance but the exact point has never been agreed. I've looked at the possibilities from Germany and Austria and now the ferry from Switzerland will come closest to the logical locations to complete Project 6. The destination island port of Lindau turns out to be more



anciently attractive that just the pretty harbour mouth and dockside tower, demanding a bit of exploring but no spending in the many tourist shops and eateries. A mainland bridge allows me to resume a nearly lakeside walk back to the car. A half day walk with absolutely no ascent. The AA suggested drive home crosses into Luxembourg at the infamous Schengen which makes an opportune journey break to collect the France – Germany – Luxembourg tripoint. It's marked by a buoy in the river Moselle where a boat was moored to sign the agreement. Viewed from Luxembourg and the bridge into Germany it becomes obscured by an inaccessible island before reaching France so Project 7 completed. Project 8 the Belgium - France – Luxembourg tripoint had been brought forward to the journey down which had contributed to the arrival after dark. Instead of the pleasant stroll about Schengen that was, this one is accessed across a bit of fly-tipped scrubland between two railways requiring bramble bashing to get close to the minor river in which it sits. From Belgium the brambles are just too thick and France has even more scrubland.





*PHOTOS TAKEN BY ERIC ROLFE ON THE SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR ON MARCH 17*

