

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION — Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



LEN WILSON - 1934-2020: see inside

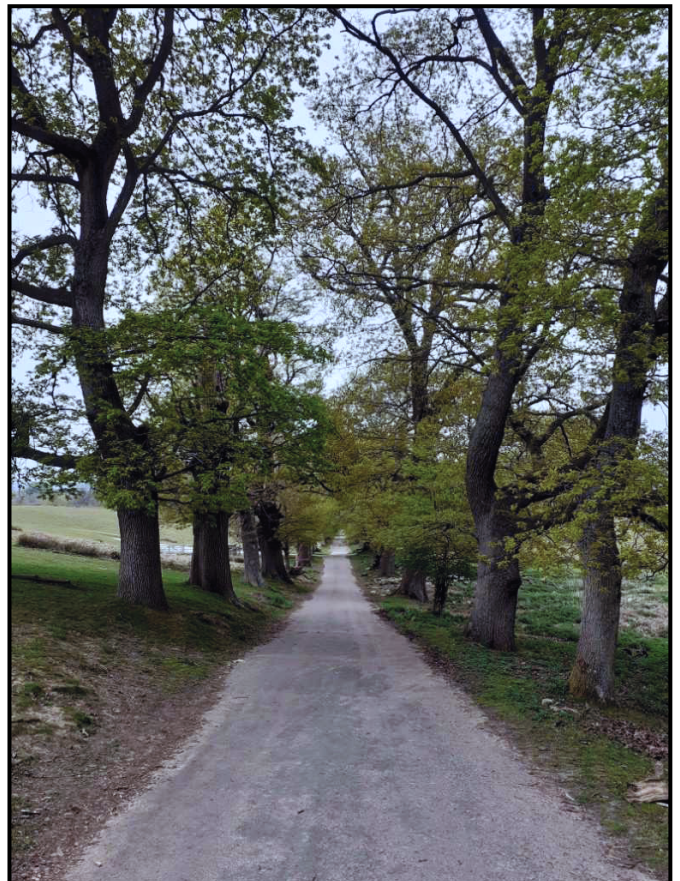
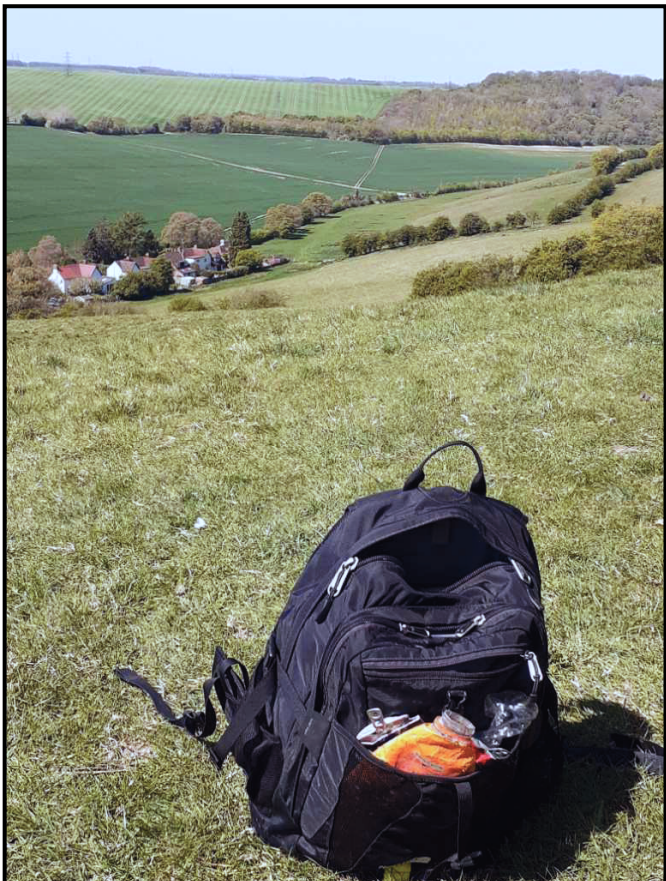
Number 112



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www.ldwa.org.uk/kent

**Pictures from the new route of the Sevenoaks Circular planned by organiser David Thornton.
See story inside.**



KENT SOCIAL WALKS HAVE RESTARTED

BY the time Kent LDWA members get this newsletter, a programme of group social walks should be under way.

Following guidance issued at the end of June by the LDWA's National Executive Committee, we restarted social walks on a trial basis on July 19 and July 26. The walks were being organised under the LDWA guidelines, which follow Covid-19 advice from the UK Government. The guidelines are quite strict, and we are sure that Kent LDWA members accept that they must be followed. The three principal instructions are that 1) there must be no more than six people on a walk, 2) that people wishing to go on that walk must contact the walk leader by email, and 3) that only primary members of the group can go. The full instructions are in the current Strider and also on the LDWA's national website.

Obviously, these arrangements are not ideal, and a meeting of Kent LDWA committee was called immediately after the NEC issued the instructions, to decide whether we wanted to restart social walks. It is fair to say that a couple of Kent committee members raised totally legitimate concerns about restarting social walks on that basis – namely that we were in danger of antagonising people who could not get on the walks, and that there was risk of a complaint being made against a walk leader if he or she inadvertently failed to follow an aspect of the guidelines.

But the general feeling was that Kent LDWA members had not taken part in group walks since lockdown started in March and they were very keen to do so. It was felt that the NEC guidelines did at least enable us to offer a walking experience to our members, so it was decided that walks should be restarted, with the July 19 one being reviewed by a committee meeting due to take place on July 23, just as this newsletter was being produced. And although I am writing this before the meeting, I have no doubt that the committee will agree that social walks will continue, adhering to national guidance relating to Covid-19. Clearly, we all hope that, in the weeks and months to come, social distancing measures can be relaxed to allow us to offer more walks to more people. Social walks secretary Peter Jull has a long list of walks offered to him from members which he is very keen to put on our programme.

Challenge walk events, attracting much greater numbers than social walks, are a different matter entirely. The NEC has drafted guidelines for challenge event organisers to follow and these will be sent out to groups. The next Kent event is the Sevenoaks Circular in March, and organiser David Thornton has done a lot of work for next year's event, including working out an excellent new route (see the story below). So we have every right to be pretty excited about the 2021 Sevenoaks Circular, and about our other two challenge walks. July's High Weald Walk is a complete revamp of our annual Weald walk, and the White Cliffs Challenge in August has a revised route. So there's a lot for Kent members of the LDWA to look forward to.

Sadly, and for the second one in succession, it was felt unwise to carry the list of Kent social walks in this newsletter, but I am sure our members will understand. I have no doubt that walks will be listed again in the December newsletter, as well as confirmation that our three 2021 challenge events will be taking place.

Thank you for your patience during this difficult, unprecedented time. Happy walking – and stay safe.

Graham Smith,

Chairman, Kent LDWA

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, Andy Clark, Joy Davies, Nick Dockree, Helen Franklin, David Thornton

Sarah Turner while not on the Kent committee, is group equipment officer. Michael Headley maintains 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

KENT CHALLENGE WALKS NEWS IN BRIEF

Sevenoaks Circular

This year's Sevenoaks Circular, due to be held on March 22, was cancelled a week before the lockdown was announced. Entrants were refunded what they paid less £3.60. Many entrants indicated they did not wish to claim this and so, after any refunds, a donation was made to the Trussell Trust, a charity which supports a nationwide network of foodbanks, including six in the Kent area. We are also honouring our booking fee and our commitment to making a £225 donation to West Heath School, where the event is based, and which does a wonderful job catering for children for whom, for varying reasons, mainstream schooling has become insufficient.

Sevenoaks Circular organiser David Thornton is planning a new route for next year, using the same venue, with two indoor checkpoints. The event is set for Sunday March 21, with the marshals' walk set for March 7. Distances will be 32, 22 and 17 miles. David has written an article about next year's Sevenoaks Circular below.

High Weald Walk

This year's Weald walk was scheduled for July 12 and was called off in May. This was a particular shame, because organiser Neil Higham had revamped the event, with a new route and a new venue – at Langton Green, just outside Tunbridge Wells. But this

revamped Weald challenge walk, with its new venue, is now due to take place next year, and is set for Sunday July 11, with a date not yet earmarked for the marshals' walk. Distances will be 26, 20 and 15 miles.

White Cliffs Challenge

This year's WCC, scheduled for August 29, was also cancelled in May. The event, with a revised route, will now take place next year and has been earmarked for August 28, with a date not yet set for the marshals' walk.

Routes will be 30 and 18 miles, with the revising of the route taking in the delightful Whinless Down in Dover, one of the best viewpoints in the area. The event will, as usual, be based at St Margaret's. All checkpoints will be outdoors apart from Capel, where the village hall has been booked and which will be a meal stop.

Surrey Tops

Another event which has been cancelled is the Surrey Tops 50-miler, set for September 19-20. This will now take place in September 18-19 next year, with the date of the marshals' walk to be announced. As usual, Kent will be organising a checkpoint, and this is likely to be at Elstead (16 miles).

The Tops, of course, is part of the KSS (Kent Surrey Sussex) Triple Challenge of 50-mile walks to be done in successive years, the others being our WCC and the Sussex Stride, which took place last year.

Postponing the Tops to 2021 means that our 50-mile WCC is due to be held in 2022, with the Sussex Stride in 2023.

FAMILY CHRISTMAS DINNER POSTPONED

DUE TO Covid-19, we have had to postpone our annual Family Christmas Dinner, and it is hoped this can take place early next year.

We are planning to return to London Beach Country Hotel, just outside Tenterden, where we have had the event for two years.

Neal and Jan O'Rourke are again happy to organise the event, with Neal leading a short walk before the dinner. Neal has been in touch with London Beach which, as the newsletter went to press, was not taking any bookings because of the pandemic. Neal has kindly offered to keep in touch with the country hotel, and when social distancing restrictions are eased, it is hoped he can make a booking for our Family Christmas Dinner to take place as early as possible in 2021. It is hoped that we can have some more encouraging news about this in the December newsletter.

APPLICATION GOES IN FOR ANOTHER KENT HUNDRED

A FORMAL application has been made to the association's national 100s coordinator Alan Warrington for Kent to host another LDWA Hundred. Peter Jull is working on plans for a Hellfire Hundred or a Hunnypot Hundred which would take place in 2025 or 2026.

This year's planned Hundred, Y 100 Sir Fynwy in South Wales, has been postponed because of Covid-19, and is now set for next year. As reported in the August Strider, this means that the LDWA Hundreds planned for the subsequent three years are now due to take place in the following years - the Trans Pennine 100 in 2022, the Elephant, Bull and Bear 100 in 2023 and the Speyside 100 in 2024.

So there is a vacancy for a group to host the LDWA's flagship event in 2025, and it is understood that Norfolk & Suffolk LDWA has also applied to host the Hundred in that year. So the situation is similar to when Kent first applied to host the Cinque Ports 100 which – as we all know! – finally happened in 2018 (and from which some of us may still be recovering ...) Then, Dorset and Kent applied to the LDWA's National Executive Committee to host the Hundred in 2016. As Dorset had not hosted a Hundred before, it was decided to let Dorset organise the event that year, with our Cinque Ports 100 happening two years later. The NEC was then alternating Hundreds between the south and north of the country, and in 2017 came the North York Moors 100. It is expected that there will be an NEC discussion, and maybe a vote, this time, and it may well be that whichever group loses out, will be invited to host the hundred in 2026.

Peter has already put in much work with his project, and Kent LDWA members may recall an article he wrote for the December 2019 newsletter about it. The proposed Hellfire Hundred (the name comes from Hellfire Corner, which Dover acquired during the last world war) would be linear, with the route going from the Deal/Dover area to the Sevenoaks area. The proposed Winnie the Pooh-themed Hunnypot Hundred would be circular, with a possible start at Cobham Hall School and breakfast at Ardingly agricultural showground, the route passing Piglet's house, Pooh Bridge and The Enchanted Place in Ashdown Forest.

Peter is working on route descriptions for both versions, which will be sent to committee members for their thoughts. GPX files will also be available.

So Peter's plans are quite exciting, and both routes are being put on our social walks programme. Further news will appear in the newsletter and on the website in due course. In the meantime, anyone wishing to help Peter is asked to contact him – his details are above.

WHITE CLIFFS WALKING FESTIVAL

The White Cliffs Challenge is, of course, the highlight of the annual White Cliffs Walking Festival, organised by the White Cliffs Ramblers, taking place in August and which was cancelled.

A lot of work had already gone into the festival before the decision was taken to cancel, and the draft walks programme will form the basis of next year's event, which is set for August 26-31, with an opening ceremony on Dover seafront.

A total of 36 walks have been planned, ranging from short walks of one or two miles to our WCC. The programme is also due to include Graham Smith's 10-mile Fish and Chip walk and his 15-mile Alkham Adventure/Lydden Loop.

OTHER WALKING FESTIVALS

In the face of uncertainty about rules on distancing and meeting in groups, three other walking festivals featuring Kent have had to be cancelled – the Heart of Kent Walking Festival, a new event based in the Maidstone area scheduled for the weekend of April 25-26; the Elham Valley Walking Festival due to take place over the weekend of May 30-31; and the High Weald Walking Festival which had been set for September 12-20.

Organisers of all three walking festivals are planning for the events to go ahead next year. Organisers of the High Weald Walking

Festival, Sussex Ramblers and the High Weald AONB, will be offering a suite of self-led walks on-line at www.highwealdwalks.org during September.

CHECKPOINT ON NEXT YEAR'S HUNDRED

COVID-19 restrictions permitting, the Y100 Sir Fynwy (pronounced Fun-We) will take place over the bank holiday weekend of May 29-31, with the marshals' walk on May 1-3.

We have agreed to provide a checkpoint and this will be at Treadam (pronounced Tre-adam), 70 miles. It 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. The CP is scheduled to open at 05.15 on the Sunday, closing time uncertain but probably around 21.00.

So if anyone is happy to help on the checkpoint, please contact Brian Buttifant (contact details above).



Len Wilson with Jill Green and Jim Catchpole at the Kent checkpoint during the Dorset 100 in 2016.

LEN WILSON 1934-2020

KENT LDWA members will be saddened to learn that Len Wilson, who lived in Acrise, near Folkestone, has died after a long illness.

Len, who was 86, joined the LDWA in 1972, the year the association was formed, and his membership number was 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, and 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 in 2016 to help at our checkpoint on that year's Hundred.

Len was born in Woolwich, in south-east London, and was brought up in Sandford, near Doncaster. After National Service, he was called up by the Army and served during the Suez Crisis of 1956. After leaving the Army, Len did various jobs, mainly in building maintenance.

Len lived in Hythe and Tonbridge before moving to Billingshurst in West Sussex, and moved to Acrise about 20 years ago. His local group on the LDWA Hundred Register was Sussex.

His great love was walking, something his son Robert inherited. Robert accompanied Len on several LDWA walks, including 10 Tanners Marathons. Robert also started the Downsman 100 in 1986 with his dad, but was forced to retire after 39 miles.

In recent years, Len walked regularly with the White Cliffs Ramblers until ill health stopped him about three years ago. Len was a volunteer Countryside Access Warden for Kent County Council and also did a lot of footpath clearing.

Len also has two daughters, Janet and Julie, and six grandchildren. Len's wife Ann is suffering from a long-term illness and is now in a care home in Faversham.

Len's funeral was held on July 13, at Hawkinge Crematorium. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, mourners were limited to family and close friends. Graham Smith, representing the LDWA, attended, as did several members of the White Cliffs Ramblers, who lined the avenue leading to the crematorium and applauded as the funeral cortege drove past.

Robert said that if people would like to make a donation to charity in Len's memory, could they please buy an extra poppy on Remembrance Day as a tribute to Len, who was heavily involved with the Royal British Legion. Over the years Len helped to raise thousands of pounds through organising Remembrance Day collections for the RBL's Cheriton branch.

Graham Smith adds. I first met Len during the Cinque Ports Charity Walk in 2005 (which eventually led to the creation of the Cinque Ports 100 in 2018). He was then in his 70s and could no longer walk as quickly as he used to. During the walk he told me about some of his achievements with the LDWA, and I could only marvel at the amazingly quick time of 28 hours he took to complete the Downsman 100 in 1986. On one stretch of that charity walk, as we were approaching Lydd, I upped my pace and strode away from the others, and Len went with me. We covered a good four miles into Lydd in about an hour, and as we were striding out together, with Len flowing along in an easy, effortless style, I could see what a fine walker he must have been in his earlier days. When we got to Lydd, Len told me he had really enjoyed upping the pace like that, but he knew he was no longer capable of maintaining that sort of speed. That charity walk was just before my first Hundred, the Chiltern Landmarks, and I was a bit nervous as I had never attempted one before. But Len told me not to worry, that he had no doubt I would get round, and that I would complete many more. Get round I did (and complete many more I also did), and when I saw Len a couple of weeks later, he said he was very proud of me. I saw Len two or three times a year after that, and although he was no longer capable of walking long distances, I was very glad he was going out with the White Cliffs Ramblers, and helping with footpath clearance work. He continued to take a keen interest in LDWA activities, and in 2016 went down to Dorset to help on the Kent checkpoint for that year's Hundred, and he was delighted to come with me to the Rose & Crown, Wrotham, the following year, when we made his good friend Brian Buttifant a Life President of Kent LDWA.

So thanks for giving me such encouragement for my first Hundred, Len. Apart from being an absolute gentleman, you were one of the finest walkers we have ever had in Kent LDWA. It was a pleasure to know you and to walk with you.



Left - Ann succeeds Kent's Ernie Bishop as national LDWA chairman in 1991; Ann in later years.

ANN SAYER 1936-2020

MANY tributes have been made to Ann Sayer MBE (LDWA no 646), one of the greatest walkers ever, who died on April 15 after a short illness.

The achievements of Ann – who was a member of Kent LDWA – went well beyond the confines of the LDWA. She still holds the record for the fastest Land's End to John O'Groats walk by a woman – 13 days 17 hours and 42 minutes – and was also the first woman Centurion (walking 100 miles in 24 hours) was an LDWA Vice President, and became a Member of the British Empire in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2005.

Ann was 83 when she died, and last year she had to have a leg amputated due to poor circulation following a fall. She was bravely soldiering on in a care home in Hampton, where she was visited by LDWA colleagues who found her in good spirits. Ann was a founder member of London Group.

Brian Buttifant, Kent LDWA life President, made this tribute: "Ann was actually a Kent group member as well as some other groups, and a frequent entrant of the Sevenoaks Circular from the early days. My wife Brenda remembers conversations with this friendly lady. It was in my earlier LDWA days that I heard of Ann and was in total awe of her wonderful achievements. Our Ernie Bishop was part of the support team on both of her record walks – Land's End John O'Groats and the Three Peaks.

"She had spoken of her rowing achievements at European level at the Welsh Harp reservoir and in East Germany where she stroked the Ladies Eight.

She was a very modest and kind lady who will be greatly missed in the world of walking."



The following is part of an article remembering Ann's (then) record British Three Peaks walk in 1979. It appeared in the Kent newsletter 79 in August 2009.

HAVING had a good result in the Dartmoor Hundred and her world's best 24 hours race in France, Ann Sayer had agreed that with the help of Jeff Ellingham and Mike Powell Davies, she would attempt to beat the record of 7 days 11 hours and 40 mins for the British Three Peaks, in 1979.

Ann's attempt commenced at 5.56am on Saturday September 8 at Fort William. Up Ben Nevis and down, finishing at Crianlarich, 50.5 miles. The second day 61 miles to Hamilton. Celia and I went North and had arranged to collect a caravan on the way and arrived at Loch Lomond about an hour before Ann arrived.

I walked with Ann or used a bike and passed food and liquids as needed. Jeff Ellingham mostly drove the caravan and Celia did most of the cooking. Ann took a short break (15-20 mins) for a warm meal once a day.

A number of LDWA members, who happened to be close to the route, met Ann to urge her on. All went well until the outskirts of Glasgow, which I didn't know and I took her in the wrong direction. I felt terrible to have added extra minutes but returned to the correct road from a different direction. The next day was a long B road which was very quiet and was parallel with the main road. Then to Carlisle, with care taken with the roads, and on to Scafell Pike, where it was pouring with rain. From there south east, aiming for the Liverpool area, and the road to Caernarvon, 83 miles via Snowdon. Ann arrived at 6.27 on the Saturday morning and had set a new record of 7 days 31 minutes.

There is an obituary, and various other articles about Ann, in the current Strider.

SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR 2 - MARCH 21 2021

By organiser David Thornton

A FEW of you may already be aware that from 2021 onwards, I shall be responsible for the organisation of Kent Group's Sevenoaks Circular challenge event, which takes place in March every year. David Sheldrake has run this event for the last three years, while I have had the luxury of being able to work alongside him, although very much in the background, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank David for that time and for passing on many useful tips and ideas during this period. Indeed it has been quite a colourful three years for us, with the 2018 event being called off at the 11th hour due to heavy snow, 2019 running like clockwork and then this year's event also being cancelled for reasons we all know too well.

What the previous three years do go to show is that when it comes to the success of these challenge events, there are a number of things over which you have no control and that in reality all you're able to do is plan as best you can and hope things come together on the day. There is, however, one thing which you can plan well in advance and with a bit more confidence and that is the route. So for that reason, as far back as December 2019, I started looking at some options. A little early perhaps, given the event was more than 16 months away, but there's nothing like a bit of forward planning, plus I wanted to have foot conditions similar to those we would likely experience on the day of the event. I've no doubt you could be led into a false sense of security, working out a route during the summer months, for an event taking place early spring and after a full British winter.

It is now summer and the routes are done, with 32, 22 and 17 miles options. It was a good job I was able to get a good chunk of it sorted well before the lockdown period. These are ready for checking independently, for which I've had several kind offers from a number of members. During the process of putting it all together, I decided to log a diary of sorts, so that I could understand clearly the investment of time required to carry out this task. What this revealed came as quite a surprise to me and which anyone else who has put a route description together from scratch will probably appreciate. One can only imagine the time that is invested by those dedicated LDWA members who put together 50 and 100 mile challenge events for our enjoyment. For anyone who is interested in seeing how 20 full days can be accumulated I have outlined this below.

I'm guessing that not all route descriptions are developed from a blank sheet and eventually I'd like to be in a position where a number of routes have been put together and from those I will be able to rotate and perhaps adjust sufficiently to give the participants something different each year, but trying to remove some of the processes which I have outlined. It gave me a great deal of satisfaction putting it together, from its initial idea to seeing the finished route. One of the best parts about taking this on is that you get to know the route and many of the surrounding paths intimately. It really does become ingrained on your mind. So let's keep our fingers crossed and hope that the event goes ahead as planned on March 21 2021, with the marshals' event on March 7. Meanwhile, very soon I shall once again have my maps strewn across my living room floor, along with a selection of multi coloured Post-it notes, hunting for a completely new route for 2022.

SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR DIARY

If you calculate all the time spent examining the maps, back and forth, over and over, searching for favourable green dotted footpath lines and avoiding yellow, orange and red road lines, checkpoint feasibility and mileage and then bedding in the shorter route options, I would say this adds up to a full day and half. 1 day walking out the first half of the 32 mile route to see if it works and then go home and tweak it.

- 1 day walking out what you've tweaked for the first 16 miles to make sure you're happy with it.
- 1 day walking out the second half of the 32 mile route to see if it works and go home and tweak it.
- 1 day walking out what you've tweaked for the second 16 miles to make sure you're happy with it.
- 1 day walking the first 16 miles and dictating the route description.
- Half a day typing it out.
- 1 day walking the first 16 miles again following the route description and making corrections and going home to re-type those changes.
- 1 day walking out that first 16 miles again to make sure it all reads correctly.
- 1 day walking out the second 16 miles and dictating the route description.
- Half a day typing it.
- 1 day walking the first 16 miles again following the route description and making corrections and going home to re-type those changes.

- 1 day walking out the second 16 miles again to make sure it all reads correctly.
- 1 day walking out the 22 mile route to make sure it works and making some tweaks.
- 1 day walking out the 22 mile route and dictating the middle section.
- 1 day walking it out following the route description.
- 1 day walking out the 17 mile route to make sure it works and making some tweaks.
- 1 day walking out the 17 mile route and dictating the middle section.
- 1 day walking out both middle sections of the 22 and 17 mile routes, following the route descriptions and making some changes and go home to type the changes.
- 1 day walking out both middle sections of the 22 and 17 mile routes following the updated route description changes.
- Half a day making sure the typed routes are tidy, laid out correctly and in order.

OUR JILL AND JIM STAR ON FILM!

JILL Green and Jim Catchpole, who are both Kent LDWA members, feature in a short documentary film about the 2017 North York Moors 100, which is now available online.

The 13-minute film was made by Jamie Hearing, who has worked on various TV walking programmes including ITV1's Britain's Best Walks with Julia Bradbury.

Jamie went on a London LDWA walk organised by former Strider editor Julie Welch and also did a recce during the North York Moors 100 marshals' walk in preparation for making the film.

Jamie interviewed Jill and Jim, as well as various other walkers, several times as they completed the route. Jill is heard, at the start of the walk, uttering the immortal words – "We are all totally mad!"

You can view the film by going onto the link <https://vimeo.com/402157343>

IN THE PICTURE

FIVE albums of photos from Kent LDWA, containing hundreds of pictures stretching right back to our early days in the 1970s, are now on the website. Michael Headley and Neal O'Rourke arranged to have all the photos scanned, and Neal and Brian Buttifant have identified many of the people in the photos so the online albums now include the added names.

You can see the Album page on the website via the following link - <https://www.ldwa.org.uk/Kent/W/7209/kent-group-photograph-albums.html>

Have a look – you may see some photos of yourself!

THREE/FOUR PITS WALK ROUTES UPDATED

ROUTE descriptions for Graham Smith's Four Pits and Three Pits walks, which also incorporate a small amendment to both routes, have been updated.

The 40-mile Four Pits Walk is an Anytime Challenge and visits the sites of the three Kent coal mines which closed during the 1980s – Betteshanger, Snowdown and Tilmanstone – and the site of Chislet pit, which closed in 1969. The 18-mile route visits the sites of Betteshanger, Snowdown and Tilmanstone.

Apart from the sites of the pits, both walks visit some of the pit villages, the places which gave their names to the pits, and a couple of memorials to the Kent Coalfield.

Graham has made a slight amendment to both routes, which now visit Elvington, the village which served Tilmanstone pit. There is a display of mining memorabilia in the community centre at Elvington, which is sometimes open to the public.

The route change, which has not affected the mileage of either walk, also means both walks now avoid a stretch of path near Nonington which was often difficult to get through because of overgrown vegetation.

The route descriptions for both walks have been updated thanks to Kent LDWA member Vic Clapson, who completed the Four Pits Walk, and checked the route, during the spring. The updated route descriptions are on the Kent LDWA website, and Graham plans to put the Four Pits Walk on the Kent social walks programme next year.

KENT'S NAMES WALKS PROJECT By Robert Peel

THE purpose of this project is to improve the condition and waymarking of Kent's many named walks and produce new printed guides for as many as possible. Profits from the guides, more than £6000 so far, help to fund improvement work.

Tunbridge Wells Circular

At last our new guide to the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk and other walks in the area is nearing completion. Current plans are to have it with the printers in early August and available for sale before the end of that month. However, experience with the two previous books has taught us that when dealing with printers things do not always go to plan so please check the Kent Ramblers website (<http://www.kentramblers.org.uk>) /before ordering. The cover price will be £7.50 but as usual we are happy to offer a special price to members of The Ramblers – £5.50 including postage until the end of November. Please quote code SEW2009.

We are happy to extend the offer to our previous books individually or to supply any two books for £9.00. For anyone wanting all three books, these are included in the super bundle available from our web site to all customers. Please add 30p to prices if paying by cheque.

The book includes not just the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk but also a town trail in Tunbridge Wells and six 'Walks Through Time' which are circular walks based on Cranbrook, known as the 'Capital of the Weald'. The delights of walking in the Cranbrook area are perhaps not as well-known as they deserve to be and we found paths through superb countryside that had clearly not been walked in years. Our volunteers have put a huge effort into refreshing waymarking and dealing with various obstacles and we hope that our book will increase footfall to the level necessary to keep the paths well trodden.

Saxon Shore Way

Work is well under way to produce a new guide to this walk whose page on the Kent Ramblers website attracts more visits than any other route page. The route is 150 miles long, making the task a challenging one. However, three volunteers have been or still are separately walking the route and testing draft material sent to them – their feedback has been invaluable. But we still need to walk the full route ourselves and take the thousands of photographs that will be needed to ensure sufficient good ones for

publication. This activity is obviously suspended while travel restrictions are in place.

England Coast Path

The Kent Ramblers guide to the first part of the England Coast Path in Kent, from Camber to Ramsgate, was published in 2016 and has sold well. We have always planned a second book (or maybe even two more books) covering the rest of the Kent coast but we have long been awaiting completion of the route to enable us to do so. Natural England has now published its proposals for the full route, including Sheppey, but determination of all disputes and completion of implementation work this year seems unlikely.



BEWARE ILLEGAL FOOTPATH CLOSURES

WALKERS may have seen reports of some unscrupulous landowners using the Covid-19 pandemic to attempt to close footpaths, or deter walkers from using them, by displaying notices such as this one spotted near Mersham in the Ashford area.

In other cases gates have been padlocked or obstructions placed across a path. In the case of the path near Mersham, the matter was reported to Kent County Council following representations made by several members of the White Cliffs Ramblers, and the landowner was forced to remove the notices.

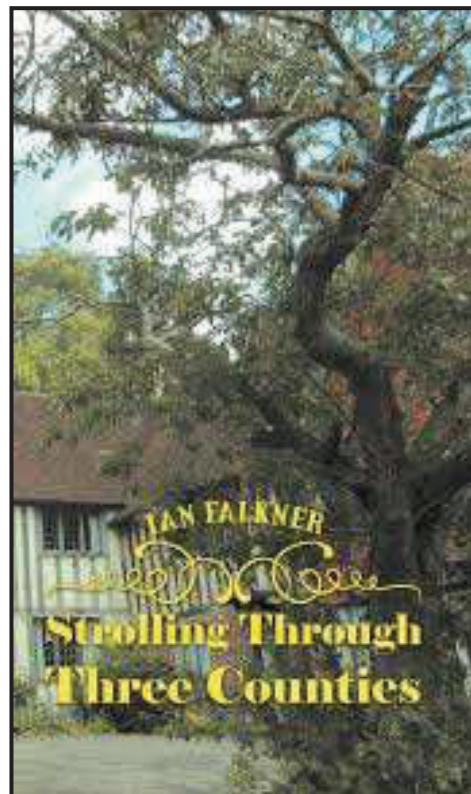
Any attempt to close a footpath, without going through the proper process, is illegal and should be challenged. Ramblers who come across such notices should report them to KCC. But there is one exception during the current pandemic - where a footpath crosses a garden or farmyard and a diversion is indicated, ramblers are advised to follow that diversion on the proviso that it is safe to do so, and that the diverted path remains on the same landowner's property.



NEW GUIDE TO WALKING IN THE SEVENOAKS AREA

IAN Falkner, who has led the Edenbridge Strollers group for 28 years, has published *Strolling Through Three Counties*, a book of 21 walks in the Sevenoaks area, with route maps and photos.

Says Ian: "Twenty-eight years ago three people and a dog went on a short walk around the countryside of Edenbridge.



“That group expanded into a full blown rambling group, the Edenbridge Strollers, stretching its horizons into the depths of Kent, Surrey and Sussex. I have been group organiser for all that time.

“So we thought it might be opportune to share some of the delightful walks that we have been on – and, just as important, to point out some of the notable landmarks and stunning viewpoints that we came across. I have tried to make this more than a conventional walks book by making the walk descriptions more interesting and by providing background and historical information about the villages etc on the routes. Hopefully this will make the book more attractive to walkers and non-walkers in equal measure.”

Ian, a retired manager with Royal Mail, has lived in Edenbridge for 40 years. He is also a member of Sevenoaks Ramblers, a member of the town council footpaths committee, secretary of the local chess club, and publicity officer for the local amateur dramatic company.

Copies of the book (£11.99 paperback, £13.99 hardback) may be purchased from the stationers shop at 53 Edenbridge High Street (contact Lucinda Panniall – 07955 722782), from Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd, 25 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5LQ (<https://www.austinmacauley.com>) or from Amazon.

MODEL TIGER SCARES WALKERS

In early May residents of remote dwellings near Underriver in Kent were surprised to find a police helicopter overhead and ten armed police converging on the local woods after a member of the public had reported a tiger roaming near the footpath. In fact the life-size model tiger has been there for 20 years, sculpted by Ramblers’ walk leader Juliet Simpson and placed in her garden in the woods. Those wishing to view the tiger themselves should visit the Kent Ramblers’ website at www.kentramblers.org.uk/kentwalks and choose walk 28.



Left: the group in Firle Beacon. Right: the view from Firle Beacon.

LOOP FROM LEWES: March 1 By Graham Smith

CONSIDERING the dire weather forecast, there was higher turnout than expected for one of our group’s regular forays into our neighbouring county, and we had a nice mixture of Kent and Sussex members.

As many people in Kent LDWA know, I love the South Downs, and one of my regular Sussex walks is the Lewes Loop (the other one is the South Downs Loop from Eastbourne which – sadly – couldn’t take place on Good Friday because of coronavirus, the first time in at least 20 years that the walk has had to be cancelled).

The Lewes Loop uses a mixture of South Downs Way and Sussex Stride routes to form a ring from the very pleasant county town of East Sussex. I have put it on two or three times in recent years, and this time I thought I would do something different and very simple – just reverse it, and instead of having the lunch stop at Firle (where the village pub is a bit expensive), we would instead stop for lunch at the youth hostel at Southease, where the cafe does excellent, and reasonably priced, meals, and also serves beer. So we met at Lewes railway station at 9am. As I say, the weather forecast had been for heavy showers, and I was so concerned that I had a Plan B walk ready in case I had to change the route. Luckily I didn’t have to, as the weather gave us fabulously extensive clear views across those delightful South Downs.

So we set off through the town, soon picking up the Sussex Stride route to take that fairly steep road leading up to the golf course, from where we followed a nice path along the Downs and then descended into the valley before going up to Mount Caburn, at 480 feet a grand viewpoint and one of the highlights of the walk. We then descended to Glynde, where Eve Richards decided to take a shorter route to the lunch stop. Michael Headley, being the gentleman he is, kindly decided to join her. And it was here that I had a text from Don Newman – who, of course, is known for turning up late to walks! – to say he had arrived and would endeavour to catch us up, so I texted him back the route and said we would not be moving too quickly.

From Glynde we moved on to Firle, and then took that long, laborious slog up onto the Downs again to reach Firle Beacon – at 712 feet THE highlight of the walk and, of course, a tremendous viewpoint. After the usual photocall (see above) we turned round and followed the South Downs Way on that lovely, springy turf to Itford Hill and descended to our lunch stop at Southease, where we met Eve, Michael and Don Newman (who had gone straight there, bypassing Firle Beacon).

Eve decided to cut the walk short and get a train to Lewes from the small station at Southease, while the rest of us moved on, keeping to the SDW to get back to that fine ridge. Following that ridge, it was question of when we dropped off to Kingston and then back to Lewes. Don Arthurs and myself, who were in front, suddenly spotted what looked like a nice, interesting little path below us. So that’s what we took, and it was certainly interesting! It was steep, narrow and muddy, so it needed careful negotiation. We all gingerly descended, and it was something of a relief to get to the road at Kingston. We then took some pleasant, albeit quite wet, paths across fields to the road, which we followed back to Lewes, where we met Eve.

We had walked 19 miles, with 2,600 feet of ascent, and the weather had been unbelievably sunny. For me, it had actually been my first long walk since January, as I had been out of walking action for various reasons. I do love those South Downs (have I said that before?)



Two views from the Rye-Tenterden stretch of the Cinque Ports 100.

LAST WALK BEFORE LOCKDOWN: RYE TO TENTERDEN ON THE CINQUE PORTS 100 ROUTE: March 22

By Graham Smith

THE Cinque Ports 100 may have been two years ago, but the route certainly lives on. A huge amount of work went into the route of the CP100, making it as varied and as interesting as possible, linking as it does the Cinque Ports of Hastings, New Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich, the Ancient Towns of Rye and Winchelsea, and the Limbs of Tenterden, Lydd, Folkestone and Deal. I always felt it would have been a shame to just forget about the CP100 once the event was over, which is why I have put the route on our social walks programme in a series of linear walks. And that is also why I have put the route on the programme of the White Cliffs Ramblers in a series of (shorter!) linear walks. The White Cliffs Ramblers were a huge help to Kent LDWA in the run-up to our big event, checking stretches of the route at night and running a very good checkpoint at Northbourne. So many members of Kent LDWA worked very hard over the weekend of the CP100, none harder than Dale Moorhouse, who was a marshal at the start, played a key role as a member of Peter Jull's transport team, and did various other jobs as well. I always felt Dale ought to walk the route, and did the first section (Hastings-Rye) with members of the White Cliffs Ramblers last summer. Unfortunately, later in the year Dale had one or two issues associated with his asthma, which restricted his walking for the rest of the year. But he seemed to be getting over those issues by the early part of this year, and started regular walks with the White Cliffs Ramblers again.

March 22, of course, was when we were due to hold our Sevenoaks Circular – but coronavirus put paid to that, as it did to walks all over the country. Dale and I were both due to the marshal on the Sevenoaks Circular on that day, and as we now had that day spare, we decided to do Dale's next stretch of the CP100 route. Although this was before lockdown, social distancing was in place, and pubs were beginning to close. So we met at Tenterden at 9am on a lovely sunny day, and left Dale's car there before getting in mine to drive to Rye. We followed those familiar paths (mainly on the High Weald Landscape Trail) from Rye, gently rising to Clayton Farm, then carried on to the church at Peasmarsh Place and then Peasmarsh itself. Then it was a nice, open stretch following paths and minor roads to cross the River Rother back into Kent.

Shortly after changing counties, we turned off the road and took that narrow path leading to Wittersham, and here we had a couple of difficulties, because the storms earlier in the year had blown trees across the path in two places. So we had some careful navigation to do, once actually getting down on our stomachs to get past. Difficulties successfully overcome, we reached Wittersham, where we stopped for lunch in the village churchyard. There were no services at the church because of coronavirus, but a notice on the church door said it was open and visitors were very welcome to go inside if they wished, which Dale and I did. Another notice on the church door gave details of a village shop, with a telephone number for elderly people who may be isolated to ring if they wanted groceries delivered; and a third gave the telephone number of a pet food supplier willing to deliver to elderly, isolated people so their pets could be fed. I was very impressed, and reckoned that was real community spirit for difficult, unprecedented times.

We moved on, with the route still following the HWLT, and offering lovely views across the Kentish Weald. We reached the road just before Smallhythe, and decided to keep to the actual CP100 route here and leave the road to follow a path which later picked up the HWLT (this is not actually a right of way, and the landowner had given us permission to use this path for our event in 2018). Dale and I didn't fancy too much road walking, and we figured we were highly unlikely to meet anyone who would tell us to go back to the road anyway. So we followed that very pleasant path, through the woodland and by a stream, to the end of the trees where we had a short climb, and could see Tenterden about half a mile away. We soon reached the town, and finished a very pleasant day's walking in delightful early spring weather. Dale and I had planned to do the next stretch of the CP100 route (Tenterden-Appledore) the following Sunday – but the following day, Boris Johnson addressed the nation on TV, and we were into lockdown.



*Damien Hirst's Butterfly Rainbow
to show solidarity with Carers – 2020*



Left: The brand new frame tent with Pam. Right: the little bivouac tent.

A CONTINENTAL CAMPING ADVENTURE By Andrew Melling

IN May 1982, having got the hang of this continental camping caper, my wife and I set off for the south of Spain, booked on a late night ferry so as to be on the road early in the morning. It was not an auspicious start. On completing the pre-trip checks on the car, I over-tightened a rubber stopper on top of the radiator, shearing off the top and leaving no seal. It was too late even to look for a replacement but Fred across the road came to my rescue creating a seal which, however, was irreversible. It worked.

Our first stop was at Blois in the Loire Valley. The Loire did not know we were coming and, after a very wet night in our little bivouac tent on a municipal campsite, the car would not start. A fellow camper gave us a jump start but we were still in Blois when the car stalled and would not re-start. We found a mechanic who diagnosed dirt in the carburettor and dealt with it effectively with a steam clean. Then we had a problem over payment. We had not intended being in France long so had few francs. (*For younger readers, the franc was a currency used in France before the euro.*) Credit card? Non! Travellers cheque? Non! RAC letter of credit? Non! In the end, he was happy to accept an English £10 pound note.

By now, it was too late to make further progress so we enjoyed a second night on the municipal campsite.

We made good progress the next day, Sunday, getting several miles past Poitiers when there was something of a let-down. Thump. We had just passed a village where I happened to notice a garage and I found the patron in the bar opposite.

Fortunately, he had spent some years in Canada and had fluent English. He agreed to help. He led us slowly along the road a short distance, to a campsite owned by a friend of his, where we unloaded the car and made camp. Our new friend took the car back to his garage and returned next day to report a failed hydrogas suspension unit. Although it was a British car, he was confident of getting a replacement part without difficulty.

Not so. The part had to come from Paris and would take several days. In the meantime we had a price – gasp! – and our friend took us into Poitiers to the bank. I nervously proffered my company Barclaycard and asked how much I could get on it.

'How much do you want?' was the reply. With all financial issues resolved, we returned to the campsite.

It was hot. Very hot. Fortunately, we had with us a full-sized garden parasol which I was able to jam into a fissure in the baked earth. It was too hot in the daytime to be inside even our comfortable frame tent with its awning so we spent our days reading in the shelter of the parasol until the heat abated sufficiently for me to walk into the village and replace the emptied wine bottles. (There was a bar on the campsite and we tried it one night but, since we were the only campers, it was just us and the owner.) This turned out to be our most relaxing holiday week ever.

After dinner on Friday our friend returned with his wife and our car, now fully functional. We opened another bottle of wine to celebrate. But our friends were now without transport so we took them down into the village and they invited us in to the brasserie for a drink. Nowhere else have I seen red wine drunk out of a small-bowled, long-stemmed glass made from thick green glass! Eventually, we returned to our camp, slightly drunk in the warm night air, and ...

Next day we packed up and made for the coast, here called *Les Landes*, all thought of the Costa del Sol abandoned. The coastal strip is planted with pine trees, by decree of Napoleon III, as defence against encroaching sands blown in by Atlantic storms. Our camp at Mimizan was in a pine wood, peaceful apart from the cones constantly dropped on our tent by the squirrels above. Mimizan was a small, pretty place (much developed now, I imagine) with the most amazing beach. It was far off the beaten track for non-locals, so much so that the one UK registered vehicle we saw was quite an event. The weather stayed hot and sunny for us the whole time making up for our tribulations.

From Mimizan we ventured north to Bordeaux (too dirty to impress) and the yacht basin at Arcachon; and south to Biarritz which had not yet lost its grace. We ogled the splendidly ornate cakes in the window of a patisserie and thought one was cheap enough to take back to camp for a treat. In our calculations, we had put the decimal point in the wrong place!

It was a Spanish holiday so we thought we must at least cross the border and spend our pesetas. (*For younger readers, the peseta was a currency used in Spain before the euro.*) Spain was not in the Common Market (*for younger readers, an early version of the EU*) so we had to pass through customs and passport control. A hapless Spanish family were having their van, loaded high with furniture, slowly dismantled and were still there on our way back.

We found a pleasant stretch of coast for our picnic lunch and then ventured in to San Sebastian for our first experience of patrolling policemen toting sub-machine guns. It felt very foreboding so we loaded up with Campari and made a hasty retreat. All this time, I had kept our little bivouac tent in the car in case something else went wrong but it didn't and we had an uneventful journey home. I couldn't trust the car again, though.



Clockwise, from top left – Midley Church; Dungeness Lighthouse; Derek Jarman's cottage at Dungeness; and the beach at Greatstone. Photos by Andy Clark

FIVE HAVE AN ADVENTURE ON ROMNEY MARSH By Graham Smith

ON Sunday June 21, when lockdown restrictions were starting to be eased, Andy Clark, Nicola Foad, Michael Headley, Cathy Waters and myself decided to go somewhere different for a walk – and Romney Marsh is certainly different.

We decided to do the fish and chip walk, led for the group a few times over the years by Mike Pursey (called, variously, Round The Corner For Fish and Chips and Fish And Chips – Another Helping). It's an interesting walk, starting from St Mary's Bay and heading north and then west to St Mary in the Marsh and Ivychurch before going south to Old Romney, then Lydd, then down to Dungeness. We have usually had fish and chips at the Britannia Inn, and then go back to St Mary's Bay along the coast.

In the past, the walk has been about 21 miles but, for reasons about to be revealed, we five did very nearly 25. We met at nine, and at first we had a bit of rain, so those long paths to St Mary in the Marsh and Ivychurch were a bit muddy and our walking shoes/boots were starting to get a bit clogged up. After Ivychurch we headed south and missed our path which would have taken us to Old Romney, so we kept on the road (involving a little extra distance) to cross the A259, soon picking up the Cinque Ports 100 route going past the ruin of Midley Church to Lydd. After Lydd, with the sun now out, came the real adventure. We initially took the wrong road out of the town (involving a bit more extra distance) but then had a good look at the map and got back en route to pick up Dengemarsh Road. The last time members of Kent LDWA had done this walk, we had taken various paths from Dengemarsh Road heading across Dungeness Nature Reserve, more or less going in a straight line to the Britannia. We thought we would do the same, to arrive at Dungeness for lunch at about 1.30pm. So we took the usual path off Dengemarsh Road, aiming to take other paths across the reserve as we had before – but we found that various paths had been closed temporarily, to protect the wildlife. So we found ourselves wandering around, following paths and trying to head away from the direction of Dungeness Power Station which we knew was too far south for us. We were certainly walking on pleasant paths, and Dungeness Nature Reserve is a really fascinating place – but we weren't making much progress. Eventually we spotted a road, which we decided to take to get to Dungeness – but when we arrived we found our way blocked by a fence. There was no way we could climb the fence (even if I have scaled a few deer fences in Scotland in my time), and a gate in it was locked, but there was a small gap at parts of it which we could crawl under. So that's what we did, after which we followed the road, took more paths (involving quite a bit of shingle) and another road to the Britannia. We got there at 3pm and had our belated lunch stop. We had done 17.7 miles.

We then continued through Dungeness, passing the cottage of late film maker Derek Jarman, to Lydd on Sea, before going onto the beach at Greatstone and then the promenade at Littlestone to get back to St Mary's Bay. We arrived at about 5.30, having done 24.9 miles. So five had an adventure, but we jolly well rose to all the challenges (or in the case of the fence, got right down to a particular challenge). I didn't have lashings of ginger beer when I got home, but I did have a couple of very pleasant cold beers!



Scenes from The Ridgeway – clockwise, from top left, the view from Lodge Hill; view from Tring County Park, with Tring in the distance; the path to Ivinghoe Beacon; Ivinghoe Beacon.

THE RIDGEWAY: November 8-12 By Graham Smith

IN November, I finally walked The Ridgeway, an 87 mile National Trail stretching from near Swindon in Wiltshire to just outside Tring, on the border of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. I had been planning to walk The Ridgeway for something like 25 years. When I was working, with a limited amount of holiday, I never seemed able to fit it in. When I retired, in 2016, I put it on my list as one of the walks I must do, and I planned to walk it the following year. My plan was based on staying with my daughter, Jessica – who was then living just outside Swindon – for a couple of nights. So I fixed the dates and booked up the rest of the accommodation. And then, a few weeks before the walk, Jessica informed my wife Sarah and myself that she was changing her job, and planned to move back in with us in Deal for a while. So The Ridgeway project was shelved. In 2018, what with the Cinque Ports 100 and various other walking projects I was involved with, I was not able to fit it into my schedule, and it was looking like I would not be able to do it last year either – until, in early October, I suddenly realised I had a few days free at the start of November. So I did a quick route plan, and booked my accommodation and bought a train ticket to Swindon.

And it's an excellent National Trail, taking in a pretty wide variety of terrain and scenery, including the wonderful Marlborough Downs, the Chilterns and an interesting stretch by the Thames. Opened in 1972, it was one of the first National Trails, and is one of the oldest walking routes in Britain, as much of it follows a broad track which, it is believed, has been used for up to 5,000 years. The Wessex stretch passes various burial mounds, some dating from the Stone Age. The trail ends on Ivinghoe Beacon, a fine viewpoint standing 757 feet high.

Day 1: Avebury-Ogbourne St George: 11 miles.

This was a very good day, with the travel plans working much better than I expected. I got to Paddington in time to get an earlier train than the planned 11.15am one, which meant I got to Swindon in time for an earlier bus, so I was able to start walking from Overton Hill – the official start of The Ridgeway - just after 12.30.

I could have taken the footpath route to the start, but I was impatient to get moving, so I took the road to Overton Hill, even if that meant a short stretch beside the A4.

The walk was excellent – a high level march along the crest of the Marlborough Downs, with extensive views all around all afternoon. The only climb to speak of was to the ramparts of Barbury Castle, an Iron Age hill about 860 feet high. There were frequent puddles, caused by the overnight rain, and it was a bit cold. I made good progress, and the tracks were very good, occasionally feeling like I was walking on a green carpet. Also, I saw my first red kite.

I got to the village at about 4.20. It is a very nice B&B, run by Rebecca and Keith Macdonald. They offer a discounted deal where you stay for two nights and they can pick you up and drive you to where you finished the next day.

Day 2: Ogbourne St George-Court Hill: 20 miles.

Oh dear – this was a very wet day, but the first couple of hours were dry, so it could have been a lot worse.

I set off just before 9, and took the short cut on the road to The Ridgeway from the B&B, rather than retracing my steps to where I had come off the previous day. It was delightful – good track on rolling downland, although it was a bit cold. The Marlborough Downs were great, and it came as a disappointment when the route went under the M4, and I suddenly realised I was leaving them. Then, going past Charlbury Hill, I felt the first spits of rain, so on came the waterproof jacket – and it stayed on for the next few hours. It wasn't long before the rain became persistent, although it was never heavy. The tracks were good and I just plodded along. The wet conditions meant I did not feel inclined to 'tarry in the presence of beauty' (in the words of the late, great A Wainwright), but I did have a look at the site of Wayland's Smithy, a Neolithic chambered long barrow believed to have been created 5,000 years ago. I was moving quickly in the rain, and I was quite relieved when I reached a sign saying 'A338 – 3.5 miles'. I plodded on to reach the road, and then walked 500 metres to the Ridgeway Centre on Court Hill, arriving at 2.30, much earlier than planned. It was a very welcome refuge, and I just waited there, drying off and drinking coffee before I was picked up by Keith.

Day 3: A338-Watlington: 29 miles.

This was a really good day – pretty tiring, but not actually as tiring as I thought it would be. And it was dry! Rebecca dropped me off at about 8.45, just where I turned off for the Ridgeway Centre the previous day. So I was well on my way by 9am. It was good weather, with the sun out, walking on good tracks, and I was making good progress. I was determined to get to Streatley (about 14 miles) before I stopped, and it was quite interesting to drop down to the Thames – completely different scenery, with extensive meadows replacing those rolling downs. I crossed the Thames at Goring, but shortly afterwards had lunch at South Stoke, in front of the church in the sunshine. After that it was meadows by the river to Mongewell, and a nice raised path through a pretty long wood to Nuffield, where I had two great boosts – 1) Dover Athletic had beaten Southend United 1-0 in the FA Cup, and 2) there was sign saying 'Watlington (journey's end that day) 4.5 miles'. By now the time was well after 4, and beginning to get dark, so it wasn't long before I had to get my torch out. I did the last 3.7 miles by torchlight, and arrived in Watlington just after 6, where I had booked up to stay in the Fat Fox Inn.

Day 4: Watlington-Wendover: 17 miles.

This was another very good day, the second best of the walk after the first day on those delightful Marlborough Downs. I left the Fat Fox Inn at about 8.45, soon picking up The Ridgeway. At first there were nice firm paths, and then came the M40, which could be heard from miles around. After that the paths were pretty muddy going to Chinnor, and beyond. I had now moved firmly into the Chiltern hills, and there was a very nice stretch of the trail skirting around Wain Hill, followed by a nice little climb to Lodge Hill, on top of which was a very pleasant ridge. It was a bit dull to Princes Risborough – but then came the best bit of the day's walk: a good climb to the top of the 810ft Whiteleaf Hill, with fine views. Shortly afterwards I came across Gerry Garland, from Thames Valley LDWA, out doing a 16-mile workout. We had a quick chat about National Trails, and various LDWA matters, before we went our separate ways.

Then it was on past Chequers, the country home of successive Prime Ministers since 1917 – which I had last seen on my first Hundred, the Chiltern Landmarks in 2005 – followed by a climb to Lodge Hill (another one) and Coombe Hill. At 843 feet, this is a great viewpoint, and it was fabulous to walk along the ridge on the open hillside, with several of those lovely red kites overhead. Then there was a nice path down to Wendover, and I arrived at about 3.30. I had booked a B&B with James Clark, a very nice guy who has a lovely home about a mile from the centre of the town.

Day 5: Wendover-Ivinghoe Beacon (and then Tring railway station): 14 miles.

This was a very good end to the walk, and another fine day. James drove me to Wendover Clock Tower, right on the route, so I was walking just before 8. And I made very good progress – nice woodland tracks for the first few miles, then a good path through Tring Country Park, before crossing the A4251 and the Grand Union Canal and passing Tring railway station (taking a call from Gill Struthers, about the 2020 Summer French Challenge, en route!). Leaving Tring Country Park, I met Martin Burnell, from Thames Valley LDWA, who lives locally and was out doing a walk. I have walked with Martin on several occasions, but I had not seen him for several years. He is one of the LDWA's many characters, and now has some issues with his fitness, so he is now unable to walk more than 15 miles in one go. That's sad, as he has completed several Hundreds.

The last bit of this day's walk was one of the best of the entire National Trail – going up Aldbury Nowers, and then around Incombe Hole, before Ivinghoe Hills and then Ivinghoe Beacon. It was excellent walking on good, albeit often muddy, tracks, with extensive views. And there were a few of those lovely red kites for company.

I was so keen to get to the Beacon I took a line straight for it, diverting slightly from The Ridgeway. I got to the Beacon at about 11.30, earlier than I had expected. It was cold and very blowy on top, so I didn't stay there long. But I must say that Ivinghoe Beacon is a fitting end to a very good National Trail

To walk The Ridgeway, I used the Ordnance Survey's official National Trail guide, with 1:25,000 maps for the entire route and background information on everything from archaeology to wildlife.

KENT QUIZ (answers on the inside back page). Sent by Brian Buttifant

These are all towns or villages in Kent.

1. You will find horses here among the trees.
2. A poorly lit place of worship.
3. These bells are silent.
4. Could be a young girl's diamond.
5. This ware is sought after by collectors.
6. A quartet of trees.
7. The gin lady will get sorted out here.
8. A buff one will give you eggs.
9. ?
10. Ships from the Arctic.
11. Going beneath a water course.
12. The limit of the cemetery.

13. Henry chased his Ann here.
14. A handy snack.
15. The remains of the fire.
16. St Edith has her well here.
17. Here you have a mote and a moat.
18. Jane Eyre married him.
19. Here we have a set of wide steps.
20. A Spanish resort and a battle was fought here.
21. A crossing over Paradise.
22. Her Majesty's town.
23. You would put this on a saucepan.
24. A horse is near the edge.
25. A fish could be caught here.

COMEDY CORNER - SIXTY-TWO GOOD USES (AND POSSIBLE USES) FOR A WALKING POLE OR STICK

By Neil Higham

The author acknowledges that he is not an animal lover (and has never had a pet; not even a goldfish) – but neither does he wish for any harm to come to these animals!

In the current unprecedented environment, top of the list and the ‘driver’ for this article must be

Holding the stick horizontal with an extended arm gives a distance of about 2m (aka ‘social distancing’).

- 1 Keeping yapping dogs at bay (by waving it – certainly not hitting the dogs!)
- 2 Keeping cattle away (by waving it – certainly not hitting the cattle!)
- 3 Ditto inquisitive sheep.
- 4 Ditto enquiring horses.
- 5 Keeping cyclists at arm’s length (*Ooh, the spokes, what a mess.*)
- 6 Keeping some motor vehicles at arm’s length – don’t mess with me!
- 7 Shooing away unwanted teenagers.
- 8 Ditto very young children.
- 9 Assisting one to, ahem, climb over (or through) a barbed wire or electric fence.
- 10 Ditto for one’s fellow walkers.
- 11 Aiding the elderly / immobile over a stile (*author gets double points here!*)
- 12 Helping the walker ascend steps.
- 13 More generally and beneficially, assisting in descending steps.
- 14 Descending steep inclines, particularly in ice or slippery conditions.
- 15 To close a gate (by pulling or pushing) when one has taken one step too many (*gate is not self-closing*).
- 16 To hold open a gate for others to get through.
- 17 To lean on when ascending steeply so that one can enjoy the view (*Oh, OK, I mean “gather one’s breath”*).
- 18 Removing the odd strand of vegetation.
- 19 (*If checking or preparing a forthcoming walk route*) clearing larger patches of persistent vegetation, eg nettles.
- 20 Pushing overhanging branches upwards or out of the way.
- 21 To break the ice or just check whether it is solid.
- 22 Testing how deep the water just ahead is.
- 23 For steadying when walking on icy / slippery surfaces.
- 24 Providing a ‘third leg’ to help the walker avoid water (ie with the stick one side of the water, legs the other).
- 25 Ditto with squelchy mud.
- 26 To provide a comfort when crossing stepping stones or fords.
- 27 To assist fellow walkers avoid the water or mud.
- 28 To help bridge a gap by providing a firm attachment (and thus ‘comfort’) to the opposite bank.
- 29 To help haul fellow walkers up a hill.
- 30 To be hauled up a hill by fellow walkers!
- 31 To haul young children up a hill or to encourage them to keep going.
- 32 To haul the elderly / immobile off the floor.
- 33 Ditto off a (low or sunken) chair at the end of an LDWA event.
- 34 To assist the walker in escaping from – or being extracted from – a gulley / crevasse.
- 35 Can greatly aide smooth progress in ‘corrugated’ / ploughed fields.
- 36 In the dark, checking for booby traps, electric fences and the like.
- 37 Waving to another walker or pedestrian or
- 38 Waving at train drivers.
- 39 Acknowledging cars.
- 40 Attracting attention of fellow walkers by waving.
- 41 For a leader to gather the troops in a crowded area (c.f. *tour group leaders with their umbrellas*).
- 42 Drawing an S.O.S. in the snow, if needs be.
- 43 Attracting help if drowning and otherwise out of sight.
- 44 Removing mud from one’s footwear without having to bend down.
- 45 Removing mud from the sole of one’s footwear if no stone, twig or knife etc is to hand.
- 46 Drawing a line in the sand to see whether the tide is coming in or going out.
- 47 Ditto in the mud (or sand) to mark the starting line, or a meeting point.
- 48 To help with wild fruit picking (*ie drawing the fruit towards you*).
- 49 To investigate holes in the ground.
- 50 To ring doorbells when one wishes to remain a good distance away.
- 51 (*If extremely bored*) for use as a javelin at in impromptu ‘Olympics’.
- 52 To spear a large, slow moving, fish if in desperate need of sustenance.
- 53 To use as a rounders or cricket bat.
- 54 (*You would, admittedly, be very unlucky if this is what it is required for*) to deflect an incoming bullet.
- 55 To hang a wet map or pair of socks on, either in stationary or moving mode!
- 56 To use as a support for a washing line.
- 57 To hang one’s hat on (either in stationary or moving mode).
- 58 Swatting wasps and, particularly, bumble bees.
- 59 Pointing out something on a notice board that is just out of reach.
- 60 Pointing out something on the horizon for a group of people to look at.
- 61 Using as an (internal) tent pole.

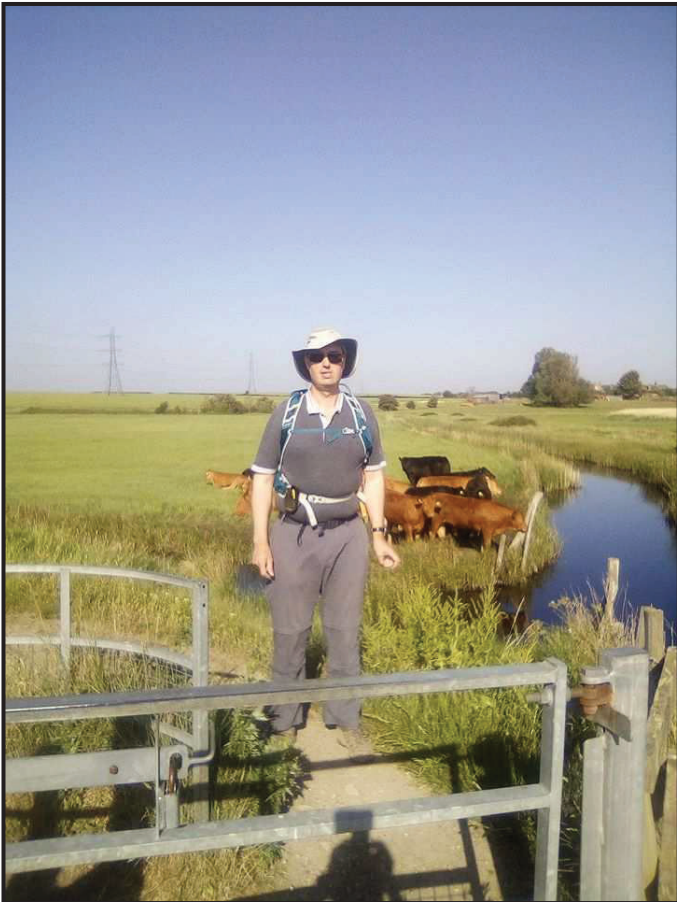
KENT LDWA MEMBERS ON LOCKDOWN WALKABOUT



This picture was taken when Helen Franklin and Stephanie Le Men did the Andredsweald Circuit from Forest Row.



Steve Russell took this one when he walked to Coldharbour.



This picture was taken when Dale Moorhouse and Martin Hendy walked from Oare to Conyer.



Don Arthurs took this picture on the Stour Valley Walk from Ashford to Wye and then went on to Canterbury on the North Downs Way.

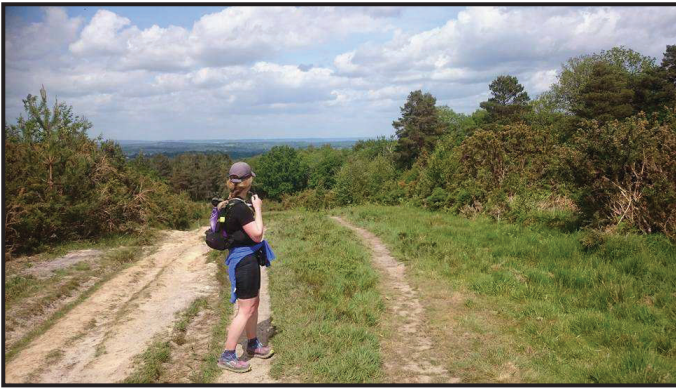


Vic Clapson took this photo on the Three Pits Walk.

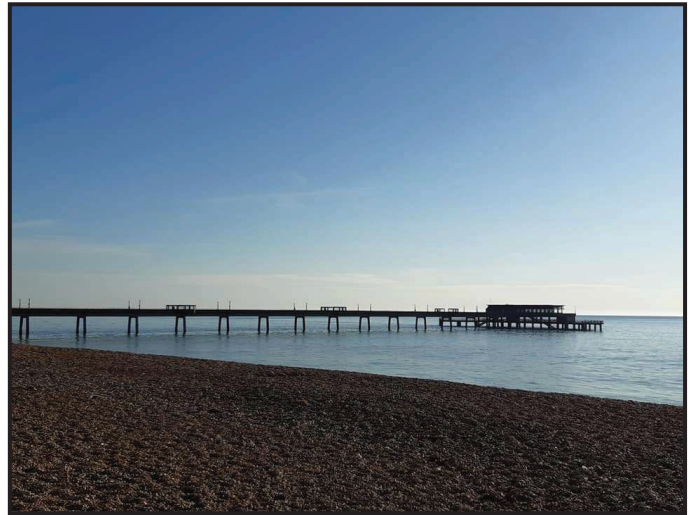
ANSWERS TO KENT QUIZ

1 Paddock Wood. 2 Dymchurch. 3 Canterbury.
4 Maidstone. 5 Tonbridge. 6 Dymchurch. 7 Yalding.
8 Orpington. 9 Wye. 10 Northfleet. 11 Underriver.
12 Gravesend. 13 Hever. 14 Sandwich. 15 Ash.
16 Kemsing. 17 Ightham. 18 Rochester. 19 Broadstairs.
20 Vigo. 21 Edenbridge. 22 Tunbridge Wells. 23 Lydd.
24 Trottiscliffe. 25 Dover.

KENT LDWA MEMBERS ON LOCKDOWN WALKABOUT



This photo was taken when Stephanie Le Men and Helen Franklin walked the Gatliff route.



Rod Smith took this picture of Deal Pier on part of the Cinque Ports 100 route.



This picture was taken from Farthing Common when Cathy Waters and Nicola Foad walked the Summerhouse Stroll.



Dale Moorhouse, Martin Hendy and Mike Pursey near Appledore on part of the Cinque Ports 100 route.



Dale, Martin and Mike at the end of the Hythe-Dover stretch of the CP100 route, in which they walked 14.6 miles, with more than 2,000 feet of ascent, in wet, misty and blustery conditions.



Dover's Whinless Down - part of the Round Dover Ramble and on the route of next year's White Cliffs Challenge.