

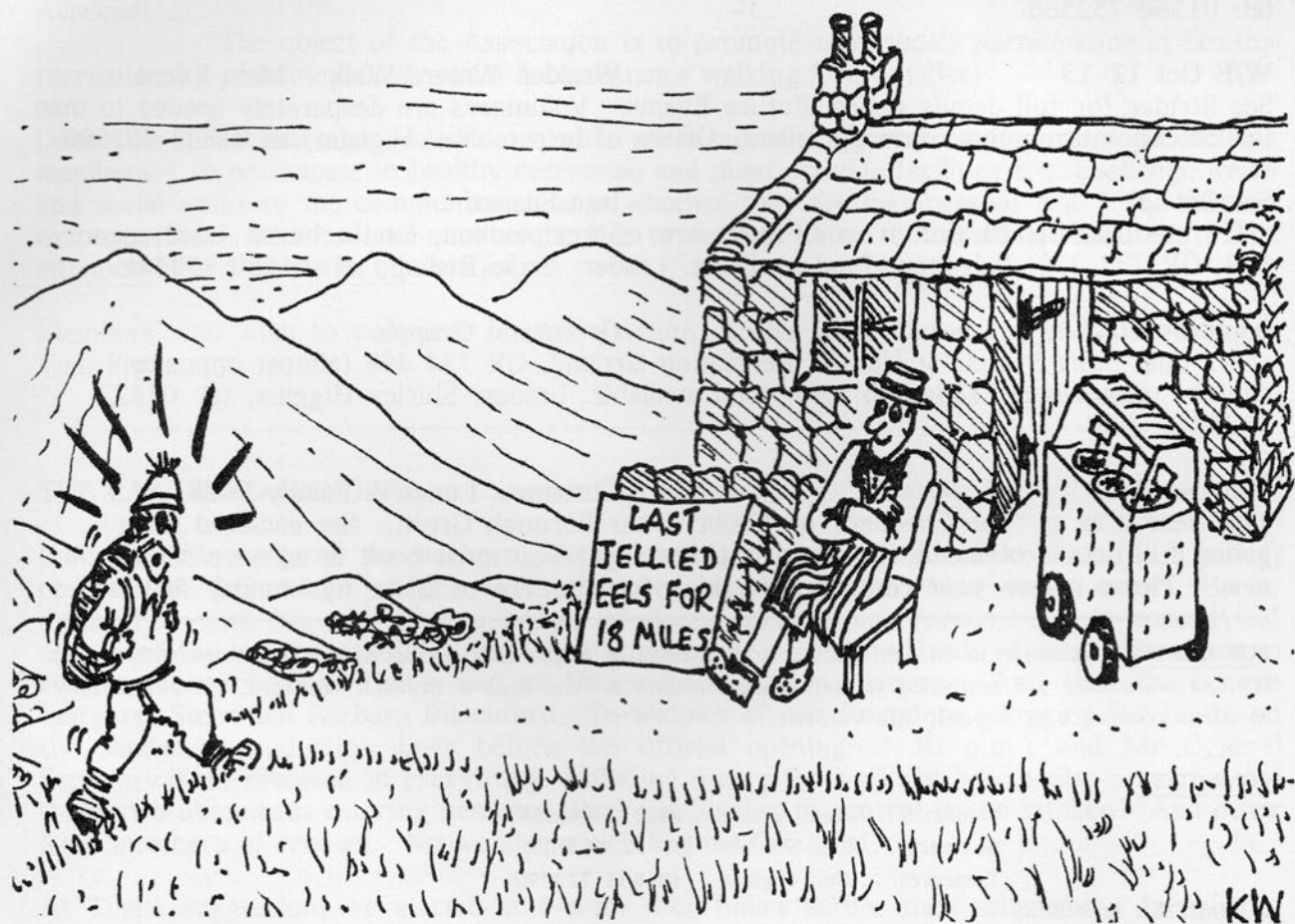


LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



"The joys of reaching the summit . . ."

Number 58

August 2002

KENT GROUP PROGRAMME - August to December 2002

Sun Aug 18

Loiter Around Leigh

20 mls. 9 a.m. start at Leigh. Park in road at back of village green. Explorer 147, GR 550 464. N.B. No direct access to B2027 from A21. Pub stop. Leader Bill Gillibrand, tel: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

W/E Sep 7-8

Wealden Waters Marshals' Walk

If you wish to enter the Wealden Waters Marshals' Walk please let Neal O'Rourke know by 18th August, in order for checkpoint staffing and catering arrangements to be made.
[REDACTED] (answering service) [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Sun Sep 15

The Long & the Short of It

c. 20 mls. (New route) Meet at Battle Railway Station for 8.30 a.m. start (GR 755 156, Explorer 124) Pub stop, food available. Leaders: Neal & Jan O'Rourke, tel. [REDACTED]

Sun Sep 29

A Wondrous Wealden Wander

c. 20 mls. Start 8.30 prompt from CP next to Hawkhurst Church (GR 762 305, Landranger 188 or Explorer 136) Pub stop, food available. Leader: Maurice Fairclough, tel: [REDACTED]

W/E Oct 12-13

Wealden Waters Walk - Main Event

See Strider for full details under 'Future Events' Volunteers are desperately needed to man the checkpoints on this overnight event. Offers of help to Neil Higham, tel: [REDACTED]

Sat Oct 26

Into Sussex

c. 18 mls. Start 8.30 a.m. from CP near new cricket pavilion, Lamberhurst. Landranger 199, GR 737 238. Pub stop, food available. Leader: Ernie Bishop, tel: [REDACTED]

Sun Nov 10

Greensand Grapple

c. 17 mls. Start 9 a.m. at Hunton Recreation Ground, GR 724 498 (almost opposite church) Landranger 188. Pub stop, food available. Leader: Shirley Higgins, tel: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sun Dec 8

Christmas Lunch & Family Walk

This year it is at "The Chequers" at Crouch near Borough Green. See enclosed form giving full details of menu, etc., and booking slip. You must book in advance for the meal. Please return your completed booking form to Trevor Blake by Monday 2nd Dec.

PUB MEETINGS continue to be held on the first Monday of each month (except if that coincides with a Bank Holiday when they are postponed to the second Monday) at "The Rose & Crown", Wrotham, GR 612 592. Meetings commence at 8 p.m. All welcome.

COMMITTEE

Chairman.....Paul Hatcher [REDACTED]
Secretary.....Tom Sinclair [REDACTED]
Treasurer.....Neil Higham [REDACTED]

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Trevor Blake - [REDACTED] Duncan Brice - [REDACTED]
Bryan Clarke - [REDACTED] Keith Warman - [REDACTED]
email:- [REDACTED]
Walks Programme - Neal O'Rourke [REDACTED]
Newsletter Editor - Laurie Lowe - [REDACTED]

Committee member Jim Oddy has moved to Warwickshire and will no longer be able to serve on the committee. Tom would like to hear from anyone who would like to be co-opted onto the committee for the remainder of the year. This will be an ideal opportunity to see just what the work involves - you never know - you might enjoy it!

CHARITABLE STATUS

Tom has asked me to remind members that their comments are requested on the proposed changes to the constitution which will be needed if the LDWA is to achieve charitable status. This would be of considerable financial advantage to the Association. Initially the case for the Association received a negative response. However, following upon the introduction of a new category of "charitable purpose" i.e. promoting community participation in healthy recreation, the Charity Commission has ruled that we are now eligible for charitable status, provided certain changes are made to the constitution.

Most of the changes are minor and unlikely to be controversial, but as was noted in the April Strider, pages 5 & 6, the most significant change is to replace "The aim of the Association shall be to further the common interests of those who enjoy long distance walking" with "The object of the Association is to promote community participation in healthy recreation by providing facilities for long distance walking". This wording is insisted upon by the Commission in order to ensure that the Association falls within the new category.

I suggest that members refer back to the notes in Strider and give the matter some thought. Tom has received a memorandum listing in more detail the constitutional changes required and he will send a copy to anyone who requests it. I have seen a copy of the memorandum and to my mind the only significant change is in the re-wording of the 'Aims' of the Association.

"The object of the Association is to promote *community participation* in healthy recreation by *providing facilities* for long distance walking." (my italics)

Does this mean that the Association must encourage the general community - as well as members - to participate in healthy recreation and must provide facilities e.g. challenge walks and social walks to the community at large whether they are members or not? To take an extreme case - would a non-member be able to demand entry to the annual hundred? The situation clearly needs to be clarified.

Members who wish to comment on the question of charitable status are invited to contact Tom Sinclair.

Laurie Lowe, Editor.

THE LAKELAND HUNDRED

Martyn Berry

I don't think many of the walkers passing through the Threlkeld checkpoint (42.8 miles) realised the full extent of the talent deployed to minister to their every need. Ernie, dissatisfied with his legs after a couple of dozen miles, came forward to us instead and registered for six hours solid. Ann Sayer solicitously carried hundreds of teas and coffees to sweaty, weary bodies. That's two ex-National Chairs for starters. And then there were Margaret Steer and Barbara Blatchford, the widows of our Founders, slogging for hours on the sandwich production lines before the official opening at 10 p.m.; and Mr General Secretary Tom involved in everything, including caring for a rather spectacular casualty; and those two ubiquitous catering geniuses, Paul and Shirley, in control in the kitchen. And other Kent members of renown. No wonder a pleb like me felt awed.

At Tom's suggestion, we started at 6 p.m., two hours earlier than scheduled. In spite of working like demons we were only just ready for the first arrivals shortly before ten. The flow built up, soon the village hall was a high-decibel meld of Somme casualty clearing post, UNICEF feeding station and uninhibited old school reunion. Some time after midnight Mike called us out the back - when we could spare a minute - to see one of the most magical sights ever. Across the dale, miles away, along the Old Coach Road aslant the fell and then dropping steeply down, was a continuous chain of tiny lights, oscillating very slightly, winking sometimes, grouping and separating again, always moving slowly and inexorably forward. It was breathtakingly beautiful, and a living metaphor for the LDWA. Shirley was still rhapsodising about it when we met at Ernie's Tunbridge Wells Walk weeks later.

Meanwhile, withdrawals were accumulating, and the overworked minibus driver called at least

twice. (We heard later that more than 200 of the 469 starters failed to complete). We stayed open well after our official closing time as walkers kept coming in. The last group arrived at 4 a.m.; it seemed ridiculous to time them out when they had got to us in 18 hours and still had 30 hours left for 58 miles; so we didn't.

The clean-up began while the later walkers were being fed, watered and tended. There had been no protection for the badminton court floor, so thorough sweeping and mopping was necessary. We finished at 5 a.m. - an 11-hour shift. The efficient Raynet team chose to crash out in the hall. I had brought a Karrimat in expectation of doing the same, but the weather forecast was bad from quite early in the day (serious thunderstorms developed in the afternoon). So I drove up to the road-head by the outdoor centre, started up Blencathra at 5.15 and reached the top at 7.05. As I flogged up the irritatingly convex swell of Blease Fell I looked back. In the grey murky light I could see little ants moving steadily along the track which contours high across the face of Lonscale Fell, south from the checkpoint at Skiddaw House. No lights this time, but equally unstoppable.....

Martyn Berry

Dear Tom,

LAKELAND 100 - A BIG THANK YOU

We would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you, to you and your fellow checkpointers for your help and assistance on the Lakeland 100. The success of the event depends upon the support of people like yourselves who give their valuable time voluntarily and tirelessly. It is very much appreciated not only by us but also by the walkers who have expressed their gratitude.

Well done and thanks once again for your support. Please would you convey our thanks to all who helped you on your checkpoint.

Yours sincerely - Joyce Sidebottom, On behalf of the Lakeland 100 organisers.

THE 1st WENDOVER GAP - Sunday 3rd March

Brian Russell

They always get it wrong, don't they? Two days before the weekend of this event, a fine, sunny day had been forecast. At last, I thought, a day's walking without full waterproofs having to be donned, and no sloshing through endless mud. Alas, although it was dry, Sunday dawned dull and murky and it stayed like it for most of the day. However it did not deter over 200 walkers setting off at 8 am. sharp, looking forward to an enjoyable day's walking in the Chiltern hills. We were not to be disappointed. Almost immediately we were into typical Chiltern woodland, heading for the long drive that heads up to the distinctive shape of Hampden House (location from many years ago of the "Hammer House of Horror" dramas that appeared on television). A mixture of fields and woodland then led us onto the Ridgeway which brought us to Coombe Hill, its monument standing majestically on the edge of the Chiltern escarpment overlooking the vast expanse of the Vale of Aylesbury. The view today was unfortunately marred by the hazy conditions, so it was onward to CP1 situated in the town of Wendover.

A pleasant 2-mile stretch of Grand Union Canal followed next before passing through RAF Halton, where we had been forewarned that no responsibility would be taken if we were shot! A steady climb now took us up into Wendover Woods which brought us to a clearing and the viewpoint of this walk's name. Still misty conditions prevented the full aspect of the views to be appreciated, so we stopped briefly to read the various indicators on the topograph. Our route continued through more woodland, eventually looping around to re-cross the Ridgeway and bring us to CP2 at St Leonard's village hall.

The short stretch to CP3 was in similar vein as before. Andrew Boulden passed by in his usual quick way (he lives locally now). Then in the pretty village of 'The Lee', I was completely caught out by not recognising a member of the national committee. As I approached a parked car I was greeted with the remark "It's nice to see the LDWA out again." "Do you know it then?" I replied. "Yes", came back the answer, "I'm Richard

Bradbury, the Editor." After expressing my most humble apologies for not recognising him from his picture in Strider, Richard stated that it had been taken years ago when he was younger. He also lives very close to this route.

It was now only 5 miles to go to the finish from CP3 - one of those used on the Chiltern 100 so I was told, but I did not recognise it - too long ago I expect. However some confusion arose on this section as we crossed the outward route not only once but twice! How could that be? One part was obvious but the other one....? I now spent the remaining time trying to work out this anomaly but to no avail. It wasn't until close examination of the map that it all became abundantly clear.

Completing 26 miles in 7 hours 22 minutes was very good for me following my recent illness and I know that everybody had a very enjoyable day. The conditions had been perfect for walking, made more so by being out in the countryside once again and also there being such an abundance of Spring flowers showing that Winter is really on its way out. The usual B.B.N. hospitality goes without saying and if you get the chance to do this walk, I can thoroughly recommend it.

OVER THE TOP DOWN UNDER

Bill Gillibrand

This is a circular walk made up of straight lines, distance about 1 mile, total ascent 300 feet, time allowed 3 hours, entry fee £55. In fact the entry fee is dwarfed by the cost of getting to the start for this is a walk/climb to the top of the arch of Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Being in Sydney on 2nd February, I decided to do a reconnaissance of the situation to see if I felt capable of tackling the challenge. At 10.30 in the morning I enquired at the office how far ahead one had to book and was told that the next available vacancy was in 20 minutes time. I decided to go for it.

At the appointed hour 12 of us (maximum allowed in a group) assembled for an introductory talk before being breathalysed. As it was early morning I passed that hurdle. Next we were required to sign a form which basically committed us to behave and to obey the leader's instructions. The bright young attendants presented us each with a lightweight overall and suggested that we strip as far as possible before donning it as the temperature outside was already about 75 Fahrenheit. Lockers were provided for us to deposit our clothing and all loose items, such as cameras and even wristwatches.

The overall was in one piece in a trendy design with a zip at the back, elasticated wrists and ankles and no other openings or pockets. Being effectively cocooned and looking like a squad from International Rescue we were then checked over airport style with a metal detector.

Our appointed leader, Jason, instructed us on how to don a very substantial belt and pull it tight. To the front of this belt we attached an equally substantial strap with a hefty device on the end, which would enable us to be connected to the static line which runs the full length of the walk. Next we stood in a circle and placed a radio receiver into a pocket at the back of our neighbour's belt. This was securely strapped in and a wire passed up through a loop at the back of the collar to a single phone which was clipped to the right ear. It would enable Jason to keep in touch with us all when we were strung out along the line. Spectacles were not only doubly fixed to a string but this too was attached to the ring at the back of the collar. A baseball cap was provided and fixed in the same way. Finally we were each given a handkerchief with an elastic loop to be fixed to the wrist before being tucked up one's sleeve. Jason assured us that they were washed every week! We were now deemed ready to start. Not having a wristwatch I do not know how long it all took but it must have been well over half an hour.

First we attached ourselves to the line and climbed a steep steel stair to a catwalk which ran, possibly for quarter of a mile, beneath the approach span to the bridge. It was quite safe with a handrail on each side. The only unnerving aspect was that the decking was an open steel mesh so that one could look directly down to the ground way below us. At intervals Jason would halt us to point out various items of interest or tell us tales about the construction of the

bridge. After passing through a opening in the south east pylon we were above the water of the harbour which Jason said was 180 feet or 2 seconds below us. There followed a climb up several flights of very steep steel stairs to bring us onto the top of the eastern arch at its south end.

Standing on the top flange proved to be a safe and secure experience as we were on a prepared maintenance walkway. This was about 3 feet wide in the centre of the 10 feet wide flange. Even reaching over as far as possible beyond the handrail it was not possible to look vertically downwards to the water. The walkway was stepped so that at no time during the entire walk did we have to place a foot on anything other than a horizontal surface. Every hundred yards or so we would stop for a talk about the bridge so that progress was very slow and physically undemanding, although this was not an experience one would want to rush. To our right we could look to the Opera House and the outer part of the harbour. To our left was the lattice of diagonal bracing between the two arches which is not usually apparent on photographs and beyond that in the distance could be seen the outline of the Blue Mountains.

At the peak of the arch Jason told us we were 450 feet or 5 seconds above the water. Here we turned sharp left onto another walkway leading to the western arch. Mid-way across and above it is an access platform for servicing the aircraft beacon. Some years ago a supermarket trolley full of empty beer cans was found on this platform, presumably after some escapade by a climbing club. Having reached the western arch we returned to the start in the same stop and start manner. Here we changed back into our own clothing before collecting the certificate and photo to prove we had done it.

If you are in the area with the time and money to spare, give it a go. It is a great experience and not at all demanding, either mentally or physically. My feeling is that the safety precautions were more to stop publicity seeking nutters doing something stupid rather than for personal safety. If you want to know more and see some pictures, look up www.bridgeclimb.com.

Bill Gillibrand

TWICE BITTEN.....

Shirley Gill

The weather forecast being sort of "reasonable", Keith Warman and I decided to have a 21 mile meander through the Kent and Surrey countryside on Saturday 15 June. We duly set out from Ide Hill at 9.00 am (an hour later than intended, but what the heck). I decided to take my walking poles as they have proved invaluable in the past . . . and were to do so again.

Early on we met a lady in a wood walking with a Dalmatian dog which became very boisterous around us. We stood still whilst she called it away and she made the usual comment "It's OK, he does not bite". Keith remarked quietly "They all say that" and we then walked on. The encounter immediately brought to my mind an incident in my childhood. I was about 3 years old and a dog latched onto my derriere and shook me like a rag doll. It meant a rapid trip to the hospital but, luckily, not much damage done - only to a young girl's dignity!

Just before 2.00 pm Keith said how much he was enjoying the walk and I agreed with him - the sun was shining, the hedgerows smelled oh so English and the views were wonderful. We were walking along a concrete farm track (also a public footpath) which led to a farm, and were due to turn off onto a footpath just before the farm. It was quite open country on both sides and about halfway along we passed a single dwelling to our left. Opposite it, to the right of us, was parked a vehicle.

As we walked passed it, suddenly and completely out of the blue, we were attacked by a dog. Unbeknown to us, it had been in the car, had quietly emerged on the side out of view to us, crept round the car and then launched its attack by sinking its teeth into my calf. I was utterly amazed and all I could think of was to control the situation. Thank goodness I had my walking poles. I quickly handed one to Keith and we managed to keep

the barking fiend at bay. I then realised that Keith was unaware I had been bitten and I yelled out "It bit me, it bit me." so loud that anyone within a two-mile radius would have heard!

Luckily, the fiend decided to retreat and went back round the car and jumped in (presumably through an open window - we did not stay to check this fact)! A quick glance to my leg confirmed that there was some damage done, so we quickly put a few hundred yards between us and the fiend, before stopping to sort out the wounds and staunch the blood. Between us, we had enough first aid kit to supply a local hospital, so I was soon bound and bandaged. It felt surprisingly comfortable and we were able to finish the last 8 miles of our walk.

I sought emergency medical advice that evening and was put on antibiotics and told to check when my last tetanus jab was done. My card showed 1985 but I was unsure if I had had a booster jab since then. Don't look up "Tetanus" in any medical book you may have at home! The article on tetanus in my ancient medical tome started with "A potentially fatal disease.....!!!"

The wounds did not look too good the next morning so we decided to seek some reassurance by visiting a hospital (it was a Sunday). Two doctors inspected my leg and said the wounds looked clean enough and that the swelling would soon go down. I was given a tetanus jab.

So folks, the situation as I write this - the police are trying to identify the owner and then I shall have to go and identify the dog! (Do they have a Line Up I wonder, with numbers round their necks?)

Lessons learned:

1. Dog Dazers are only any good if you first see the dog! (Keith had a Dog Dazer in his pocket but the attack was far too quick for it to be used)
2. Carry water for washing wounds from animal bites - apparently it is imperative to thoroughly clean wounds as soon as possible.
3. Report the incident to the police.
4. Be VERY wary if you are at Grid Reference TQ 427 496. (About 2.5 kms south of Limpsfield Chart, Editor)

Shirley Gill

White Cliffs Challenge Walks - Saturday 14 September.

For the fourth year running, the National Trust is offering the opportunity to take part in the White Cliffs Challenge Walks. There are three distance options; all walks are circular and take you on clearly marked public footpaths. Detailed directions will be given.

The three options are 4 miles, 10 miles and 21 miles. The latter route is via Little Mongeham, Northbourne, Betteshanger Colliery, Ripple, Ringwould and Kingsdown Wood to Oldstairs Bay, where you join the cliff-top downland again for the return via the South Foreland Lighthouse.

The 21 mile walk starts at 8 a.m. and the entry fee is £10 for adults. Entry forms and further details from - White Cliffs Challenge Walk Co-ordinator, The National Trust, Langdon Cliffs, DOVER. CT16 1HJ.

The following letter has been received from **Keith Bailey** of the Staffordshire Group :-

Dear Laurie,

Many thanks for allowing me to join you on your West Kent Kanter walk on Sunday 7th April and thanks also to the Kent Group members who made me feel so welcome. A special "Thank you" to Keith, Shirly, Paul and Mary Hatcher for explaining items of interest along the route. I must remember not to enter The Wealden Waters Walk some paths of which we covered on this walk and which are said to be under water at the time of the event! The front cover of newsletter number 57 explains all. I thought it was a nice touch to be presented with a copy of this newsletter by the committee.

Thanks to Ernie Bishop for the entry forms for the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk, which I intend to enter if I can arrange my dates. Thanks also for your invitation for a midweek walk on my next visit to Lamberhurst - "Just give me a call" you said.

May I now make you an offer? If your group fancy a weekend up here in my area, which includes the Peak District, I would like to arrange accommodation in either a bungalow (6-8 people), or a barn, or youth hostel for larger numbers. I would also welcome the chance to lead both the walks on Saturday and Sunday. It is now too late for this year, but please consider it for your programme next year.

I have enclosed a copy of one of my walks called "Railway & Pits Walk Around the Potteries." This is an interesting walk through our local history. For those members who bring their partners who may not wish to walk, I have enclosed a list of attractions in the Potteries

Thanks again to all your members present on the day for a good walk in good company, all topped by a day of good weather. What more can one expect?

Hope to see you again soon,

Keith Bailey, Staffs LDWA Group.

As you can see from this letter, Keith has offered to arrange a Group weekend in the Peak District. As he mentions, this does not have to be a weekend for serious walkers only. He has sent me several leaflets which describe visitors attractions in the surrounding area. (Royal Doulton, Wedgwood, Spode, Visitors Centres, Factory Shops, Museums, etc.) These can all be reached by local bus services.

The committee will need to gauge the level of support from group members for this proposal. An initial suggestion for the date is the early May bank holiday weekend in 2003. Note that the Marshals' Walk for the 2003 Hundred is to be held in August 2002, thus leaving the traditional weekend for the Marshals' Walk free.

The committee needs a definite response from those who feel that they would like to take advantage of this offer. Please contact Paul Hatcher

SOME REMINDERS OF LDWA ETIQUETTE*

*(For want of a less posh synonym)

Following the welcome surge of new members last Autumn it is perhaps timely to remind us all of a few points to be born in mind on social walks and challenge events even though they are almost second nature to some.

Both:

Make sure you arrive at the correct starting point in GOOD time, i.e. making allowance for traffic jams, train delays, lacing up boots, precautionary comfort stops, etc., etc.

Obey instructions of marshals/walk leaders at all times.

If you do not have a car and the start is not readily accessible by public transport ask a fellow group member in your vicinity for a lift well in advance (NOT the night before) and offer to share petrol costs.

If you are going by car consider offering lifts to others whether they have a car or not.

OBEY THE COUNTRY CODE

Challenge Events:

Only enter if you are reasonably confident of finishing within the time allowed or not long after.

Make sure you carry ALL the items listed in the event details, e.g. a torch if likely to finish after daylight, PLUS water and emergency energy-giving rations.

If you arrive at a checkpoint at or shortly after the closing time but nevertheless feel confident of completing the distance within the time allowed, CONSULT the marshals and ABIDE BY THEIR DECISION.

Always remember that marshals are volunteers and often walkers themselves: think about and THANK them.

Social Walks:

Especially if it is another group's walk, phone the walk leader beforehand to let him/her know you plan to join them - very helpful particularly if there is a pub stop.

Do your best to stay with the group, i.e. neither miles in front of the leader nor three fields behind.

Welcome new members and guests from other LDWA groups.

General:

If there is a tear-off slip in the Newsletter, or elsewhere, fill it in and send it back with any money due. Do NOT just turn up as if expecting transport or food to appear from nowhere!

Tom Sinclair

North Downs Way News

The national trail, as it passes over the M2 bridge over the River Medway, is closed for six months whilst contractors carry out widening work. It closed on June 26 and will remain closed until mid-January 2003. The contractors CSM are offering a free mini-bus service for walkers using the trail. This will run to a timetable :-

Monday to Friday - 07.00 to 18.00 at 30 minute intervals on the hour and ½ hour.

Weekends - 08.00 to 16.30 at hourly intervals.

Outside of these hours an "on call" service will operate via an intercom. For further information on the closure and bus service phone [REDACTED]

There is a signposted route (the same as the bus route) which is 3½ miles. Coast-bound - yellow, London-bound - green, from the A228 via Rochester Bridge to Wouldham Road and vice versa.

Another Bridge Crossing for pedestrians will soon be available. This will be over the busy A249 Sittingbourne/Maidstone road at Detling Hill. The "Jade Crossing" is being built at present and should be completed by mid-August. The North Downs Way is being re-routed on existing rights of way to use the new bridge. The campaign for a safer crossing was hastened by the tragic death of young Jade Hobbs and her grandmother.

Brian Buttifant.

The following is taken from the SEVENOAKS CHRONICLE for June 20th :-

"A BRASSY LOOK AT PANORAMIC VIEW" - A parish councillor has masterminded a fantastic new project to mark the stunning view from Green Hill in Kemsing. Brian Buttifant, who spearheaded the idea for the "Kemsing Green Hill Topograph", presented the work at a dedication ceremony conducted by the Bishop of Tonbridge last

Thursday.

The topograph, defined loosely as a "detailed representation", consisted of a brass plate on which is etched a picture of the panorama from the top of the hill, with some of the main features identified.

Speaking to the 'Chronicle', Mr Buttifant said: "I haven't seen this particular feature around before. The project was initially for the Millennium but it took a little too long. It is now a permanent reminder of the Queen's Jubilee." He added: "It will also help walkers and visitors to the area to pick out the landmarks. I'm delighted with the result which was a combined local effort and I enjoyed the project work immensely."

The funding for the project was provided by the 2001 Kemsing Festival and revenue from the Parish Council's Projects budget.

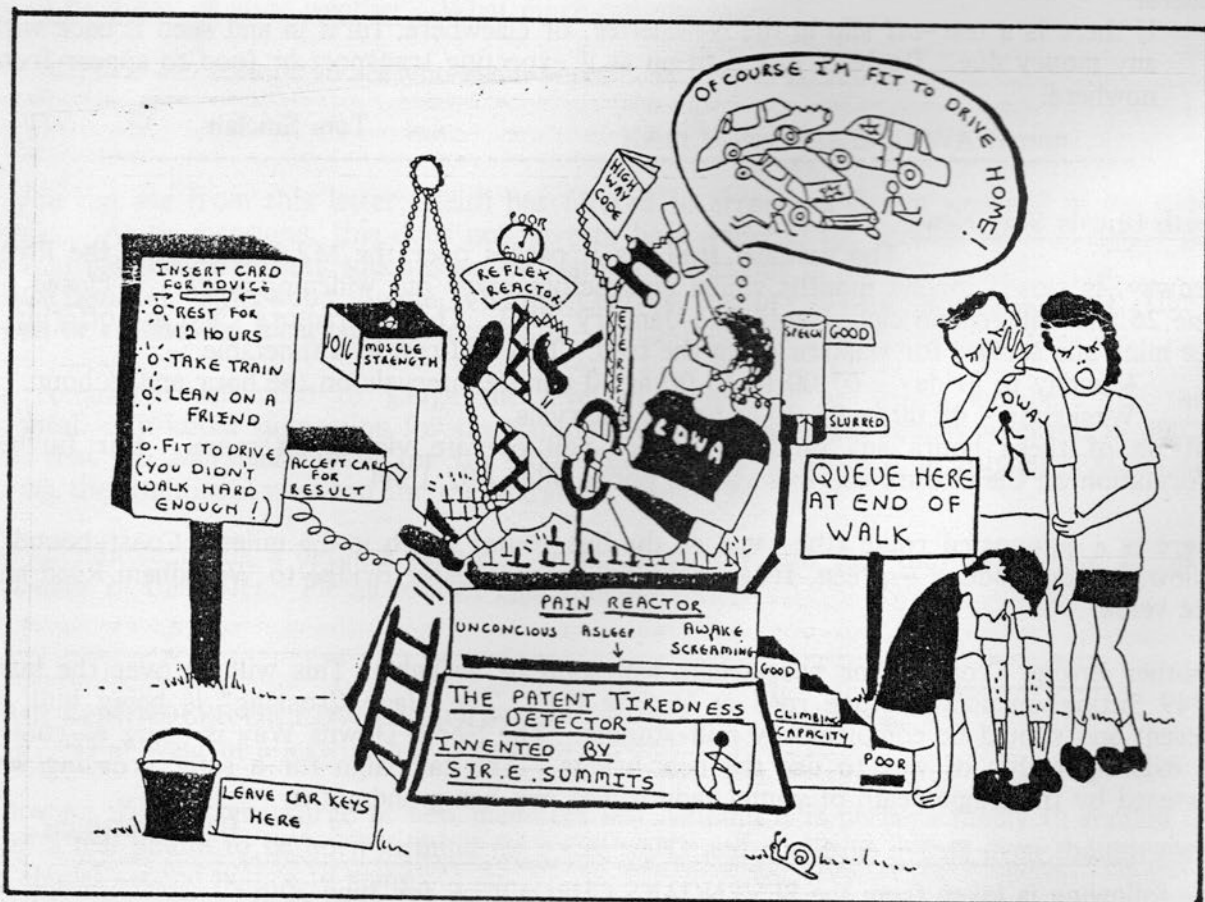
Local artist, Lawrence Jenkins, designed the impressive monument, which allows the viewer an informative scan of the horizon

Driving Whilst Tired

This subject has been in the news recently following the Selby rail disaster. How many of us have driven home after a challenge walk and struggled to stay awake during the journey? The problem is particularly acute after an overnight event and time should be allowed to sleep and recover before setting off on a journey by car. The following advice and information is taken from a DTLR leaflet.

If you fall asleep at the wheel you risk killing yourself, your passengers and other innocent victims.

An estimated 300 people a year are killed and many more seriously injured where a driver has fallen asleep at the wheel.



A picture with a moral:- 'The Tiredness Detector' - for use at the end of long challenge events. Drawn by Lynn New to an idea by Jill Green.

Research shows that:

Drivers do not just fall asleep suddenly. There is plenty of warning.
Getting out of your vehicle for a walk will have only a limited effect.
Opening the window and/or turning on the radio will have little effect on your tiredness.
No amount of will power will keep you awake.
Caffeine does help but it needs 20-30 minutes to take effect.

DO - Plan to stop for a 15 minute break every 2 hours on a long journey.
Try to get a good night's sleep before starting a long drive.
Stop in a safe place when you feel tired. If you are on a motorway don't stop on the hard shoulder, take the next exit and find somewhere to park or stop at the next motorway service area.
Drink a cup or two of strong coffee followed by a short nap of no more than 15-20 minutes, once you have stopped somewhere safe.

DON'T
Start a long trip if you are already tired.
Drive for long distances after a full day's work.
Drive after you have been drinking.
Drive if you are taking medicines that make you feel drowsy (read the instructions)
Make long trips between midnight and 6 a.m. when natural alertness is low.

NEW PRODUCT HITS WALKING SHOPS' SHELVES

Keith Warman

Whilst in the Lake District recently, Shirlie and I discovered a new product which is available for a trial period in local outdoor equipment shops.

We spent a few days in and around Keswick and, as we made use of the buses, visited the bus station each day. Here, we became aware of a previously unknown phenomenon. In the mornings, hardened fellwalkers gathered to either catch buses or start their day's exertions to then return in the early evening with radiant faces. Their clothing, footwear and perspiring bodies entirely fitted the stories we overheard. For example: "That's another six peaks bagged" and "I thought the climb up (name of distant mountain) was never going to end". We stood in awe and admiration of these seasoned human beings.

Our attention was then drawn to others, usually alone, who hovered around the bus stations in the mornings and who were also there in the evenings. These people had all the equipment, including high-altitude anoraks, moleskin or tweed breeches and enormous boots covering at least four pairs of socks. They seemed to have rather unruly hair, sat in isolation at the bus station and, with studious expressions, read magazines or newspapers. They created billowing clouds of smoke from huge pipes and had 80 litre rucksacks (loaded to the hilt) propped beside them. In the evenings, they were back there when the serious fellwalkers returned, and were still exactly as they had appeared to us in the mornings but with one vital exception - their boots and trouser bottoms were slightly muddy and their hair slightly unkempt.

We mused for some time on how the equipment-freak loners left AFTER the serious walkers and yet arrived back BEFORE them. A visit to one of the many outdoor shops in the town provided the answer. Hidden behind slabs of Kendal Mint Cake, piles of Wainwright guides and boxes of compasses and altimeters, we discovered small tins containing a substance we had not seen before.... Poser Mud.

It seems that, despite appearances, some folk don't venture onto the hills at all. They wait until the seasoned mountain goats have safely left the towns and villages, then surreptitiously buy a tin or two of Poser Mud. In the secrecy of public conveniences, they carefully daub the stuff in strategic locations about their clothing, footwear and rucksacks before returning to the comfort of the bus station cafe to resume their reading and await the return of the

seasoned walkers.

Poser Mud is available in different tints so the deception can be matched to the area in which you supposedly have walked. You can buy Penrith Sandstone (dark reddish-brown), Langdale Shale (mid grey), Patterdale Dolorite (dark grey) or Honister Slate (dark greenish-grey). If you see someone sporting the wrong colour mud for the area they are in, you can be sure they are wearing Poser Mud and they've bought the incorrect shade!

So, next time you are in the Lake District, look out for small open-cast earth quarries. You may well have discovered one of the many clandestine Poser Mud mines that are beginning to scar the landscape.

Keith Warman (01-04-02)

THE FOUNDERS CHALLENGE

The London Group have asked me to remind Kent members that this event takes place on Sunday October 20th. The route includes places associated with LDWA founders i.e. Blatchford Down, Steer's Field, Tanners Hatch YH, the Toposcope on Pitch Hill and Old Peaslake P.O. Entry numbers are limited to 250 due to parking limitations, so get your entry in early! SAE to Bill Thompson.

See Strider for full details.

LOCAL FOOTPATHS FEATURED IN NEW WALKERS' 'BIBLE'

The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk is one of over 600 routes in the seventh edition of the Long Distance Walkers' Handbook recently produced by the LDWA Ltd and published by A&C Black. The Tunbridge Wells Circular was recently re-launched and the 27 mile route was used by the Kent Group for a challenge walk in June.

Other local footpaths featured in the Handbook include: Darent Valley Path, Elham Valley Way, High Weald Landscape Trail, Medway Valley Walk, North Downs Way, Saxon Shore Way, Thanet Path and Wealdway.

This seventh edition of the Handbook is the result of several years of research, by teams checking routes, and gives details of 638 main paths ranging from the arduous Pennine Way to those that can be completed in a day. Containing user-friendly regional maps, the book includes information on the Ordnance Survey Maps required, way-marking, publications available, badges and certificates and web sites. There is also a list of addresses covering over 500 sources of publications and other relevant information.

The Handbook, ISBN 0713660961, is obtainable from good bookshops or direct from the LDWA Merchandise Officer, at £12.99.

And finally advice from John Dryden via Tom Sinclair :-

"Better to hunt in fields for health unbought
Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught
The wise, for cure, on exercise depend
God never made his work for man to mend."

Please send items for inclusion in the December newsletter to the editor - Laurie Lowe,