

LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION — KENT GROUP

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

NEWSLETTER



This picture appeared on the cover of the first edition of the Kent Group Newsletter in February 1983 and was supplied by Phil Hastings.



Number 65

December 2004

KENT LDWA WALKS PROGRAMME – December 2004 to March 2005

Saturday 4th December

CHRISTMAS CRUISE AROUND CALAIS

Approx. 14 mls. Meet at P&O desk, Dover Eastern Docks at 7 a.m. – and don't forget your passport! Ring Graham Smith for more details – [REDACTED].

Sunday 19th December

FAMILY LUNCH WALK

This will be held at "The King's Arms", Meopham Green, GR 640 651. A traditional 2-course Christmas lunch will be preceded by a short walk led by Jim Oddy. The walk will be at a gentle pace and will start from The Green at 11 a.m. The traditional 2-course Christmas lunch costs £17-00 per person and **must** be booked in advance with Neil Higham [REDACTED]. The latest date for acceptance of bookings is Monday 13th December.

Tuesday 28th December

SEVENOAKS TWENTY

A walk following the Sevenoaks 20 mile route. Start at 8 a.m. from the Sevenoaks Weald scout hut, GR 531 511 (Track to R of cemetery). Pub stop in Sevenoaks. Leader Brian Buttifant, tel. [REDACTED].

Saturday 1st January

NEW YEAR ON THE SOUTH DOWNS

c. 20 mls. Start 9 a.m. from Eastbourne. Meet at western end of promenade (B2103) where road bends right at South Downs Way marker post, GR 600 972. Park along promenade road, before school on left. Ring Graham Smith for more details – [REDACTED].

Friday 7th January

NIGHT WALK

18 or 20 mls. Meet 9.30 pm. for 10.30 pm. start at "The George" public house, Trottscliffe, GR 641 599. Out on the Wealdway, return on the North Downs Way. Leader - Ivan Waghorn, on [REDACTED].

Sunday 16th January

WEALDWAY PART 1

GRAVESEND – WEST PECKHAM. 19 mls. As this is a linear walk, cars will need to be left at each end of the route. Those coming from East Kent can meet at Moto Services on A2 at Gillingham at 8 a.m. before driving to West Peckham to join those from West Kent at 8.45 a.m. Park carefully in W. Peckham and meet near the church (GR644 525). Then to the Tollgate Motel (off A2, GR 643 712) to start walk. Ring Graham Smith for more details – [REDACTED].

Sunday 30th January

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Location: - Chilham Village Hall, GR 065 536, Landranger 179. **Car parking:** - cars must be parked on grass opposite hall (weather permitting). Do not obstruct drive to castle or neighbouring properties.

There will be a walk of 6-7 miles led by Mike Pursey and starting at 10 a.m.

Lunch will be provided at 1 p.m. in the hall. The lunch is free but please return the booking slip included with the Notice of Meeting so that numbers can be ascertained in advance.

The meeting will commence at 2 p.m. and finish by 4 p.m.

Sunday 6th February

West Peckham to Withyham. 22 mls. Ring Graham Smith on [REDACTED] for start time and travel arrangements. **WEALDWAY PART 2**

Sunday 20th February

Withyham to East Hoathly. 19 mls. Ring Graham for details. **WEALDWAY PART 3**

Sunday 27th February

Approx. 10 mls. Start 10 a.m. from One Tree Hill car park (Landranger 188, GR 559 532) Finish about 4 p.m. No pub stop, bring packed lunch. Short in length, plenty of incident. Leader - Martyn Berry, tel. [REDACTED] **SEVENOAKS OUTCROPS WALK**

Sunday 6th March

A walk for those who will be helping on the day of the main event. Please contact Brian Buttifant on [REDACTED] for details and entry forms. **SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR MARSHALS' WALK**

Sunday 13th March

East Hoathly to Eastbourne. 22 mls. Details from Graham on [REDACTED] **WEALDWAY PART 4**

Sunday 20th March

See "Future Events" in your copy of STRIDER for full details. **SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR**

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. Meetings commence at 8.30 p.m. All welcome.

COMMITTEE

Chairman.....Brian Buttifant..

Secretary.....Bill Gillibrand..

Treasurer.....Neil Higham....

Members..... Trevor Blake....

Duncan Brice...

Bryan Clarke...

Gordon Harker..

Mick Sullivan..

Keith Warman..

Social Walks Programme.....Neal O'Rourke...

Footpath Problems.....Shirley Higgins...

Newsletter Editor.....Laurie Lowe.....

PHIL HASTINGS

Those of you who have been members of the Kent Group for many years will remember Phil and his wife Anne. In August I received a letter (via Jill Green) from his daughter Juliette. It contained the following news:-

"It is with great personal sadness that I am writing to inform you that my dad and Anne were involved in a car accident in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, on 13th July 2004. Both died on impact. A memorial service was held in Cape Town on 23rd July 2004."

Although Phil was not so closely involved with the Kent Group in recent years, he was very active in the early days of the LDWA (see Ernie Bishop's article on page 4). In addition to participating in challenge walks, Phil was also an accomplished race-walker with many notable achievements to his name. Typical of Phil, he rarely talked about his successes under the rules of race-walking. Some details of his achievements under this discipline have been assembled by Jill and Dave Green and these are reported below.

Some years ago Phil remarried and Anne was often seen supporting him at events. The photograph below shows both of them relaxing at the end of the Invicta 100 in 1992.



I have many memories of Phil's involvement with the Kent Group. In the early days of the Sevenoaks Circular he produced each year, a boldly hand-written route description, which in retrospect was much easier to read while struggling through the Wealden clay, than some of the word processor-produced route descriptions of today. Each edition would contain at least one throw-away line, such as "If you arrive here after dark, aim for the house in the far distance." or "Pass the point where the road-roller was parked last year."

Phil undertook the task of measuring the distance of the planned route for the Invicta 100. To do this he decided to walk the entire route pushing a surveyor's wheel and in this way he recorded all of the intermediate distances. I never understood how Phil and his wheel coped with the steps and many ploughed fields along the route – but he did!

I will remember Phil as a kind, friendly and unassuming chap with a mellow South African accent, and his trademark umbrella protruding from the top of his rucksack.

Laurie Lowe.

The following notes have been compiled from information supplied by Jill and Dave Green. A "Centurion" is a person who has completed 100 miles, under race-walking rules, in a time of less than 24 hours.

Phil became Centurion 632 in 1978. He completed the Leicester to Skegness race in a time of 21 hours and 56 minutes. He went on to complete a total of 8 British Centurion walks within the 24 hour time limit.

Phil was also an early competitor in the French classic 28 hour race in Roubaix. He first competed in 1981 when he walked 180 kms in the 28 hour time limit. Subsequently, he took part in or supported this event for the following 22 years. In 2003 Phil and Anne supported on the 50th anniversary event of the Roubaix 28.

Phil introduced Jill to race-walking, having met up with her on an LDWA challenge walk. He frequently supported her on ultra-distance events both here and abroad.

The following is Ernie Bishop's account of Phil's activities in the early days of the LDWA.

When Celia and I returned from a prolonged holiday, it was a great shock to find among the accumulated mail a letter from Juliette Hastings informing his friends of his death.

My memories of Phil go back to 1976. I joined the LDWA that summer, which must have been a week or two before Phil. I was no. 1691 and he was 1708. On receiving my first copy of "Strider", (which was called "Newsletter" then), I entered a 25 mile walk, promoted by British Airways, in Windsor Great Park. On arrival I stood near the start alongside another walker and we talked as we waited. He was perfectly understandable but had an accent which I couldn't pin down to a particular country. That, of course, was Phil.

At the appropriate starting time a few moved off and as we weren't aware of the usual procedure, we followed suit. We stepped it out leaving the others behind, following the route description, but mystified by the lack of checkpoints. We soon found that we had things in common, had recently joined the LDWA and both lived in the Kent Group area. On completion of the first lap, we realised that we had reached the checkpoints before the marshals, so we scrubbed the first circuit and started again.

During the next few years I did several events with Phil, in particular events where teams were involved. For the Surrey Summits in 1977 we formed a team of three with Chris Burton of Sevenoaks and, I believe, the next year with Andrew Addis. Kent Group held the trophy for two years, mainly because there were few teams to compete against. The team idea was dropped soon after that.

I remember on one of those "Summits", in the dark, going down a gully, approaching Kettlebury Hill. Phil was studying his map with the aid of a torch when he walked straight into a tree which had partly collapsed across the path. It took him a while to recover, but he got up and carried on.

One other event which was only for teams of four and which I believe I did on three occasions with Phil as part of a team, was The High Peak Marathon, a non-LDWA event. I assume that it is still held every year although it hasn't appeared in "Strider" since 1990. It was held in February, with teams leaving at 10 minute intervals from 11 p.m. on a Friday. It was a 40 mile route, in wintry conditions, around the high moors of the Derwent Watershed. Conditions could be appalling, maps and compasses were essential, and rules required emergency equipment and a tent be carried between the team members. Team members were supposed to stay together at all times.

The routine was that I would pick Phil up at his home early Friday afternoon, a meal at Chesterfield on the way up and have ourselves ready for the start at Edale village hall at 11 p.m. It was always more tiring when it was mild and boggy rather than when it was frozen. Worse still when members of a team became detached from one another. That happened on the second occasion when one member (not Phil) charged on ahead and we spent over an hour trying to find him in the dark.

Apart from the annual '100' - of which Phil had completed 10 by 1991 - I believe that most of the events tackled by him were centred in the 'Home Counties' and some of these had to be avoided if they happened to clash with a race walk which Phil felt committed to, either as a participant or a marshal.

In 1978 he persuaded me to support him with food, drink and encouragement on the Leicester to Skegness 100 which was organised by the Centurions. This was a linear route on moderately busy roads which were at their worst over the last 20 miles from Boston to Skegness. It was a warm, summer week-end and it seemed that most of the inhabitants of Eastern England were heading for the coast. Phil walked at a good steady pace to finish in 21 hours 56 minutes and thus qualified as a Centurion.

The Centurion 100 in 1979 was at Ewhurst, over 10 laps of 10 miles on a rolling route south of Leith hill. Phil talked me (and other LDWA members) into entering. Most completed the route, including Phil. I think most of us regarded it as trying something different, but still had a preference for routes across country on footpaths.

In looking through records, I came across Phil's name as completing the Masters and Maidens Marathon, organised by Alan Blatchford in October, 1980 in a time of 4 hours 55 minutes. Not a fast time, but it must have been one of the rare occasions

when Phil actually ran on part of an event. His best time for an LDWA hundred was 33 hours 9 minutes for the 1977 Downsman.

I understand that he appeared on the Sevenoaks Circular this year, doing a short route as the start of a fitness campaign to make a 'come back'. That was not to be, but I shall always remember Phil as a member who, when it rained, would pull an umbrella out from his rucksack. Phil was a character we shall all miss.

Ernie Bishop.

The following is from Keith Warman:-

Phil was an established and very active walker when I first joined the Kent Group. He struck me as a likeable eccentric with a wealth of stories and experience, the latter of which he was happy to share with me. I was quite in awe of his exploits on challenge walks and remember how he used to surge around the Surrey Summits with the likes of Roger Michell and Tony Rowley in about 17 hours. I can still picture him carrying a rolled-up umbrella, Nicholas Crane-like, on Hundreds, and when it rained he had the last laugh.

Phil's draughtsman training gave him a detailed eye for his walking activities and he used to convert a written route description to a vertical straight line on paper, probably to scale, with distances and changes in direction noted to either side. It was odd to me but made perfect sense to Phil.

For several years, he wrote the route description for the Sevenoaks Circular, by hand, in capital letters. Those were the days before word-processors and computers and his efforts were an art-form which had to be rewritten every time the route changed and had to cater for multiple distances. The same detailed approach calculated opening and closing times of checkpoints with military accuracy based upon average speeds, prevailing winds, etc. It was amusing to read that, for example, checkpoint 1 opened at 2:09pm and closed at 4:27pm!

On one of Paul Hatcher's Cream Tea Walks, Phil became detached from the back of the field during the morning and, unfortunately, by the time it was realised that he was missing, he was nowhere to be found. Our embarrassed leader plodded on for the rest of the day and upon arrival back at Pluckley we discovered a relaxed Phil, having walked back on the lanes, enjoying what he claimed to be his fifth cream tea!

I last saw Phil this March when he ambled around the Sevenoaks Circular 14-miles route, cheerful as ever and enjoying the atmosphere. I was very saddened to learn of his death - he was a real character and we are poorer without his like.

Keith Warman.

Notes of Committee meeting of 12th October

SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR:

Bryan Clarke has supplied a marked up proposal based on last year's entry form. Keith raised queries concerning recent revisions to the Country Code. He will look into it and advise Bryan. Gordon asked if the time allowance for the 30 miles could be increased. Brian said he and Duncan were still reviewing the route and proposing a slight shortening of the 30 miler and reducing the number of stiles. A marker is needed to redirect walkers and Keith is to supply a marker post for Brian. Keith has yet to design the certificates and would welcome ideas. Mick asked if there could be wider publicity. He would approach Tunbridge Wells Council to see if an item could be put in their magazine. Gordon suggested sending forms to the Duke of York School in Dover. Entry forms will be given to all committee members after the next meeting for them to distribute.

HIGH WEALD WALK

The walk will be on 10th July next year and called 'A Walk with the Smugglers'. It will be a 26 mile walk with a 15 mile alternative. Strider has been notified. Maurice Faircloth is developing the route. The base will be at Goudhurst Village Hall at a cost of £75 for the day.

WHITE CLIFFS WALK

This is planned for the 8/9th October 2005. The venue will be Kingsdown International Scout Camp, near Walmer. It was decided to settle for the 50 mile version and to call the event the 'White Cliffs Fifty'. Gordon Harker is to see if he can get a suitable photo for an announcement in Strider. Keith is to check with Julie to see if we can put a picture in the April Strider and a box advert in the August edition. Bill will put an item in the newsletter with a call for marshals. Keith will work on a design for the badges and certificates. He will produce artwork for discussion at the AGM. Some old dated badges are left and Keith will check with the supplier to see if there is a saving in using the old design without the date.

FOOTPATHS

Shirley Higgins had reported that a claim had been made that all the bridges (missing for years) on Romney Marsh had been replaced. On a walk recently, she found the bridges in place but the paths were impassable due to standing crops. A letter has been written to the appropriate PROW Office and the "Kent Trails" magazine. To date, there has been no response from the PROW officer. She proposes to check the situation again next summer.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Brian raised the matter of having a pub meeting in East Kent, either as well as the one in Wrotham or alternating with it. Gordon is to consider it.

CHILTERN LANDMARKS HUNDRED – 28th – 30th May 2005

The Kent Group has been allocated **CP6 (Russells Water – GR SU 708 898)** for this event in 2005. It is in a small village hall at 39.75 miles and there is limited parking. Opening times are Saturday 1800 hrs to Sunday 0600 hrs. The menu provisionally consists of hot dogs and potato wedges. Volunteers will be needed for this Whitsun event. Please submit your names to Neil Higham during Trevor's absence.

Volunteers are also required for check-pointing on the Marshals' walk which will take place over the weekend of the 30th April – 2nd May 2005.

In addition to the above, Fiona and Merv Nutburn have volunteered to run **CP17 (Chenies, - GR TQ 026 974)** at 98 miles. This is a barn and the opening times are from 04.30 Sunday to 09.00 Monday. Earlier access will be available. Any Kent Group members who are not required at Russells Water would be welcome to join

Fiona and Merv. This will be a long session (28.5 hours) and a back-up team will be needed.

Entry forms for the Chiltern Landmarks 100 are available from Bill Gillibrand.

CLEVELAND TANDEM CHALLENGE EVENT

Message from Eva Bowes: - Unfortunately Cleveland LDWA was too late submitting notification of the Tandem for it to be included the December Strider.

Could we therefore request that you make your members aware that the Tandem will be held on 15th January 2005. Entries are now being taken. Entry forms are available on our website at www.ldwa.org.uk/cleveland

KENT'S WINDMILLS

KCC owns a unique collection of eight mills and has completed a major repair programme at seven of them, including Union Mill at Cranbrook. Union Mill, the tallest smock mill in England, was built in 1814 because there was a shortage of flour during the Napoleonic War.

The mill's sails have been replaced with authentic Kentish design sweeps and stocks to make the mill look as it did in 1850. It is one of the fully-operational mills open to the public in the south east.

Repair work has also been carried out on the mills at Chillenden near Sandwich; Drapers Mill, Margate; Herne, near Herne Bay; Meopham; Davison's Mill, Stelling Minnis and Wittersham Mill, near Tenterden.

Leaflets giving mill opening times are available from libraries and tourist information centres or from KCC Principle Conservation Officer, Peter Cobley on 01622 221547.

This information is taken from "Around Kent", July 2004.

The Prayer of a Tired Walker – If you pick 'em up, O Lord, I'll put them down.
Phil Hastings, Newsletter, February 1983.

OUR LINK WITH PHIL HASTINGS..... by PAT CLARKE

You will read elsewhere in the Newsletter of the sudden death of Phil Hastings and his second wife Ann, it will be a shock to all who knew them (especially the 'old timers' who knew Phil when he was a very active member of the Kent Group).

Over 40 years ago Bryan and a friend he met when doing his National Service in the RAF on Malta, toured Italy while on leave. During that holiday they met a friendly mother, daughter and a friend who were from South Africa. They were touring round Europe and spent some time with Bryan and companion. Bryan exchanged addresses and kept in touch. I don't think somehow that it was the mother, affectionately known as Ma Johnstone, who was the attraction but it was she who later kept the friendship going. She and her daughter, Gloria, moved from South Africa to Canada to avoid the troubles there and settled in Vancouver. Gloria later lived with her husband and family on nearby Vancouver Island.

It was shortly after Bryan finished his National Service that he and I met when I was in digs opposite his home - but that is another story! However once we married it became my responsibility to keep the correspondence going and being one of those strange people who enjoy letter-writing I was happy with the task so letters and photos flew back and forth fairly regularly.

Now we move on a few years to over 25 years ago when Bryan and Trevor Blake first saw an advert for the Sevenoaks Circular and joined the Kent Group, LDWA. Not long after, Bryan arranged for the Kent Group to use the Dartford Archaeological Group's hall for the Kent Group AGM. I was there to help with refreshments. While we were standing behind the counter and waiting for used cups, etc. we got into conversation with Phil, who was helping us. And as you do, we started to talk about our families. He mentioned that his son had gone over to Canada to stay with a family they knew on Vancouver Island. You've probably jumped to the improbable conclusion by now and you will be right! It transpired that it was Ma and her family that Phil and his then wife were in touch with. They had met and got chatting on a train to London. Those of you who knew Phil will know that he too was from South Africa.

Some time after this, Phil and his family had Ma over to stay with them for a holiday and we went to their house and took Ma out for the day. For Bryan it was a re-union after many years. For me it was our only meeting although I felt as if I knew her. We all kept in touch with her till she died. A few years later Ma's daughter and husband came over and we met them at Phil's house. If you had read of that string of coincidences in a book you'd never believe it, would you?

Because of this we had kept in touch with Phil even during the time he was no longer coming to LDWA events. Anne and he had many holidays over in Namibia and South Africa where he still had relatives. He always sent us a postcard. We had a letter from him earlier this year telling us they were going to Namibia again for a holiday and, of course, we had a chance to talk to them both at the Sevenoaks Circular this year. We can't quite believe that we won't see them again.

The Walkers' Prayer

Lord Bless all Walkers that they may live long and healthy lives, especially bless our leaders for they are all powerful and lead us through the wilderness.

Yea, though they lead us down the valleys and over the hills, we shall feel no pain for our hearts, minds and muscles are numb.

Let them know their north from their south and their east from their west, and Lord, let the sun shine so that they may have a faint idea in which direction we are heading.

Grant O Lord that they curb their tongues and not tell us that we have walked seven miles, when we know we have walked ten.

Also let them know the difference between a gentle slope and a steep cliff.

Give them the ability to count so they know the number of walkers, so that none shall go astray.

Make them prevent the leaders from starting the moment everyone has caught up.

Curse those walkers who overtake the leader; let their sticks break, their laces come undone and their flasks leak.

Curse also those who disappear into the woods, without telling the backmarker.

Grant, O Lord, sunshine at all times, but not too hot; cooling breezes, but not strong winds; shade needed and incomparable views when we are resting.

Spare us from brambles, nettles and other obstructions.

Lead us not down the wrong paths.

Finally Lord, let us arrive back at our cars safe and sound, for we are children of the wilderness, the blind being led by the blind, and we are shattered.

Give us the strength to turn up for the next walk, for we are of the tribe stupid and know no better.

We ask all this with tongue in cheek, ever conscious that many a true word is spoken in jest.

Supplied by Bill Gillibrand (who wishes it to be known that he is not the author!)

A couple go on holiday to a fishing lake in Northern Ireland. The husband likes to fish at the crack of dawn - the wife likes to read. One morning the husband returns after several hours of fishing and leaving his equipment in the boat goes to take a nap.

The wife decides to take the boat out. She motors out a short distance, anchors, and continues to read her book. Along comes a water bailiff in his boat. He pulls up alongside the woman and says, "Good morning. What are you doing?" "Reading a book," she replies, (thinking, "Isn't that obvious?") "You're in a restricted fishing area," he informs her. "I'm sorry, but I'm not fishing, I'm reading." "Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I'll have to book you." "If you do that, I'll have to accuse you of sexual assault," says the woman. "What? I haven't touched you!" says the bailiff. "That's true, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment." "Have a nice day", he said and left.

Supplied by Bryan Clarke

CUMBRIA FILE

Hello again from the northern outpost. The decorating has now been completed, the greenhouse all wrapped up for the cold weather and the garden and allotment all ready for the winter.

We have had a steady flow of visitors throughout the year. It was good to see Shirlie and Keith and nice to be able to take them on some of our local walks and to talk over past events and happenings. We were also able to take a few days to meet up with Jackie and Kevin on Exmoor for some more walking and reminiscing.

I have now made contact with the Cumbria Group, taking part in route proving walks for their new event planned for June next year. "Three Rings of Shap" 20, 40, or 60 miles (three separate circuits of approximately 20 miles each, see December Strider). I also went on a social walk of the Border Reivers' Trod 1, Carlisle to Greenhead, mainly along the Hadrian's Wall Path. The event itself was cancelled due to lack of entries and is now defunct, but could become an anytime challenge. We both went to their AGM; I kept a low profile and kept my mouth shut, Surprise, Surprise!! At the moment I have more than enough LDWA commitments as Local Groups Secretary. I was disappointed that the Kent Group was not represented at the Local Group

Representatives' Meeting, but I will send the Minutes to Bill so that the group are informed of any important details.

Sorry that we will not be able to get to the Family Lunch for the annual get together as planned, but we are both in jobs that do not allow us to take time off so close to Christmas. However, we will be down to Kent in March as Graeme and Vicki expect their first child then. We hope that we will be able to meet up with some of you then.

We wish you all a HAPPY CHRISTMAS and all the best of walking in the New Year.

All the best, from Paul and Mary.

PS. If anyone wants to come up and take part in the "Three Rings of Shap" walks we can provide accommodation for 2, some other members or the Cumbria Group have said that they can do likewise. STRICTLY FIRST COME FIRST SERVED.

Another Hawkhurst Horror.....led by Maurice Faircloth.

Well it was my first Hawkhurst Horror and I have had a super walk, mostly in territory unknown to me. For years before the M25, we used to go to Hampshire via Hawkhurst and today I have actually seen the lovely, rolling Kent countryside north of Hawkhurst.

I arrived early at the car park to such a hive of activity! Hawkhurst was on the move. The reason? – apparently every two weeks a refuse lorry/crusher is parked there and the locals deliver all their excesses which don't go in their wheelie bins. Quite entertaining and what a good idea.

Twelve of us left and we were soon on the footpath where we saw lots of fungi. Gordon collected several edible ones on Jean's instruction, so parasol mushrooms were to be his supper – a first for him. We joined the High Weald Landscape Trail at Benenden which we followed to Rolvenden where we had lunch. We found "The Star" a walker-friendly pub and even though Maurice recommended the Liver & Bacon, we mostly seem to settle for Fish Cakes, which quickly ran out and had to be deleted from the menu board. While there, another first – I was able to view the inside of Rolvenden Church. These days most are locked but I suppose being Sunday, I was lucky. A very nice stained glass window greets you when you enter.

From the church we wound our way back to Hawkhurst via Standen Street, The Paper Mill and Gun Green. Lovely views all the way. The paths and lanes had been good but several stiles and gates were booby-trapped. I think the area needs a footpath officer.

The last few social walks that I have been on have had new members joining us for the first time. That's very encouraging. I hope we made them welcome. On the other hand, I have missed some of the regulars that I used to see. Where are you all? Hope to catch up with you all at the AGM.

Liz Keeler.