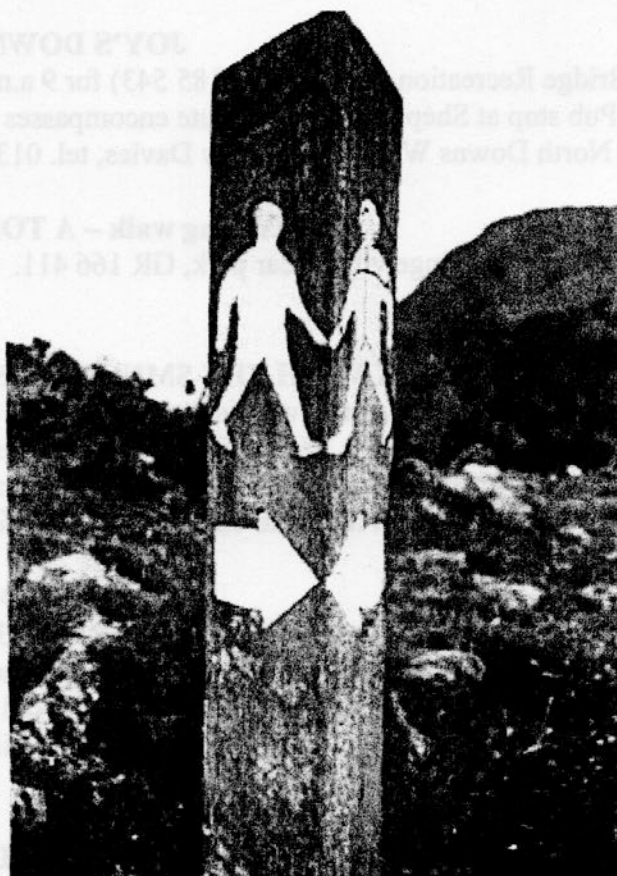


LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION — KENT GROUP

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

NEWSLETTER



Way mark post seen in Snowdonia.
Who said that we are not a friendly lot?



Number 66

April 2005

KENT LDWA WALKS PROGRAMME April to July 2005**Sunday 10th April****NOT THE WHITE CLIFFS 25**

C. 25 mile linear walk – Farthing Common (GR 136 404) to Mill Hill (GR 360 514)
Landranger 179. Start 8 a.m. – pub stop. Please contact leader for food details and travel arrangements. Leader: Gordon Harker, tel. [REDACTED]. *[This walk, together with that on 31st July, will cover the proposed route of our White Cliffs Challenge event to be held in October.]*

Sunday 24th April**CHILHAM CAPER**

C. 20 miles. Meet Chilham car park, (GR 066 536) at 9 a.m. Landranger 179, Explorer 137. Pub stop at Bossingham. Leader: Mike Pursey, tel. [REDACTED]

Sunday 8th May**ROGER'S WEALDEN WANDER**

C. 21 miles. Start at 8.30 a.m. at Frittenden. Park in front of the school, (GR 814 409)
Landranger 188, Explorer 137. Leader: Roger Munn, tel. [REDACTED]

Sunday 22nd May**JOY'S DOWNS VALLEY LINK**

C. 20 miles. Meet Bridge Recreation Ground (GR 185 543) for 9 a.m. start. Landranger 179, Explorer 150. Pub stop at Shepherdswell. Route encompasses both the Elham Valley Way and the North Downs Way. Leader: Joy Davies, tel. [REDACTED]

Friday 10th June**Evening walk – A TOLSFORD TODDLE**

6 miles. 6 pm start. Meet at Lyminge village car park, GR 166 411. Leader: Graham Smith, tel. [REDACTED]

Sunday 19th June**A WALK WITH THE SMUGGLERS – Marshals' Walk**

For those who can help on the main event. Two distances – 14 & 25 miles. Meet at Goudhurst Village hall (GR 722 376) at 8.30 a.m. for the 25 ml route and at 10.00 a.m. for the 14 ml route. Parking nearby. Please contact Neal or Jan O'Rourke on [REDACTED] by 12th June at the latest, if you intend to enter. *See page 2 for entry details.*

Sunday 26th June**LOW WEALD WALK**

C. 18 miles. Meet Tenterden, on green near traffic lights (GR 886 334). Public car parks at £5 per day are plentiful, but there is free parking on Sundays on the A28 from the south west and on roads to the left, just before the centre. Parking near old Rail Station. Landranger 189, Explorer 125/137. 9 a.m. start. Pub stop, food available. Leader: Ernie Bishop, tel. [REDACTED]

Sunday 10th July**A WALK WITH THE SMUGGLERS – Main Event**

See Future Events in Strider.

Saturday 16th July**BOULOGNE TO CALAIS**

c. 31 miles. Meet Dover Eastern Docks at 7am to catch ferry to Calais, then train to Boulogne. Walk back to Calais to catch approx. 11 pm ferry to Dover. (Possible arrangements for using car(s) for crossing are being discussed) For details contact Graham Smith, tel. [REDACTED]

Wednesday 20th July**TROSLEY EVENING WALK**

C. 7 miles. Meet 7 p.m. at the George Inn car park, Trottscliffe (GR 641 599)
Landranger 188. Leader: Ivan Waghorn, tel. [REDACTED]

Sunday 31st July**CLIFF TOP TROUPE**

C. 25 miles. Mill Hill (GR 360 514) to Farthing Common (GR 136 404). Landranger 179. Start 8 a.m. – pub stop. Please contact leader for food details and travel arrangements. Leader: Gordon Harker, tel. [REDACTED] *[This walk, together with that on 10th April, will cover the proposed route of our White Cliffs Challenge event to be held in October.]*

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.....Bryan Clarke....

Gordon Harker...

Mick Sullivan....

em

Keith Warman...

er

Duncan Brice...(

Social Walks Programme.....Mike Pursey.....(

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

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

em

A WALK WITH THE SMUGGLERS – Marshals' Walk, Sunday 19th June.

This is for those who are willing to help on the day of the main event. There will be three checkpoints on the 25 mile route and one on the 14 mile route.

Entries: - Please use the official entry forms but mark them "Marshals" and send them to Jan O'Rourke at [REDACTED]

Closing date is 12th June

ENTRY FEES – 14 miles..... £2.00

25 miles..... £2.50

CHRISTMAS on the SEVENOAKS TWENTY ROUTE.....Bill Gillibrand

Early on Tuesday, 28th December, seven hardy souls joined Brian Buttifant at the Weald Scout Hut to walk off the excesses of the Christmas break. There had been torrential rain overnight but the day dawned bright and sunny without a cloud, though barely above freezing. Those from the outback areas of Kent reported having occasional ice patches on the road but the general impression was of an awful lot of water lying around.

Once we set off, the presence of water was soon confirmed with conditions underfoot being decidedly squelchy. Only one ploughed field was encountered in the morning to give a thick coating of mud to our boots. Even so, it was a very soggy mud and not the pull-your-boots-off type that we frequently encounter. For most of the morning Brian led from the back while Liz Keeler forged ahead, working only from an amazing memory. On occasion, deficiencies in the route description from last year were discussed at some length. On the exposed ridges the wind has a distinctly icy feel to it.

Because of the soggy conditions, progress was not fast but we arrived at Wetherspoon's in Sevenoaks shortly after 12 noon. Being a weekday, the pub had obviously been open for some time and we were unfortunate to have a large group ordering food just ahead of us. As a result, service was slower than we had hoped so that we were not under way again until 1.20pm. With 10 miles still to cover and sunset at 3.59pm, we were somewhat behind schedule.

Liz having relinquished the lead, Brian took the initiative to make some tactical changes by short-circuiting Shipbourne and using the roads rather more to help speed our progress. The cold but bright weather stayed with us all day, so sunset did not immediately bring darkness. In fact, the twilight lingered long enough for us to arrive back at the Weald Scout Hut with just enough light, without torches, at 4.35pm and with clear consciences for having worked off all the Christmas pudding.

NEW YEAR on the SOUTH DOWNS.....Graham Smith

FOURTEEN LDWA members, a few bravely trying to disguise hangovers, met at Eastbourne on January 1st for the New Year on the South Downs walk. Seven of us were from the Kent group; the others were from Sussex, Surrey and London groups. The idea for the walk actually came from Neal O'Rourke. I had arranged to put on a New Year's Day walk and Neal requested one on the South Downs, as he and Jan were planning to celebrate their wedding anniversary in the Alfriston area and they said they would like to join us. In the event Neal and Jan were not there, as they decided to spend their anniversary on Exmoor instead (but I won't hold it against you, Neal - we had a great day, so thanks for the idea).

So just after 9 a.m. we 14 briskly set off from the sign marking the start of the South Downs Way at the end of Eastbourne promenade. The walk climbs immediately and it's quite steep, which tends to be a pretty good cure for hangovers. From Beachy Head the views of the coast and of the South Downs ahead were great, and we were all glad we had made the effort to do the walk. After Birling Gap came the Seven Sisters (I am sure there must be nine of them - if not more!) They are, of course, hard going, but it must be said they are easier to walk on a cold January morning than on a baking afternoon in late August - which was the last time some of us had been over them, on the Sussex Stride.

After the last of the Sisters we dropped down into the delightful Cuckmere Valley, and followed the riverside path to Alfriston, instead of taking the South Downs Way via Westdean. It was a nice contrast to the Seven Sisters, albeit a rather muddy one. We had lunch at the extremely pleasant Star Inn, where a very welcome open fire and slow service at the bar meant we stayed there well over an hour (well, that's my excuse!) and we left at 1.45pm to follow the river and then across fields to Milton Street, from where the long, steep ascent of Windover Hill began. At the top, we went on to Wilmington Hill - a much better route than the South Downs Way one, with good open walking and excellent views. Then we dropped down to reach Jevington via tracks and paths, which just before the village, took us past a field of llamas.

After Jevington came the gradual, easy ascent of Bourne Hill, and with about four miles to go the rain, which had been forecast to hit the South of England by late afternoon, caught up with us. To say it was heavy is like saying the LDWA is for people who like walking long distances. The rain wasn't just heavy, it was blown by a gale-force wind and came at us horizontally. While the South Downs are undoubtedly glorious, they are also exposed, so it wasn't long before we were all well and truly soaked. All we could do was button up our waterproofs, grit our teeth, put our heads down and march on - and on.

Luckily, the rain stopped half a mile from Eastbourne, which meant that changing into dry clothes for the drive home wasn't as uncomfortable as it could have been. We got back at 4.50pm, before it was completely dark.

Despite the rigours of the last few miles, it was a very enjoyable day, which made it a fine start to 2005 for us all. Shame you weren't there, Neal and Jan - but I suppose celebrating a wedding anniversary is a good excuse, so I'll let you off.

GROUP NIGHT WALK Friday 7th January Jill Green

It was about 1990 when I last did a Kent Group night walk. I really enjoyed it, but I have no idea where we walked or how many took part. However, I do remember the amazing collection of antique bottles displayed in the Lowe household. Digging interesting bottles from the Thames mud was Laurie's hobby before he took up long distance walking. He must still like collecting things - I seem to remember a set of toenails set in plastic or perhaps I was dreaming. Night walking does funny things to the brain.

The weather forecast for the night of January 7th was terrible - rain and gale-force winds. Nevertheless, a dozen oddly dressed people met up at the pub at Trottiscliffe in good time for a social chat and drink before the 10.30 p.m. start. My husband Dave came for the drink and chat. He could not contemplate the night walk followed by the Winter Tanners and he could only drink a small amount of weak beer because of the driving. I promised to take him out for a meal and a good beer on Saturday.

Ivan Waghorn was a very good leader, keeping us all together. He embellished the walk with tales of ghosts and wolf attacks in the wilds of the remote Kent woods. Ghosts and wolves were not of great concern but the creaking and crashing of trees in the strong winds were rather more unnerving.

We walked past the checkpoint that Dave and I had helped to run with the Wessex Group on the Invicta Hundred. Appropriately, Ivan and I were wearing our maroon Invicta 100

sweatshirts. I had walked the Marshals' walk with Ivan and now he kept saying "You must remember this bit Jill." I could have said "Oh yes, I remember it well!" but I told the truth, which was that I had no memory of it at all. That was 13 years ago and we did not meet any ghosts or wolves on that occasion either. Anyway, one wood looks much like any other in the dark.

I do not know how many LDWA groups put on social night walks. It really is great fun and it would be nice to hear reports from other groups.

P.S. - I *did* take Dave out on Saturday for a meal – well, it was better than cooking! We did the Tanners on Sunday – me the 30 and Dave the 20. We started at the same time but he had to sit in the car for 2½ hours until I finished. I think this was because there were no nice, warm checkpoints for him to settle in.

THE PUNCHBOWL MARATHON, DEJA-VU?.....Keith Warman

This year's event (on Sunday 13th February) was the 37th, which must make it one of the longest surviving in the LDWA calendar. Surrey Group offered a straightforward formula of a traditional challenge walk in lovely surroundings with a choice of routes - 20 or 30 miles. I chose to do the 30-mile route knowing that it would bring back feelings of deja-vu for me at several points around the course.

An early alarm call in Kent was necessary to make the 7:30am start at Chichester Hall, Witley and it was nice to see familiar faces, some of whom I can remember from when I first took up this challenge in 1982.

It was raining lightly as I set off and the first section of the route was the reverse of the last section of the Surrey Summits in 1982-84. After crossing Lower House Drive, I descended some ancient ragstone steps by an equally ancient ragstone wall. How I remember struggling up these towards the end of the Summits all those years ago, when I was still in short trousers! Near Bedford Farm, I remember years ago seeing a helicopter's landing pad but there was no sign of it now.

The sun came out after checkpoint 1 at Little Cowdray Farm, and I lengthened my stride along the bottom of the Devil's Punchbowl on a track used by this event before. I passed the delightful Gnome Cottage, which was used as a checkpoint on the Summits around 1989. Then, its tiny front room housed old sofas and a blazing log fire to warm my bones; this oasis was very difficult to leave at 4 am with about 55 miles in the bag.

The track around the Punchbowl's rim and down the western side was familiar from previous excursions and a sudden snow blizzard hit me. It lasted about twenty minutes. I recalled times past in the night when my toes kicked hidden rocks in the depths of the gullies. My route up to the trig point on Kettlebury Hill reminded me of floundering through the sandy heaths, with paths in all directions, trying to locate the secret trig point in darkness on the Summits. In those days, you had to find it, as there were questions to answer on the way round!

The airy ridge towards Tilford was used for army manoeuvres and I can recollect hearing night-time firing in days of yore and hoping they weren't aiming at the walkers... The hall at Tilford and Crooksbury Hill brought back more memories of my nocturnal sorties on the Summits. More sandy heathland tracks led to Warren Cottage on the edge of Puttenham Common. There was always a concealed bog (not a public convenience-type!) next to the cottage, which I rarely managed to avoid. The Common was an easy place in which to become mislaid from your route (which I have done several times) but this daylight crossing showed its delights to the fore.

In Puttenham village the shop, which once stayed open through the night to serve passing Summiteers, had sadly closed down and this year's Punchbowl didn't pass the bus shelter where I had an hour's sleep in 1984!

And so to Elstead. Ah, I remember the open brazier that used to warm us at the "outdoor" checkpoint on the Summits. Now, however, after the last checkpoint on Elstead Common, I followed sandy tracks used on many previous Punchbowls, back across the A3 to return to Witley past the church.

This was a splendid walk and one that was well worth that early morning alarm call. Thank you for the déjà vu, Surrey Group.

Annual General Meeting

Sunday 30th January

This year's AGM was preceded by a walk of about 7 miles, led by Mike Pursey and visiting The Pulpit, a great viewpoint in Perrywood. The walkers arrived back at Chilham Village Hall in time to scrape off most of the mud before sitting down to a very tasty lunch prepared by Gordon Harker, ably assisted by Mike Sullivan.

The meeting was attended by 28 members. The elected group officers and committee members are listed on page 2 of this newsletter, together with their contact details. The minutes of the meeting are included with this newsletter.

A Walk with the Smugglers – starting from Goudhurst, with distances of 25 and 14 miles. The main event is on 10th July. A Marshals' walk will be held on 19th June – see page 2 for more detail. Offers of help on the main event to Neal O'Rourke please.

White Cliffs 50 – the date of this replacement for the Wealden Waters Walk, will be 8/9 October, with a marshals' walk held over the weekend of the 10/11 September. Plenty of help will be needed to make these events a success, so put the dates in your diary and come forward with an offer to assist. Gordon Harker is to lead two 25 mile, linear walks over the proposed route, the first on 10th April and the second on 31st July. See Walks Programme for details.

ARE YOU INTERESTED in a group badge for your favourite sweatshirt or tee shirt? The committee are looking into the possibility of having a new badge design put onto a CD. This would allow the design to be applied to almost any garment when used through a suitable supplier. If you are interested in this prospect, and would like the idea to go ahead, please let committee members know.

Q and A Session.....A man walks into a public toilet in Sydney where he finds two cubicles. One is already occupied so he enters the other one, closes the door and sits down. A voice then comes from the cubicle next to him: "G'day, mate, how are you doing?"

Thinking this a bit strange but not wanting to be rude, the guy replies: "Yeh, not too bad, thanks." After a short pause, he hears the voice again: "So, what are you up to, mate?" Again answering reluctantly but unsure what to say, he replies: "Um, I'm just having a ...you know.... How about yourself?" He then hears the voice for the third time: "Sorry, mate, I'll have to call you back – I've got some idiot next to me answering all me questions."

MORE FROM THE NORTH..... *Paul & Mary*

I thought the idea was to spend time walking in the Lakeland hills, but just recently, when I have not been keeping up with "Local Groups" business, I seem to have been called to the Co-op to cover for those that are off sick. Both Mary and I were expected to do extra shifts over the Christmas period, and this was followed by extra work removing the stock - damaged due to the power cuts, caused by the floods - and then having to replace it with the fresh stock.

I did however manage one social walk with Cumbria Group, Lambley to Alston and back along the South Tyne Trail. We walked on frozen ground covered with a light dusting of snow. The route to Alston was a switchback up and down the valley side and with the brisk pace set I found the going tough. After a lunch stop on the platform at Alston station (watching all the coming and going of parents and children on the Santa Special), it was back alongside the track and then the old rail line all the way back to Lambley. Cold, but not a cloud in sight all day. We still try to walk with the Brampton Fell Walkers on Wednesdays and have had a number of good winter walks with them in the hills, especially picturesque when the snow has been on the tops.

Our new year's resolution was to attempt to complete the 214 Wainwrights in the main guides and to take on the other 102 listed in the outlying fells where practical. It is my intention to record this with a digital camera, and then download to disk (sounds easy!) if I can get the modern technology to work. We made a start on 23rd February; our first summit was Arthur's Pike 1747ft completed in the snow with the fell walking group. We will keep you up to date with our attempt and hope that as the computer skills develop we will be able to send some pictures.

I write this at the beginning of March as we are about to leave for Kent, we would have liked to be around for the Sevenoaks, but need to be at the National AGM to deal with Local Groups and 100 Sub-Committee Business. Pleased to hear that the group is to stage the White Cliffs in October. We will see if we can get down to it, but no promises. Keep up the good work and we hope that we may see some of you up in this part of the country when the weather improves.

LOCAL GROUPS REPRESENTATIVES MEETINGS

Paul continues to keep me informed of these meetings (through Bill Gillibrand). Here are some of the points discussed:-

INSURANCE

I have received a number of requests and queries regarding Insurance cover for events organised by organisations outside the LDWA, but wishing to link themselves to the local LDWA group in order to obtain insurance cover. I feel that the situation needs clarifying.

Put simply it is:

- (a) Entry forms state. Organised by LDWA group
- (b) Venues and checkpoint bookings are made by LDWA group
- (c) Entry fees and all other finances go through the LDWA group.

This does not affect other organisations helping with the organisation and running of an event, or that the funds generated cannot be distributed to those organisation.

If you have, or know an organisation that wishes to **run its own event**, we have a contact within the LDWA that can provide details of an alternative insurance where they can get cover at a reasonable rate.

Evening Walks

Some groups have included a large number of short evening walks in their programmes this time. Although these are valuable in many ways, they are unlikely to attract walkers from outside the group area and are thus best kept to Local Group Newsletters and Websites. Because of their limited interest and because of the constraints of space, details of these walks are not to be included in April Strider. Many groups that have evening walks mention them in their preamble with an invitation to contact the group secretary for details and an appropriate sentence will be inserted where necessary. Shortage of space has also meant that late August and September walks have had to be "chopped". I hope that this is acceptable. It could be a topic to have on the agenda at the Local groups Representatives Meeting in October!

Overnight Events

One point of concern has been the lack of time and sleeping arrangements for late finishers (and helpers) on overnight events, particularly Hundreds. In view of recent events, as well as making space available, the wording on final details should be stronger, i.e. "IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU HAVE ADEQUATE REST BEFORE DRIVING".

Membership:-

The committee as a whole is committed to trying to increase membership. This is where you, the groups can help. Please use your spare Striders for this purpose by placing them in the local Library, dentist's, doctor's or heath club, or send to Local Press, TV or Radio Station. Membership forms can be distributed to B&Bs on long distance paths and T.I. Centres. I am following up the idea (again from the LGRM) of business cards for group members to carry and give out to those interested in our activities. Come on, let's all make the extra effort to increase our active membership.

YOUR GROUP NEEDS YOU!

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO REMIND YOU THAT HELPERS WILL BE NEEDED FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENTS:-

Chiltern Hundred – we need enough people to provide three shifts on the Group's checkpoint. Whitsun weekend – offers to Trevor Blake or Neil Higham in Trevor's absence.

A Walk with the Smugglers – the 14 and 25 mile routes will have a total of four checkpoints which will need to be manned. Offers of help to Jan & Neal.

White Cliffs 50 – this will have 6 or 7 checkpoints. Contact details for offers of help to be announced later. Pauline Barnett is the Entries Secretary.

ARE YOU ON EMAIL?

Under this heading, an appeal was made in August to try sending out the Newsletter by email. The replies came flooding in – from as many as **two** members, and so the experiment was abandoned. Nevertheless, I suspect that at least two thirds of the Kent Group has access to email and it could prove useful on occasions.

I occasionally receive notices and correspondence that would be of general interest but the only sensible means of contact is this Newsletter, which can mean a delay of three or four months. A simple recent example is that the grid for the crossword in the December Strider was wrong and I was sent the corrected one. I refrained from the hassle of printing many copies, addressing envelopes and costly postage but the corrected grid was sent to those on email with a few keystrokes in a matter of minutes. If most of the group could be dealt with by email then it becomes reasonable to inform the few remaining by snail mail so that nobody is left out.

Not everyone wishes to publicise their email address and with good reason. Group mailings will therefore be sent without making the addresses available to the other recipients. In the past, some addresses have been given in the membership list that is sent with the December Newsletter, but I would not propose to add to them unless specifically asked.

Having said all that, I hope to hear from you to help improve communication within the group. Just send an email to **ldwakent@btopenworld.com** and don't forget to give your name if it is not apparent from the address.

Many thanks,

Bill Gillibrand

WINTER ALONG THE WEALDWAYKeith Warman

Graham Smith and Mike Pursey arranged a winter jaunt along the Wealdway on four Sundays between January and March. Shirly and I had walked this route (separately and alone in 1994 and 1989 respectively), so we thought that we would join Graham and Mike and rekindle some memories.

The first stage was from the Tollgate hotel (beside the A2) to West Peckham, this being about 17 miles. Having sorted out the transport arrangements, we set off and soon left the drone of the main road to be striding across the downland on a fair morning. A steep drop into the hamlet of Luddesdown was followed by a refreshment break in the sunlit churchyard. The lady vicar wished us well and like a string of amber pearls, we crossed the curved valley known as the "bowling alley", which was spared twenty years ago from the threat of the MOD's mine-laying exercises.

After a couple of unscheduled stops, we slithered through Whitehorse Wood - on the crest of the North Downs - in deep mud, conditions which some might have described as unpleasant but which Tim Glenn, the keeper of the LDWA's merchandise, would say were "rather sporting"! The scarp was descended and the paths were surprising dry as the Coldrum Stone and Ryarsh Wood were passed. After Addington quarry, we dived under the M20 amidst glutinous wet sand. Later than anticipated, the lunchtime stop was taken at the Royal Oak at Wrotham Heath.

The climb to the Greensand ridge through Platt and Mereworth Woods was gentle and the dryness underfoot was quite noticeable. From Gover Hill, the views of the Weald and towards the

Medway valley were misty and the last mile to West Peckham was also part of the Greensand Way. The 12 of us arrived just before darkness fell.

The second stage was 22 miles to Ball's Green and the temperature was cold for the 8 brave souls present. The landscape was flat and included old hop gardens, orchards and sheep pastures. We soon joined the River Medway, which was followed (carefully avoiding anglers' equipment) for six miles to Tonbridge. We passed Hartlake Bridge, which was the scene of a terrible tragedy in 1853. The old wooden bridge collapsed after heavy rain as a horse-drawn wagon full of hop-pickers was crossing it. The whole ensemble fell into the river and thirty people were drowned.

Our peaceful riverside saunter ended in Tonbridge, where the contents of a boys' rugby club was leaving as we strolled through. After Haysden, our gallant leaders had the pub in Bidborough in their minds as we took the steady climb up to the Bidborough ridge in our strides. The afternoon quickly turned superbly sunny as our undulating route led us through Modest Corner and Speldhurst to a rest stop at Fordcombe cricket pitch. Only the sound of leather on willow and old duffers exclaiming, "Well played" was missing.

After Stone Cross, we ambled along the 300' contour, with enchanting views, to drop abruptly into the upper Medway valley. The Sussex Border Path and London - Uckfield railway line were crossed and, on a near-perfect winter late afternoon, clear footpaths led us to Ball's Green just as the watery sun dropped below the horizon. Here, Keith had managed in the morning to direct the cars onto a muddy verge to park. "But it's usually bone dry in the summer" was his feeble excuse.

Stage three began bitterly cold but it failed to prevent seven hardy souls reporting for the 19-mile section up and over Ashdown Forest, then through typically-Wealden terrain of farmland, woods and streams. From Withyham, we soon warmed up on the long climb past Fisher's Gate and up the meandering track through Five Hundred Acre Wood. Once onto the open forest, the keenness of the wind was felt but, again, the paths were dry.

A rest was taken at Camp Hill, from where Graham, Shirly, Kay and Alan managed to sneak away quietly leaving Roger, Mike and Keith to find their own way! The two parties eventually met at Buxted Park, where the drinking faction decided to try their lunchtime luck at the posh hotel. Having had the pleasure of forking out £14 for four halves of beer, they shot outside to meet a surprised Keith and Shirly, who were quietly munching their sandwiches. The beer mongers announced that they intended to go off-route to Uckfield for cheaper fare. The two alfresco strollers decided to continue along the route, fully expecting to be caught up by the fearsome five. The attractions of said fair town must have been good for, despite Keith and Shirly's slow progress through Blackboys with distant views of the South Downs to whet their appetites, they arrived back at East Hoathly twenty minutes before the others. A cold but thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all.

By the time you read this, dear reader, the fourth and final stage (23 miles to Eastbourne) will have happened and you will have to quiz those who took part just how long the celebratory dip in the English Channel lasted!

On behalf of all who have taken part, but in particular those who managed to be ever-present, thank you to Graham and Mike for organising such wonderful walks on the Wealdway, the South-East's own Coast to Coast.

Would A Wooing Go..... A frog telephones a Psychic Hotline and is told, "You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you." The frog says, "This is great! Will I meet her at a party or what?" "No" says the psychic, "Next term, in her biology class."

WHITE CLIFFS FIFTY**Bill Gillibrand**

The Southern Triple Challenge was instituted in 1989 and consisted of three 60 mile events, being the Three Forests Way (Essex & Herts.), the Surrey Summits and our own Wealden Waters Walk, all to be completed in an unbroken sequence. That came to an end in 2003 when the Surrey group decided to discontinue the Summits and replace it with a 50-mile event called the Surrey Tops that would be held alternately with the Punchbowl Marathon.

The Wealden Waters Walk proceeded as usual in that year but proved difficult to organise and did not attract such enthusiastic support as in the past. Accordingly it was felt that it had come to the end of its time and was not held in 2004. That left rather an empty period in the Group for the latter part of the year and there was felt to be the need for a replacement.

Thoughts turned to the Millennium Hundred and the former White Cliffs Challenge that had proved popular, in spite of being so remote from the rest of the country. Thanks largely to the efforts of Gordon Harker, a route was devised in the east of our area, taking advantage of past experience and omitting the unfortunate need to walk in a dishevelled state through the built up centre of Canterbury. This replacement was cut from 60 miles and the result was the White Cliffs Fifty which will be held on 8th & 9th October this year. It will start and finish in Deal at the Betteshanger Sports Club.

Arrangements are well in hand and an advertisement with a photographic splash should appear inside the cover of the April edition of Strider. The Marshals' event will be held on the weekend of 10th & 11th September. As a 50-mile event, it will of course be suitable as a qualifier for the next hundred, so get ready and watch out for further details.

FOOTPATH PROBLEMS - Shirley Higgins reports the following changes to West Kent PROW Officers:-

Colin Finch has replaced Debbie Adams for Sevenoaks parishes.

Jenny Searle has replaced Paul Smith for Tonbridge & Malling parishes.

Long-term members of the Group will be saddened to hear of the death of
HAROLD MANN on 11th October 2004, at the age of 84.

Harold was once a very active member of the Group and was for many years heavily involved with the Swale Footpath Group. In 1982, he completed the Tour du Mont Blanc and reported his experiences in one of the first issues of the newsletter. He was a member of the 1992 Invicta Hundred organising committee.

The Ridgeway Walk was a favourite of his and he completed it on many occasions. At one time, he had an arrangement with a publican whose establishment was situated near the finish: it was that anyone over the age of 65, who successfully completed the walk, should be given 1 pint of ale at Harold's expense.

An Update from Keith Warman:-

I was interested to read about Kent's windmills in the December Newsletter. As part of my paid employment, I have been assisting KCC with their refurbishment programme for the last six years. You might like to know that Peter Cobley (he was a Principal Conservation Officer!) retired on 4th October 2004. The person in charge of windmills now is Dr. John Williams, Head of Heritage Conservation (telephone number [REDACTED]). Chillenden windmill was blown down in a freak gale and is now stored in pieces in a millwright's workshop in Berkshire. It is planned to rebuild it on the original site during 2005.

POSTSCRIPT**Andrew Melling**

I was saddened to learn in the December newsletter of the death of Phil and his wife in July.

Not having been a 100 miler or a race walker, my recollections are more mundane. In the early years, our membership had a bias towards north west Kent, Bexley and Bromley. We had some suburban evening walks including, in 1978, the Eltham Well Hall Corridor Walk. (It never caught on.) Phil led us through some of the leafier parts of south east London finishing through Grove Park and Elmstead Woods to refreshments at his house across the road from the pond. He told us of his work as one of the team conserving the pond. He was not shy of explaining in some detail his evening training route down through Poverest and up on to the ridge on the east side of the Cray Valley. Not content with walking to Chislehurst Station in the morning, he walked to the next station on the line and then the one after that. Eventually, if my memory serves me well, he walked the whole distance from Chislehurst to his office in town, thus maintaining an enviable fitness.

He was the most memorable of friends.

Editor's Note:- I have received a card with this message from Phil's daughter:-

"Thank you very much for sending me a copy of the newsletter and please thank everyone else for their kind words. It means a lot to me to know how well they were liked and how much they will be missed."

Juliette Hastings.

Sevenoaks Marshals' Walk**Tom Sinclair**

Seventeen brave souls ventured forth at 8 o'clock on the very cold Sunday morning of 6th March and all finished the various distances attempted. Mike Pursey, Graham Smith, Gordon Harker and Roger Munn did the 30 mile route; Ernie Bishop, Mick Sullivan & Janet Phyll, Dave Sheldrake, Eileen & Mark Kelly, Bill Gillibrand, Brian Buttifant and Ann and Toni - two recently-joined ladies - did the 20 miler; Laurie Lowe and Shirley Higgins (the wrinklies) and Bryan Clarke and Tom Sinclair (the grizzlies) the 14.7 mile route. The last two had just struggled up a steep tarmac track near the finish when a fast-moving Dave Sheldrake loomed up behind them.

My thanks to Bryan C. for keeping me company on my first event for a long time and I am sure Toni & Ann were grateful to Brian B. who 'shepherded' them through the latter stages of the 20, as well as organising things generally. Thanks also to Brenda B. who, with Brian's friend Bob, fed us drinks and biscuits in a drafty field at the back of Shipbourne Church; to Ann & Ivan Waghorn (not to mention Polly) who regaled us at Weald Scout Hut and later at Ide Hill Cricket pavilion; and to Neil Higham who came out to Gaywood Farm, for which Brian had pencilled me in until I told him, at the AGM, that I wished to try the short route.

Kent Air Ambulance

This worthwhile service receives no Government funding and it is supported solely by local fund-raising. Kent Group has made donations at various times over the years and will be doing so again in the Rose & Crown, Wrotham, at about 9 p.m. on Thursday 7th April when a much larger cheque will be presented by the Landlord, Alan Bradshaw. Alan hopes that there will be media representatives about, so it would be good to have a liberal sprinkling of members (preferably wearing LDWA gear of some sort) to tell them and the Air Ambulance people about what we are and what we do. If you can't make the usual pub meet on Monday 4th (or even if you can) come along on the 7th.

SUSSEX STRIDE - 30 & 50 miles.

27th/28th August 2005

REVISED 50 MILE ROUTE - SEE THE FABULOUS SUSSEX DOWNS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE!

Outgrowing the Marathon distance?

Ready to 'move up' but feel that 50 miles may still be too much?

Then why not give our new 30 MILE EVENT a try?

Making use of the same facilities in Rottingdean as the 50 mile event, the route traverses the challenging South Downs to the east and south of the old county town of Lewes. Four checkpoints offer support and sustenance - the time limit is 10 hours.

THE OBJECT

To complete a journey of about 50 miles in 20 hours, or 30 miles in 10 hours, over downland, bridle ways and footpaths, passing through a number of checkpoints in the correct sequence and within the opening and closing times.

For full information and an entry form SAE to:

SHIRLEY GREENWOOD



Or visit our website: www.wilen.fsnet.co.uk/SussexLDWA

The Standard Entry Form may be used.

THE OXON WALKS

Saturday 7th May 2005. 40 or 20 miles in 13 hours.

From the YMCA SPORTS PAVILION, Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames. OS 175 GR766815

Start - 7.00 to 9.15 a.m.

Organised by Thames Valley Group.

Entry forms available from ldwa.org.uk/thamesvalley or SAE to Avril Stapleton,

Bill Gillibrand has copies of entry forms for this event.

WAHT MITSKAE?

Aoccdrnig to rseeacrh at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist an lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a tatol mses and you can sitll raed it. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Bdooly amzanig huh?

Byran Crakle.

My Spell Check has just displayed the following message "Bguger this, I'm ehasxuted!" – Editor.

TECH SUPPORT

Dear Tech Support

Last year I upgraded from Boyfriend 5.0 to Husband 1.0 and noticed a distinct slow down in overall system performance - particularly in the Flower and Jewellery applications, which operated flawlessly under Boyfriend 5.0. In addition, Husband 1.0 uninstalled many other valuable programs such as Romance 9.5 and Personal Attention 6.5, and then installed undesirable programs such as Football 5.0, Cricket 3.0 and Golf Clubs 18. Conversation 8.0 no longer runs, and Housecleaning 2.6 simply crashes the system. I've tried running Nagging 5.3 to fix these problems, but to no avail.

What can I do?

Signed..... Desperate.

Dear Desperate:

First keep in mind, Boyfriend 5.0 is an Entertainment Package, while Husband is an Operating System. Please enter the command: "<http://www.IThoughtyouLovedMe.html>" and try to download Tears 6.2 and don't forget to install the Guilt 3.0 update.

If that application works as designed. Husband 1.0 should then automatically run the applications Jewellery 2.0 and Flowers 3.5. But remember, overuse of the above application can cause Husband 1.0 to default to Grumpy Silence 2.5. Happy Hour 7.0. or Beer 6.1. Beer 6.1 is a very bad program that will download the Snoring Loudly Beta.

Whatever you do, DO NOT install Mother-in-law 1.0 (it runs a virus in the background, that will eventually seize control of all your system resources) Also do not attempt to reinstall the Boyfriend 5.0 program. These are unsupported applications and will crash Husband 1.0.

In summary, Husband 1.0 is a great program, but it does have limited memory and cannot learn new applications quickly. You might consider buying additional software to improve memory and performance. We recommend Hot Food 3.0 and Lingerie 7.7.

Good Luck

Tech Support.

Please send your News, Articles, Reports, Gossip, Secret Desires, Ambitions, etc, etc, to

Laurie Lowe, [REDACTED] for publication in the next Group Newsletter.