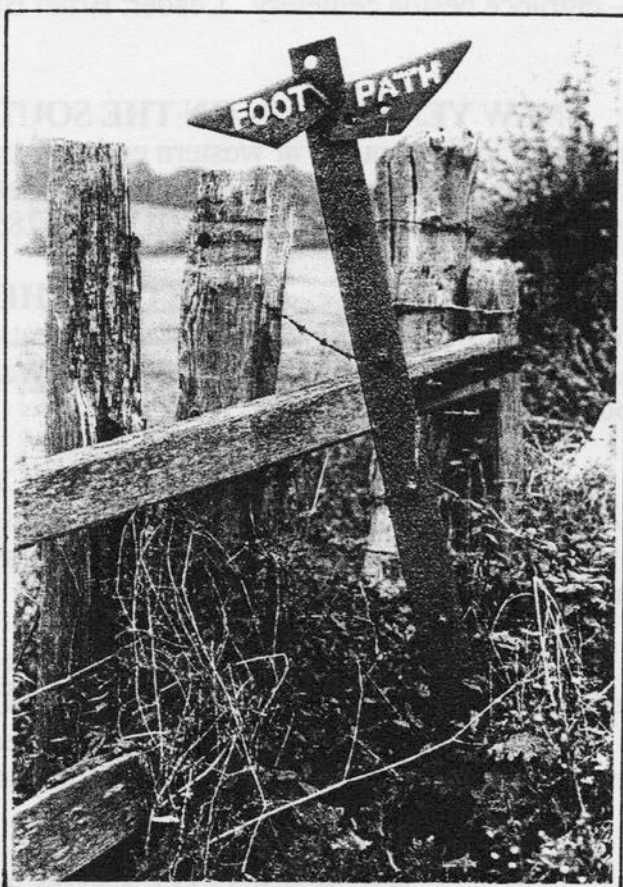


LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION — KENT GROUP

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

NEWSLETTER



See page 3



Number 71

December 2006

KENT GROUP SOCIAL WALKS PROGRAMME

December 2006 - April 2007

Sat 9th Dec CHRISTMAS CRUISE AROUND CALAIS-ENCORE UNE FOIS. c. 14mls. Calais to Escalles & return. Meet by SeaFrance desk, Dover Eastern Docks at 7.30am. for 8.15am. sailing. Ring SeaFrance reservations on 08705 711 711 for foot passenger day return. Don't forget your passport! Ring Graham Smith for more details on [REDACTED].
NOTE: Possible crossing by CAR/FERRY. Please contact Graham.

Fri 29th Dec SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR GROUP WALK

20 miles on the route of the event to be held in March. Start 8 am. at Weald Scout Hut (GR 531 513) Pub stop in Sevenoaks. Parking at Scout Hut – entrance beside cemetery. Leader: Brian Buttifant, [REDACTED]

Mon 1st Jan NEW YEAR AGAIN ON THE SOUTH DOWNS. c.20mls. Meet 9am. in Eastbourne at western end of promenade(B2103) by South Downs Way marker post, GR600972. Park near school on left. Pub stop. Leader: Graham Smith. Tel: [REDACTED]

Fri 5th Jan A NIGHT ON THE TERRACE. c.20mls. Meet 9.30pm. for 10.30pm. start at the Wheatsheaf PH, Kemsing. Landranger 188, GR555587. Leader Ivan Waghorn. Tel: [REDACTED]

Sun 21st Jan HIGH WEALD LANDSCAPE TRAIL, 1
Rye – Rolvenden, c.16.5mls. Meet Rolvenden Church(GR 845312) at 8.30am. to arrange cars before driving to Rye. Pub stop. Ring Graham Smith for more details on [REDACTED]

Sun 28th Jan KENT GROUP A.G.M.
This will be held at Etchinghill Village Hall (GR 167393) Meeting to commence at 2.00pm. This will be preceded by a short walk of 6/7mls. (start 10am.) and a free buffet lunch. See enclosed form.

Sun 25th Feb HIGH WEALD LANDSCAPE TRAIL, 2
Rolvenden – Brenchley, c.17mls. Meet Brenchley Church (GR679418) at 8.30am. to arrange cars. Pub stop. Ring Graham Smith for more details on [REDACTED]

Sun 25th Feb SEVENOAKS OUTCROPS WALK
c.10mls. Start 10am. from One Tree Hill car park GR559532 (Landranger 188). Finish about 4pm. No pub stop, bring packed lunch. Short in length, plenty of incident. Leader: Martyn Berry. Tel: [REDACTED]

Sun 4th Mar SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR – Marshals' Walk.
Contact Brian Buttifant for details on [REDACTED]

Sun 11th Mar**HIGH WEALD LANDSCAPE TRAIL, 3**

Brenchley – Withyham, c.20mls. Meet Withyham Church (GR493357) at 8.30am. to arrange cars. Pub stop. Ring Graham Smith for more details on [REDACTED]

Sun 18th Mar **SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR- MAIN EVENT**

See Events Diary in Strider for details.

Sun 25th Mar**HIGH WEALD LANDSCAPE TRAIL, 4**

Withyham – Ardingly, c.17.5mls. Meet Ardingly Post Office (GR 348297) at 9am. to arrange cars. Pub stop. Ring Graham Smith for more details on [REDACTED]

Sun 1st Apr**ROYAL STROLL 2**

c.20mls. Meet at Harrietsham Station (GR 867529. Landranger 189, Explorer 148) for 8.30am. start. We plan to pause briefly at the two trees planted in White Horse Wood in memory of Peter Barnett. We will then continue on to Eyethorne (c. 11mls) for the Pub stop - food available. Contact leaders nearer the day for confirmation of details. Leaders: Neal & Jan O'Rourke. Tel: [REDACTED]. E-mail: [REDACTED]

Fri 6th Apr**ANOTHER SOUTH DOWNS WAY LOOP**

(Good Friday) c.26mls (or 20 alternative). Meet at Eastbourne, western end of seafront (B2103) at South Downs Way marker post (GR 600972). Pub stop (or two!). Leader: Graham Smith. Tel: [REDACTED].

Sun 8th Apr**HIGH WEALD LANDSCAPE TRAIL, 5**

Ardingly – Horsham, c.19mls. Meet at Horsham Station (GR 178309) at 9am. to arrange cars. Ring Graham Smith for more details on [REDACTED]

Sun 15th Apr**FISH AND CHIPS - ANOTHER HELPING.**

c.20mls. Meet at Jefferstone Lane, St. Mary's Bay (GR 090275) for 8.00am. start. Park on roadside near village hall. Pub stop (fish & chips optional). Leader: Mike Pursey Tel: [REDACTED]

PUB MEETINGS are 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.

The annual membership list is enclosed with this newsletter. Please check that your details are correct and notify Bill Gillibrand of any errors.

Bill would like to get a comprehensive list of email addresses, as he finds this a quick and efficient way of contacting members. If you do not want your email address included in the general membership list, please contact Bill. He will remove it from the list but he will still be able to contact you by this method.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman.....

Secretary.....

Treasurer.....

Members.....

Footpath Problems.-----
Newsletter Editor...email: laurie@mansPlease note that **Graham Smith** is taking on the job of editing the Newsletter.

Send all items for inclusion in the next edition to: - Graham at [REDACTED]

email: [REDACTED]

Cover picture – This footpath sign (made from a couple of broken ploughshares welded to a post) stood for many years on a path near the village of Shoreham in the Darent Valley. When the Darent Valley path was established, a standard wooden post was placed next to it. Sadly, the original post has now disappeared.

Laurie.

STRIDERS AND GROUP NEWSLETTERS.....Ernie Bishop

Newsletter No. 5 touched on the Association's initial "100", to be held in May 1973. The Editorial said "The Downsman Hundred promises to be the greatest test of endurance open to walkers since the John O'Groats to Lands End Walk of 1960". For distance, the "Downsman" was double that of the "Fellsman Hike" but when the amount of ascent and the terrain, (quite apart from the greater likelihood of heavy rain) are taken into account, that statement becomes debatable.

There are four pages devoted to the details of the future walks, some of which are familiar and others that have disappeared from the scene over the years. There is one further page devoted to the "Yorkshire Three Peaks Walk," which starts and finishes at Horton in Ribblesdale. Obtain a card from the Pen-y-Ghent café, where they will enter the start and finish times and sign their confirmation. I assume that is still being carried out. Only 21 miles, but with

wind, rain and boggy conditions underfoot it can seem further than you think, particularly if you don't follow the correct route coming off Ingleborough.

Referring back to Newsletter No.1, the first event advertised, for a winter walk over the hills and moor land, was the Reservoir Roundabout, on the 15th January 1972, for a charge of 30p. That event continued each year until January 2006, and had been started in 1967, before the LDWA had been thought of. A continual period of forty years. Nev and Ann Tandy put their energy into it for all that time and many of their entrants would never think of missing it. I feel sorry that I never did it even once.

Page 22 provided the background to the two major founders of the LDWA, Alan Blatchford and Chris Steer. Alan was 16 years younger than Chris and in his late teens, he went from football and cycling to take up walking and running. In 1960 he completed his first London to Brighton run and in 1963 he completed Brighton to London and back (100 miles) in 22hours 10minutes.

Chris saw active service in the RAF during the war and took the opportunity to walk in the Elburz Mountains in Persia and further ranges in Iraq and Cyprus. When home he had a business of his own, but tried to ensure that he averaged 30 miles a week.

There is one page devoted to a record attempt (100miles) by the Rucksack Club of Manchester to mark their Jubilee in 1952. The route was from the Tan Hill Inn near the Yorkshire/Westmorland border to the "Cat and Fiddle" near the Cheshire/Derbyshire border. (The actual distance was found to be nearer 120miles). The route was planned to keep as high as possible. Food was arranged along the route. The two who finished first recorded a time of 55.40hrs. Later the walk was completed in 46.30hrs, by members of the Hyperion Club. Alan Blatchford had prepared a map of the route. I have no doubt that further attempts have been made on the record, and I'll keep my eye open for them.

Newsletter No.6. (July1973) Two firsts occurred. The first Annual General Meeting was held on April 7th at Edale Village Hall in the Peak District. A proposed constitution was presented and, following some amendments, was accepted and an inaugural committee elected. Secondly, the Downsman Hundred took place. 124 starters set off from Winchester to Eastbourne. David Rosen finished first in 22.20hrs, and Wynne Evans 66, the oldest finisher, completed the distance in 48.25hrs. They had suffered continual hot weather and a hard surface, leading to the retirement of 58 of the starters.

Andrew Melling wrote a letter pointing out the inability of some walkers to control their use of torches, particularly at night when looking for a checkpoint that is using an inadequate light and where the tent is small in a fairly large field. The last two paragraphs of Andrew's letter summed it up ... "If you were not

there yourself you can have no idea of the absurdity of the situation. The first party wander onto the shapeless top of the Fell looking for a small orange tent and a tiny light. They get to the other side and cannot find it so they turn round to backtrack and soon see lights ahead. The lights ahead are the second team who take the first team to be the checkpoint and at once charge over. The same exercise is then repeated several times until the walkers in the area are accumulated into one immense candle sending beams in an infinite number of directions, each beam illuminating a patch of mist in front of it and precious little else.

A cry goes up "There's a light over there" and thirty or more powerful torch beams saturate the mist and frustrate for ever the chance of an eye seeing any pinprick of light there may have been. Surely we are not all so bedevilled with light at home that we can never see without? Can we not agree to save our torches for map reading and leave the Torchlight Serenade for the romantics?"

There was one article by Oliver Dixon (LDWA53) that took up five pages. This was headed "The Measurement of Distance" and different methods are considered and rejected, the following are the dos and don'ts:-

1. Don't use a pedometer.
2. Don't use a map measurer.
3. Plot the course on a 1/25,000 map.
4. Using a fine straight line drawn on a piece of drafting film, follow the straight-edge method described above as carefully as possible. Measure off against the line-scale on the map.
5. Repeat three times. If the spread of answers is more than 0.5% of the total distance, there is probably a mistake in one of your results.
6. Take the average of the sound results.
7. Add 1.5% to the result.
8. If you had to use a 1" map instead of a 2.5" add a further 1.5% to your answer.
9. Your result should now be within 1% either way of the true value.
10. As a precaution against any personal bias, you could get another person to repeat the whole process.

Newsletter No.7 came out in December 1973 with a larger event calendar, an improvement on the early issues, a fully organised committee and a general step forward. The committee had invited Lt. Col. Richard (Dick) Crawshaw to become the association's first President and he had consented. He was M.P. for Toxteth, Liverpool, and a keen climber, free fall parachutist and long distance walker. Not long before he was approached, he set a world record for the longest non-stop walk. Three Regional Representatives were appointed to encourage events and activities and lead the formation of local groups:-

South East Representative was Peter Rickards

South West - Tony Rowley

North - Michael Smith.

Peter was just the person to get things moving in the South East and expanded Kent Group considerably over the next few years, but I believe that the Regional Representatives did not last for very long as most of the Southern Counties formed their own groups and committees over the next few years.

One new member who joined the group at that time was John Probert. He dropped out after a year or two but remained a member and re-joined Kent Group round about 1980. He eventually disappeared from the group about 1997 and we heard of his death a few years later. He was a stocky and strong walker who had made his living as a blacksmith, with a strong mind of his own.

I was interested in 2½ pages devoted to Ernie Foster, who had been joined by Alan Hoare to walk from Winchester to Canterbury, (approximately 140miles) over 3 week-ends. My memory came back to the "Pilgrims' 100" in 1982 which was put on by Kent Group for the "hundred" that year, but we'll go into that in due course.

Half of Newsletter No.7 seemed anything but LDWA. Two or three walks in areas that are not known to me, a 50-60 mile event for troops in Cyprus, a three-day festival in Co. Mayo, Western Ireland, a wet day in the Drakensberg Mountains in South Africa and walking in New Zealand.

However, there was one article was a report by Chris Pinder (LDWA 361) of Dartmoor Rambling Club. It was an annual event from Okehampton across the moor and south to Ivybridge. There were eleven who walked as a group. They had plenty of rain, swampy ground, bog, rivers and streams to wade, covering 28 miles in 12.5 hours. It was suggested that the next year they bring flippers and snorkels. I have never heard of this event before so assume it was abandoned some years ago.

More with the next Newsletter.

Snippets from the MINUTES of the Committee Meeting held at the Tickled Trout P.H., Wye on 18th August 2006.

A letter has been sent to the manager of the Kings Arms in Meopham Green to confirm the Christmas dinner on 3rd December. The walk will start at 10.0am with dinner at 2.0pm.

An email had been received from Laurie Lowe stating that he was planning to move to Bedfordshire in the near future and had a lot of group equipment in store. After discussion, Brian said he would ring Tom Sinclair to see if he could

provide storage for the large plastic sheets. Brian would take the photo albums and Neil would look after the files and the windbreaks. Graham hoped that Laurie would do the next newsletter but would take it on after that and he would speak to Laurie and Bryan Clarke about it.

SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR:

Brian said that he had booked the Vines Cricket pavilion for next year's event and the booking of the checkpoints was in hand.

If new certificates are needed, they will be A5 size.

HIGH WEALD WALK:

Neal O'Rourke had reported that the Wadhurst hall has been booked for next year's event on 8th July when there will be 26- and 14-mile options. Laurie is checking the distances. Then the routes will be walked out and notification sent to Strider. The committee was glad to hear that, although not 100%, Neal was recovering and out walking again.

The accounts for the last event were not yet available, as not all the invoices had been received.

FUTURE HUNDREDS:

LDWA 100, 2007 – Cant Canolbarth Cymru,

This event will be based in Llandrindrod Wells in Mid Wales. Our group has agreed to man checkpoint 6 at Llangunllo, GR 213712 on OS map 148. It is a well-appointed village hall, which will be open from early evening on the Saturday until breakfast time on the Sunday, the precise times are not yet known. With the experience of the checkpoint we did on the 2005 Chiltern 100, we will need two shifts of eight as a minimum. So offers of help please - to maintain our high standards - to Brian Buttifant on [REDACTED]

Brian is to confirm with the organisers that Kent has been allocated Kettlewell at 67.8 miles for the **2008 Hundred**. It seems that no group has volunteered to take on the 2009 event.

FOOTPATHS:

Shirley had sent in a copy of the letter by Keith Warman to the East Kent PROW office after his incident at Sutton Court Farm, which had been discussed previously.

She had found Louise Weller at the Mid Kent office helpful in sorting out some problems on a Ramblers walk she was leading.

She had found a new route from Wrotham Hill via Ash to be in good condition.

However, Brian reported that on a walk from Ash to West Kingsdown, Ivan had taken a bad fall at a faulty stile and he had reported it to the West Malling PROW office.

Brian said it was reported that there had been 200 completions of the 27.5 mile Tunbridge Wells Circular. He suggested that it might be suitable for a social walk.

THE ULTIMATE ULTRA EVENT – MAYBE!!

Route description for walk in Poynton, Cheshire magazine - "Over stile and turn left (south). Walk another 50 years to a stile." From Ivan Waghorn.

THE WALKING PARSON

Laurie Lowe

The Reverend A. N. Cooper, MA, Vicar of Filey, Yorkshire, wrote several books in the early 1900s, describing various walking tours that he had undertaken both at home and abroad.

At this time, walking for pleasure was an unusual activity, and it was often referred to as "tramping". Hence, the strange sounding titles of some of his books – 'The Tramps of the Walking Parson', 'A Tramp's Schooling', and 'Tales of My Tramps'. These and other books by the same author were first published during the period 1900 to 1920 and they describe a multitude of long distance walks undertaken by the parson.

In 'The Tramps of the Walking Parson', he starts by describing a practice walk from Yorkshire to London, which he accomplished in six days. This gave him the confidence to tackle a much longer route in Europe.

On 11th April 1887, he set off on a walk to Rome. He wrote.....

As it was Easter Monday, it will be readily understood that I, a parish clergyman, had much to do before I left. There was the vestry meeting to attend, accounts to make up, and it chanced there was a parish entertainment that evening at which I had to preside. This will explain why I could not start till evening.

He eventually set off on his walk to Rome by walking 10 miles to a neighbouring vicarage, arriving at 11pm for his first night's stop. After this very casual start, he made his way to Rotterdam, drew a straight line on a map to Rome and set off to cover the estimated distance of 800 miles "as the crow flies". He aimed to average 180 miles per week and as he was a parson, he did not intend to walk on Sundays, thus planning to cover 30 miles each day. He did not have a detailed map of the intended route and he makes no mention of a compass. He seemed to rely on road signs and on asking the way when necessary.

The following extract gives a taste of his style and describes what he packed into a small satchel, which was slung, across his shoulder. Just think what we consider essential to cram into a modern, adjustable-back rucksack when contemplating a walking holiday.

I stowed away a change of garments, and the indispensable brushes, etc., in a satchel, just large enough to hold them, and was prepared to enter upon a new experience of washing my clothes. True, one almost has to blush at confessing one's underwear was only washed once a fortnight, especially considering the amount of perspiration they must have daily absorbed; but I wish to state all the draw-backs as well as the charms of the journey. The only chance of washing was on Saturday night, and that allowed the garments to dry in the sun all day Sunday.

*It must be borne in mind that the sun is not always shining, even in Switzerland, which reminds me of a disastrous wash I attempted at Andermatt. Though it was only Wednesday, my socks were particularly dirty that day, and I resolved I must wash them. Like a man, I determined to wash them before I had considered how to dry them. Rain was pouring down, so I could not hang them out of the window, and there was no stove in my room or in the corridor, though the top of the Alps is very cold in April. The household had gone to bed, so that I could not send them down to the kitchen. What was I to do? I thought if I took them to bed and lay upon them, the heat of my body would draw the moisture out. So it did, and it drew the dye out too, and next morning there was a great patch of colour on the bottom sheet, which corresponded to the colour of the socks. *Que voulez-vous ?* What can a man expect when he ventures into a department so decidedly feminine as that of washing clothes?*

Of cloth clothes I could have no change. On Sundays I put on a white tie, and wore my gloves; that was the only change I could make in honour of the day.

All roads lead to Rome, I had heard, and I was to prove that the mediaeval saying is still substantially true. It might be thought I ought to have made allowance for losing my way. I did not, and in the whole walk went only 14 miles out of my route. This was at Pavia. I left by the wrong gate, and so deserted was that part of the country I did not meet a creature for seven miles. I did not meet one even at the end of that distance, but I noticed by my map that I ought to be following the stream of the Po, whereas I was walking against it. There was nothing for it but to retrace my steps, and I think the disappointment took more out of me than three times the distance of profitable walking.

The longest distance recorded for one day was 42 miles. His only comment about the exceptionally long days was that his evening meals were taken rather late!

And what about modern waterproofs? Cooper decided against carrying even an umbrella in preference to a stout stick. Here are his thoughts on the subject of wet weather....

It is impossible for a man to walk for six weeks, especially in April and May, without an occasional shower and even a downpour. Once I was caught in a thunder-shower, and was drenched through before I could get under shelter. But after a storm comes a calm, and generally sunshine too, and there is nothing like the open air for drying things, and within an hour of being wet through, my clothes would have been pronounced dry as a bone.

These, however, are but small-beer chronicles, mere "memoirs to serve," as the French would say, in my experience of being wet through. As on mountain tops the clouds gather, so it is down the mountain sides that the rain descends in all the freshness of youth. After going over the St. Gothard Pass, the rain began soon after leaving Airolo, and continued heavily till I reached Bellinzona, a distance of thirty miles. I was eight hours in the most drenching rain, for I had no umbrella, and only one adjective describes the state of my clothes. They were sopping wet. The water squelched from my boots as I walked, and when I sat down the chair looked as though it had been out in the rain too. My hotel was one of the most cheerless I ever was in, and on a wet night, and to a wet man, it looked doubly so. I had to get my dinner in the garments I had on, or else go dinnerless to bed. I chose the former alternative, and continued to sit near the stove, close enough, for one side of me to dry. I then changed my place, and sat with the other side steaming. I had heard that it was very dangerous to let one's clothes dry upon one, but what was I to do? Besides this, the people of the hotel seemed so churlish and inhospitable that I hesitated to ask the favour of their drying my clothes for me during the night. So next morning I put the damp clothes on and went out into the glorious sunshine, and before an hour was over I had forgotten I had ever been wet, and no disagreeables reminded me of it, in the shape of cold, rheumatic pains, or such like.

Over a period of about 30 years, Cooper went walking this way and that across Europe. Budapest, Venice, Monte Carlo, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Pompeii, Lourdes, Vienna, Berlin, Rome for a second time, and Madrid. In the intervals between these major expeditions, he toured every part of the British Isles. Only once did he take a companion with him, and it was not a success.

If you can find any of the following books in second-hand bookshops, I can recommend them:-

The Tramps of "The Walking Parson" (1902)

With Knapsack and Notebook (1906)

Quaint Talks about Long Walks (1907)

A Tramp's Schooling (1909)

Walking as Education (1910)

Tales of my Tramps (1913)

WHITE CLIFFS 50 MARSHALS' WALK – AUGUST 12th-13th

Graham Smith

THIS was a walk to remember – or perhaps to forget!

Ten group members met up at Shepherdswell Guides hut at 8am. – six planning to walk the entire 50-mile route, three walking 29 miles to Etchinghill and the other – Joy Davies – planning to go as far as she could.

The Radio Kent weather forecast was for 'showers in the afternoon, coming over from the west'. Well, there were showers in the morning, but in the afternoon there was prolonged, persistent heavy rain – and had it not been for Gordon Harker's superb catering at the checkpoints, there may have been no finishers.

The ten set off from Shepherdswell in good spirits. There were darkish clouds overhead, but the first shower didn't come until the party were walking across the fields between Ripple and Deal. Waterproofs had to be donned, and they remained on until Checkpoint 1 – the back of Gordon's car at Walmer. At Kingsdown, where the White Cliffs begin, the clouds parted to reveal glorious sunshine, and everyone thought they were in for a good day. Joy was even talking about perhaps walking the whole 50 miles.

Sadly, Stephanie Le Men had a stomach problem, and she and Christophe Delogne decided to stop at Langdon Cliffs. After more fine fare provided by Gordon, the others pressed on and shortly afterwards, along Dover seafront, they ran into another shower. This one was a bit heavier than the previous one, and – although the eight still walking didn't realise at the time – it was a forerunner of the non-stop deluge to come later in the afternoon. The rain stopped just before the climb out of Dover, and at Capel – 22.6 miles – it started to rain again.

While the party enjoyed more fine refreshments at St Radigund's Church Hall, the rain got heavier – and heavier. When it appeared to ease, Joy, Mike Pursey and Graham Smith – who were by now pulling ahead of the others – ventured out. The whole stretch between Capel and the next checkpoint at Etchinghill was very hard going. The rain did not stop at all; it just varied from light to hard to heavy. What made it more uncomfortable was on the Downs, which are high (by southern standards anyway!) the wind was blowing, making the party cold as well as very wet – and, of course, pretty miserable.

At Etchinghill - checkpoint 4 at 29.7 miles - Brian Buttifant, Dave Sheldrake and Ivan Waghorn were packing up, and Joy decided to join them – who could blame her? Mike, Graham, and Merv and Fiona Nutburn decided to press on. The sodden, depressing conditions were the same until Farthing Common, and Mike and Graham were mooted the possibility of calling it a day at Elham, the next checkpoint at 36.7 miles.

Luckily, after Farthing Common the rain stopped, and the route followed the Elham Valley Way, which, by its very nature, is low level, and away from the blowy Downs, so conditions were improving. The four stayed at St Mary's Church Hall for the best part of an hour, to enjoy more excellent sustenance provided by Gordon and Liz Keeler, and to change some of their saturated clothing.

By the time they started walking again, it was just about dark. Apart from the odd shower, the rain had stopped, so the night walking was not bad at all. Mike and Graham plodded on to the last checkpoint at Bishopsbourne, with Merv and Fiona about an hour behind.

After that, it was more plodding – following the North Downs Way for almost the entire distance - back to Shepherdswell. Mike and Graham arrived at 2.30am, Merv and Fiona about two hours later.

Fortunately, of course, weather conditions were much better on the White Cliffs 50 and the White Cliffs 29 a month later. But everyone on the marshals' walk agreed the weather they encountered was the worst they had walked in this year. Congratulations to everyone who completed it, or part of it and many thanks to Gordon, Liz, Tom Sinclair and Allan Stewart for providing such much-needed refreshments and huge support and encouragement at the checkpoints.

The following item by Mike Pursey should have appeared in the August issue but I somehow mislaid it. My apologies to Mike..... Laurie.

A SOUTH DOWNS WAY LOOP Good Friday April 14th. 20 or 26 miles

It was with some disappointment that, as I drove towards Eastbourne on what had been quite a pleasant morning, I spotted distant Beachy Head in a great pall of fog.

To be fair, the forecast had included the possibility of isolated fog/mist patches in some coastal areas. Nevertheless, it was pleasing to find what eventually turned out to be sixteen walkers at the start (some latecomers) for the two distances.

It was a mixed bag of walkers from Kent, Sussex and London Groups and eleven of us (two stayed to wait for the latecomers) set off undaunted into the fog. On this occasion Yours Truly was standing in for Graham Smith, the usual leader on this regular Good Friday twenty-six miler (Joy Davies, of course, leading the twenty-miler)

It took me no time at all to blot my copybook and lead us astray as we drifted off line in the (by now) mist. After discussion with Andy, a local Sussex Group

member, we finished up taking an alternative route to Birling Gap and missing Beachy Head (usually the first feature) completely. It didn't really matter as there was no fine sea-view to be had from the cliff-top. After the view-less Seven Sisters, we entered the Cuckmere valley, where the mist was a lot thinner, and stopped for elevenses beside one of the lagoons, as usual. We were soon joined by the "later" party, five I believe, who were joined by two of our number and then taken by Joy on the remainder of the twenty-mile route.

The remaining nine of us then pressed on with the twenty-six miler. Our usual route from there, via Exceat Bridge, is to take a path on the eastern rim of Seaford and thence loop out to join the main South Downs escarpment at the Bopeep car park. This would be followed by a 1.5-mile detour to the top of Firle Beacon, an excellent viewpoint. Sadly, the Seaford path has become too popular with dog-walkers and, consequently, unpleasant to walk, in parts; so, an alternative was used. We climbed out of the Cuckmere valley from the new bridge near Littlington and eventually joined our usual loop route. At Bopeep, we decided to abandon the detour to Firle Beacon - pointless in the visibility - and turned back, on the South Downs Way, to Alfriston for lunch at one of the three pubs there.

After lunch, it was along the river again, for a bit, then across the fields to Milton Street and a longish climb back up onto the downs. From the top, we'd normally leave the South Downs Way and take a route along the northern perimeter of the Downs, giving fine views to the north. Once again, the poor visibility made this pointless, so we continued on the S.D.W. Soon Yours Truly made another blunder (blaming the mist, of course!). I took the wrong option at a fork and, consequently, led us all the way back to Littlington. So, out came the maps and my error was confirmed. Unfortunately, we'd strayed two miles off route and the only option was to retrace our steps back to the fork.

The group were remarkably cheery and optimistic (and forgiving!), despite the tiredness now setting in and the obvious lack of reward (views). We pressed on through the mist for the remainder of our walk, which went without incident, fortunately. Despite some route cuts, on the day, we probably walked more than the twenty-six miles, in all. It was considered expedient (and, probably, diplomatic) to miss out our usual second pub stop which would have been at the Eight Bells at Jevington.

I have to thank all those on the twenty-six mile route for their tolerance and understanding of their leader's (at times) erratic route making but everyone, nevertheless, seemed to have enjoyed the walk. An adventure!

Mike Pursey

The sale of my unwanted books of Kent walks at the White Cliffs 50 venue, raised £19-50, which was donated to the Kent Air Ambulance funds. Laurie.

Walker's Bag Packs Power – a scientist at the University of Pennsylvania has invented a backpack that gives new meaning to power walking.

Prof Lawrence Rome's suspended-load backpack uses the motion of the body to drive a rack-and-pinion device that powers a generator.

"It could help anyone with a need for power on the go, including researchers, soldiers, disaster relief workers or someone just looking to keep a mobile phone charged during a long trek," said Prof Rome, whose invention was described in a recent issue of the journal *Science*.

By carrying a load weighing from 44lb to 84lb, testers generated up to 7.4 watts – enough to power a range of gadgets such as an MP3 player and night vision goggles.

Submitted by Keith Warman.

A Puzzle sent in by Bryan Clarke:-

Count every 'F' in the following text:-

FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY
COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.

If you counted less than six, then try again!

Non- PC joke corner...

DID YOU KNOW....

That marriage is the number 1 cause of divorce. Statistically, 100% of all divorces started with marriage.

I married Miss Right; I just didn't know that her first name was Always!

I haven't spoken to her for 18 months – I don't like to interrupt.

The last time we had a fight it was my fault. She asked, "What's on the TV?" I said "Dust".



Advert seen on wall in Selborne village and submitted by Jack Burgoyne

Even more non-PC corner...

George Bush and Dick Cheney went for lunch at a fancy restaurant. The young and attractive waitress came to the table to take their orders. She asked Cheney what he wanted, to which he replied, "I'll have the healthy heart salad please." She turned to Bush and said, "And what do you want Mr. President?" Bush answered, "How about a quickie?"

Taken aback, the waitress yelled, "I'm shocked and disappointed in you. I will never vote for you again. I thought you were a man of high morals." And with that she departed in a huff.

Cheney leaned over to Bush and said, "Mr. President, I believe that's pronounced Quiche."

As most of you will have gathered by now, Eileen and I are planning to move to Bedfordshire (near to daughter Jennie). It is just possible that by the time you read the newsletter, we will have completed the sale of our residence of over 50 years, and moved into temporary accommodation while we look for a suitable property. During this period, we can be contacted at -

Tel:- [REDACTED] I am told that my email address should remain unchanged, so I hope the following will still find me:- [REDACTED]

Once we are permanently located, I will give the new details.

My thanks go to all who have contributed to the newsletters over the years of my editorship. Remember the newsletter depends on you, so keep the copy coming to Graham.

Laurie Lowe.