



LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER

No. 3



November 1983

PROGRAMME DETAILS

All programme enquiries and suggestions to :-

or John Skinner, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Brian Buttifant, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Please note that as from September there has been a change of venue for our monthly social evenings. These are now held at the "Bricklayers Arms", Chipstead, near Sevenoaks. GR 499 562. They take place on the first Tuesday of the month, from 7-30 to closing time !

Thursday 17th November A slightly more formal evening with an illustrated talk by Brian Haigh of the Surrey group. Brian, an expatriate Yorkshireman, will give a talk on "Walking in the North". So please come along to support our guest speaker. The venue is the "Kelsey Arms", Tunbridge Wells (this is on the right as you enter the town from the north) 7-30 pm for 8-00.

Sunday 27th November The Group's annual pre-Christmas family ramble and lunch. This year we have a new venue at "The Spinning Wheel" at the top of Westerham Hill, GR 434 568. We have a sample menu at approx. £5.50 per head. Contact Brian Buttifant with bookings before 20th November. The meal will be preceded by a short walk suitable for all the family.

Friday 16th December An evening at "The Bull" Otford for a seasonal drink and get-together. Some may recall a previous year's snowy conditions which prevented many from travelling to enjoy a pleasant evening. Pray for better weather this time.

Friday 27th January 1984 Now is the time for all good members to attend the Group A.G.M., to be held at St Edith Hall, Kemsing. 7-30 for 8-00 pm. Refreshments will be served.

Thursday 1st March 1984 Leslie Smith of the Sussex group will present an illustrated talk on the Pennine Way - an account of the Sussex group's adventures on this L.D.P. At the "Kelsey Arms", Tunbridge Wells. 7-30 for 8-00.

PROGRAMME OF WALKS

Friday 20th January 1984 John Skinner's annual night walk. This time it is to be called "The Middle Medway MUDDle " Approx 25 miles, starting from Watlington Station at 11 pm. Meet at 10 pm at the "Railway " pub for a last drink ! John's overnight walks have become notable (some would say notorious) landmarks in the

group's history. A good introduction to the problems of nighttime navigation, and a must for those who have not yet tackled an overnight event. Carry extra warm clothes, food and a torch with spare batteries.

Sunday 12th February 1984 "Apples & Oysters" - an 18 mile walk from Canterbury West station. Led by Mike Smith. Meet at 9-15 am. We would specially like to meet new members from the east Kent area on this occasion.

Sunday 4th March Sevenoaks Circular Walk-Out. Meet at 8-30 am at Rayley's Centre, Sevenoaks. GR 532 547. A route check and opportunity for those helping on the day of the event to tackle this 30 mile route.

14/15th April 1984 Group weekend in the Yorkshire Dales. Staying in a converted schoolhouse in the northern dales. We hope to organise a couple of walks over 'anytime' routes in the area. We will need firm bookings (and possibly a deposit) in the new year. There will be the opportunity to make it a long weekend for those who wish to stay Friday to Monday. If this is a success, it could become a regular group activity. Contact John Skinner for more details in the new year.

GROUP BADGE (at last !)

This is a subject which has been discussed many times over recent years and a number of designs have been submitted by members over the last few months. It was felt by the committee that one design must be chosen so that an order could be placed as soon as possible.

The designs fell into two distinct groups - those based on a Kent symbol (e.g. oasthouses or the Invicta horse) and those based on the LDWA badge design. After much discussion, it was agreed that since we are after all part of the national organisation, the design should incorporate the familiar LDWA logo. Thus the badge will be a modified LDWA badge with the word 'KENT' added. The actual layout was submitted by Peter Barnett.

At the present time we are awaiting a quotation for the cost of producing this badge, once we have this we will be in a position to take orders from group members.

Notice on a Country Church Door - When ere I see a little church, I always pay a visit. So when at last I am carried in, The Lord won't say 'Who is it?'

(Phil Hastings)

I draw your attention to an event which is held in Kent and may have been overlooked (or avoided) by our more competitive members. This year the event took place on the 9th July at the Ditton Centre, Kiln Barn Road, Maidstone. Apparently 64 teams were entered. Pies can only be thrown with the left hand. Pies should not be raised above shoulder height. No discrimination against sex (!) Cowards should not enter. Perhaps the Kent group could enter a team next year.

For future reference contact Mike Fitzgerald

Phil Hastings.

RACE WALKING - CENTURION 100 mile event.

Any Kent group member thinking of having a go at this event next year (to be held at Leicester) please contact Phil Hastings for further details.

Phone [redacted] [redacted] [redacted].

PAST EVENTS

46th Hastings to Brighton Road Walk - 6th August 1983

A three- man team of walkers from Cambridge Harriers set out at 11 am on a warm sunny day to walk the 38 mile distance between Hastings and Brighton. This is a really tough walk over an undulating course. There was a high-class entry this year with a number of international walkers present. In spite of many illustrious names and some very well equiped club teams, Cambridge Harriers managed to gain 3rd team place. All credit must go to 'Big' Hans Rennie, 'Blisters' Hayes and Phil Hastings for determination, perseverance and a good team effort. Phil also won 3rd place handicap. Our grateful thanks to family and club colleagues who turned out to support us throughout the event.

Phil.

RESULTS

[illegible]

Team result (3 to score)

1	Surrey W.C. (Selby, Simmons, Lightman)	22
2	Leicester W.C. (Trigg, Adams, Attou)	32
3	Cambridge H. (Hastings, Rennie, Hayes)	73

Handicap H/C Time

1	N. Simmons	4:57:41
2	W. Elliott	5:02:09
3	P. Hastings	5:03:44

First veteran over 40: N. Simmons

First veteran over 50: P. Worth

First newcomer: M. Byrne

(above awards excluding first 6 individuals)

EVENING WALK - Hildenborough - 26th July

Once again we were lucky with the weather when Mike Smith led a small group of members around a nine mile circuit in the Kent Weald on a warm summer evening. In fact it was so warm and humid that our only lady walker was forced to remove a redundant under-garment. This operation was managed with considerable dexterity while on the move !

The high temperature also caused some concern over the possibility of dehydration - so we took two pub stops and two of the group even managed a third drink by sprinting ahead at the finish in order to arrive minutes before closing at a third hostelry. Three pub stops in a nine mile walk is claimed as a club record.

Another participant met an old acquaintance in the bar at the second halt for liquid refreshment. He had last met the lady when she was a WAAF at Biggin Hill in 1941 ! So you see, evening walks can be interesting - why not join us ?

LAL

WEALDEN WATERS WALK-OUT - 27/28th August

The purpose of this 100 km walk was twofold. First to allow those who would be helping on the day to attempt the complete distance and secondly, to check Mike's route description ! So it was that Mike Smith, Ron Roweth, Brian Buttifant and I set out from the Pantiles at T. Wells at 9am on Saturday. Ernie Bishop (supported by Celia) had started further back round the circular route some hours earlier and was expected to catch us later in the day.

Progress over the first 20 miles was rather slow (over 7 hours !), due mainly to the large amount of clearance work required to force our way through some of the overgrown paths. However our efforts were rewarded when we were met at Bowles Rocks by Pauline and Peter Barnett. They had agreed to support us through the rest of the day and night. From then on they met us at intervals and plied us with vast quantities of food and drink. This must be the only walk of this distance where I have actually gained weight ! Incidentally, I wish to thank all those who also offered to support us - if we had accepted all offers, there would have been more helpers than walkers !

The weather remained warm and dry throughout the day and the night was perfect for walking - calm and warm, with a bright moon overhead. One vivid

memory I have, is of sitting by the roadside against Pete's van, watching the sun come up over the dark outline of Penshurst Place.

We all completed the distance within 24 hours - which was quite respectable bearing in mind the delays for path clearing, discussions (!) of the route details and the large amount of time spent at Peter and Pauline's checkpoints ! A most enjoyable walk through very pleasant countryside in superb weather. If only we could have ensured such conditions for the event in October - more of which later !

LAL

THE CLEVELAND CLASSIC - 17/18th September

Keith Warman

Five members of the Kent Group, Laurie Lowe, John Skinner, John Stew, Harry Bishop and myself, found ourselves on the Saturday morning in the W.I. hall at Great Ayton, preparing for the inaugural Cleveland Classic. Proceeds from this event are to go to Botton Village, a self-contained community for the mentally handicapped, run under the auspices of the Camphill Trust. The public cafeteria at Botton made a welcome checkpoint on the route.

With the kit checks and last minute preparations behind us, our ardour was dampened five minutes before the noon start by a quick rain shower. We noticed the ubiquitous Henry Bridge and Cyril Blow, belying their years and keen to accept this new northern challenge. The rain eased as a couple of hundred walkers and runners set off, and we were climbing right from the start towards Roseberry Topping (which rises 1051 feet out of the Cleveland Plain) 2 miles away. The steep ascent and steeper descent were ingrained on our minds, as the summit of Roseberry Topping was also to be the last checkpoint on the 56-mile route.

In overcast but dry conditions we joined the Cleveland Way through Guisborough Woods, with occasional glimpses of industrial Tee-side. The route took us through Skelton, Saltburn Woods and the pretty Italian Gardens to meet the North Sea at Saltburn seafront. Those with their wits about them remembered to turn right here to follow the coastal path of the Cleveland Way around to Staithes. This became quite an exacting section (including once getting lost) and apart from Skinningrove, an attractive one too. The organisers' desire to have walkers off the coastal path before dark was understandable, considering the sheer drops and crumbling cliffs. From Staithes we followed minor roads south through Roxby Woods to Scaling Dam. A tricky moorland section, meandering through tussocky heather to Danby Beacon was followed by the drop into Eskdale.

The railway and the River Esk were crossed and we climbed onto and along Danby Rigg before descending on our backsides to Botton Village, and the ample largesse at the village checkpoint was very welcome. It began to rain here and continued to do so for the rest of the night.

A stiff climb out of Botton took us onto Castleton Rigg and we tramped along the road through driving rain to join and follow the Lyke Wake Walk at Old Margery Cross. The section to the old railway line was the boggiest part of the whole route and we seemed to meet torches coming from all directions. We traipsed along the old railway to the Bloworth Crossing checkpoint, then re-joined the Cleveland Way to Park Dyke, Kildale, Gribdale Gate and back over Roseberry Topping again to the finish at Great Ayton.

Laurie finished in 20 hours 50 minutes and Harry and I half an hour later. Unfortunately the two Johns had to retire, at Danby Beacon and Bloworth Crossing. The 56 mile route took in a variety of scenery and underfoot conditions, with woods, roads, coastal paths, heather moors and peat bogs. The checkpoints were frequent and all had drinks and ample food to make a well organised and enjoyable event.

Keith Warman

BEWL BRIDGE RESERVOIR & BEDGEBURY FOREST WALK -

Bryan Clarke

Sunday 2nd October saw a repeat of last year's walk, on this occasion in combination with the Sussex Group. The four Kent Group walkers were joined by no less than nineteen of the Sussex Group, plus one dog! At 9-30 am we set off from the car park with the reservoir on our left, to walk through woods and grassland with pleasant views over the water and many species of water fowl. The most common bird seemed to be the Canada goose which we saw flying, swimming or grazing in several large flocks. The walk along the shore line was fairly easy with walkers mingling and conversing quietly. Leaving the reservoir we had our first taste of uphill work and eventually arrived at Ticehurst for a two hour pub lunch and a drink or three. This is an essential feature of Sussex Group walks - indeed, it seems to be written into the constitution! As a consequence, the afternoon's walking started as a jolly affair. Although we had lost a person at Ticehurst (she had to be home early) we seemed to have gained a few comics, as the first few miles were punctuated with laughter. A strange game appeared to be played whereby someone would drop back, hide in the bushes for whatever reason, and then run to catch up! Probably an ancient Sussex custom.

The afternoon route took us back to the reservoir then away again to visit the splendid Bedgebury Pinetum before returning to complete the circuit of the reservoir. Finally we reached the last stretch along the top of the dam and climbed the steps to the car park just in time to find the refreshment shop closing at 5-30, so we made do with a few minutes natter before leaving for home.

Bryan Clarke

LUDDESDOWN INQUIRY

Members may already know that the Ministry of Defence have purchased Court Farm and Bookers Farm at Luddesdown near Gravesend for military training of regulars and territorials. Exercises will be for the purpose of laying dummy mines and these exercises will be on 30 times a year, lasting for three days on each occasion.

Obviously this is of great concern to the villagers of Luddesdown who have set up a local action group and have had publicity in the national press, on television and in The Great Outdoors. The concern to us walkers is that the Wealdway goes through this area.

The application for military use is made to the Gravesham Borough Council who have had discussions with the MOD to try and minimise possible local objections to this proposal. I have already written on our behalf, stating our concern that the walkers right of way will be obstructed. The MOD and Gravesham Borough have put their proposal to the Secretary of Environment, who has called for a public inquiry to be held on November 8th.

I was surprised to read that the MOD already have 22 sites in the county, all over 100 acres (except one at 93 acres), and are negotiating for another 113 acre site. This is a total of approximately 9,000 acres compared with some 5,000 in Essex and under 2,000 in Sussex. All are considered unsuitable for reasons such as a) unsuitable size or terrain b) too far from RSME at Chattenden Barracks c) areas fully utilised and current training cannot be relocated.

To quote from one of the MOD papers :-

Safeguard of public footpaths - Public rights-of-way would continue to remain open at all times, including during training. On the rare occasion that a member of the public was using one of the paths at the time military use was being made of it (eg for mine laying exercises) that person would be invited to wait for the short period of 2 or 3 minutes that it would take military personnel or vehicles to cross the path. If the person insisted on immediate passage, he/she would be allowed to pass unhindered, and the training halted during that time. In these ways, it would be the Ministry's aim to ensure that members of the public would be able to continue to enjoy the beauty of the area.

The outcome of the inquiry is awaited with interest.

Brian Buttifant

WEDDING BELLS !! CONGRATULATIONS to KIM & NIGEL SMETHAM

who decided to team up for the ultimate long distance event on the 1st October. We all wish them good luck for the future. LOVE IS..... sharing a route description on an allnight event !

Apparently the rest of the 'Maidstone Mob' were in no condition to turn out for the group walk the next day !

WEALDEN WATERS WALK - 15/16th October - Brief Report

Once again our biannual 100 km event was dogged by bad weather. This year the event coincided with a severe depression which swept across the country, bringing torrential rain and gale-force winds.

For the record, 65 brave souls started out from the Pantiles in Tunbridge Wells at 10 am on Saturday and 22 managed to struggle through the appalling conditions to finish by 12 noon on Sunday. It is a tribute to Mike Smith's organisation and the valiant efforts of all the checkpoint marshals, that the event did not just sink without trace during the height of the storm.

We hope to have a detailed report in the next issue. Meanwhile, here is a letter received from Shirley Hume which puts things into perspective:-

Dear Mike (et al),

Monday 17th October

I wanted to write and tell you what I thought about the Wealden Waters Walk, but considering the laws concerning libel, I waited before doing so. I am pleased to be able to inform you that, apart from the strained ligament in my left foot, the large raw patch of skin across my back where the rucksac rubbed on wet clothes, the cuts and bruises on my legs inflicted by evil-minded stiles, eye-strain from reading by torch light, indigestion from eating too much good food too often and incipient pneumonia, I have never felt better!

Seriously, it was a marvellous walk and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Please pass on my thanks and compliments to all the checkpoint crews - they did a great job in diabolical conditions. I have enough experience of the job on wet, blustery 'Oxon 40' events to have a great admiration for them. In particular, CP's 4,5 and 6 kept us going when we needed it most and we left each one feeling a lot 'bouncier' than when we arrived.

I was very pleasantly surprised by the vastly improved route description; it made all the difference to be able (with care) to keep going and not have to keep stopping, back-tracking etc. That is not to say we didn't go slightly wrong in places, but then some people can get lost walking the Ridgeway!

I really don't know how you managed to cope so well with the ghastly weather (even allowing for the experience gained the hard way). Living with a meteor-

orologist I knew what to expect, but it worse than we feared. The organisation never seemed to falter, let alone diintegrate - perhaps we could recommend you to Chris Bonnington for his next expedition.

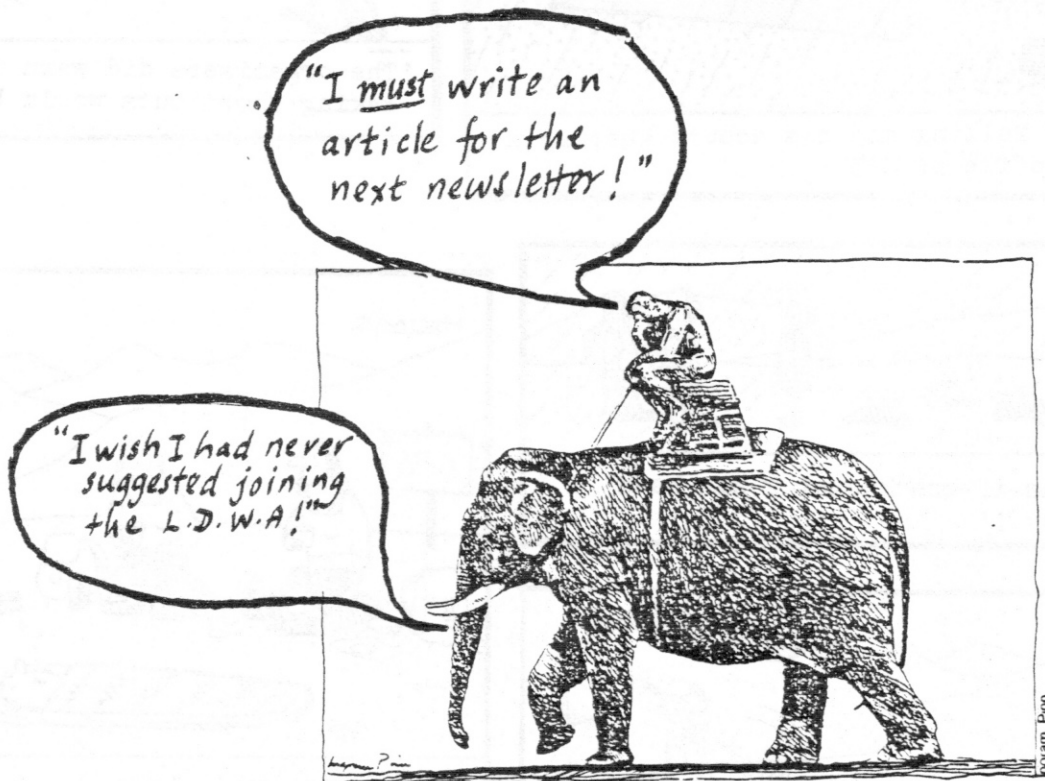
Finally thanks to everyone at the Finish, who cheered us in and made me feel 10 feet tall, as well as ministering unto the walking wounded. I have heard comments from other people complaining that the walk is too difficult - ignore them!! There are enough walks in the calendar for all lengths and standards to be catered for. Given reasonable weather the W.W.W. is no harder than the Surrey Summits and the one thing you don't have to feel responsible for is the weather !

Thanks again to everyone for an unforgettable experience (take that how you like). I will be recommending the next W.W.W. to my mother-in-law and my boss. You never know, I may even be there myself.

Regards,

Shirley Hume.

P.S. Chris is reserving his position!



The following scenes (with acknowledgements to Helms) depict some of the problems encountered during the W.W.W. :-

