

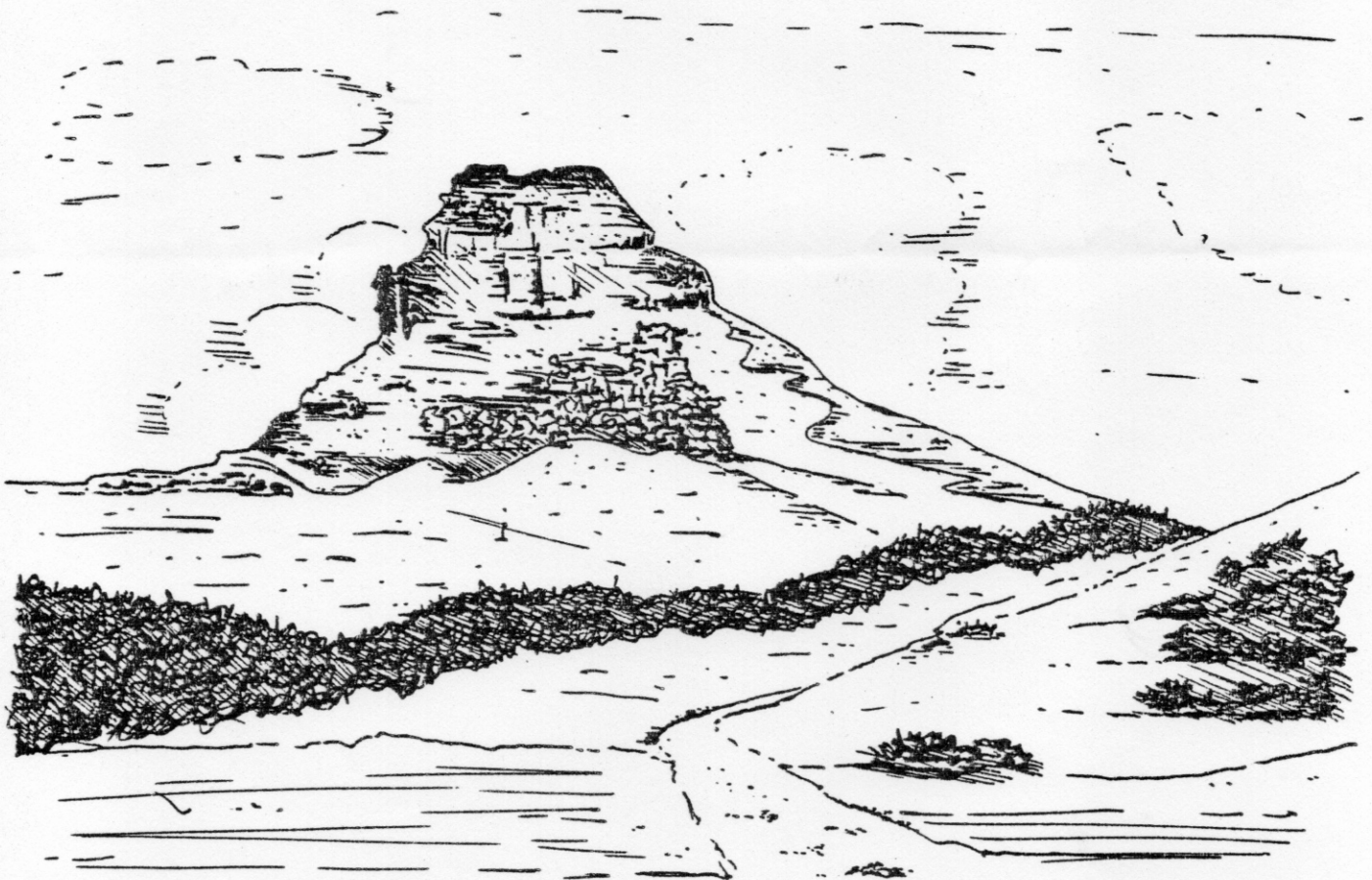


LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 1986

NUMBER 11

KENT GROUP - FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Sat 20th Sept....A 20 mile walk from Hawkhurst. Meet in public car park at 9am. Leader is Maurice Faircloth. Tel. [REDACTED]: [REDACTED].

11/12th Oct.....The Wealden Waters Walk. Kent Group's 100 km event starting at 10 am. at the Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells. Help is still needed on check-points and at the walk headquarters. Entry forms and details from Mike Smith, [REDACTED].

Sat 1st Nov.....A repeat of last year's day trip to France. Contact Graham James ([REDACTED]) for details of an opportunity to walk, dine and shop in France.

Thu 6th

Fri 7th Nov.....A slide evening presented by Tony Youngs of the Surrey Group. The title for the evening is "The South West Peninsula Path". To be held at The Kelsey Arms, Tunbridge Wells (on the A26 north of the town) 7.30 for 8 pm.

Sun 23rd Nov.....Family walk and lunch at last year's venue in Cranbrook. Full details and booking form on last page of this issue.

Fri 12th Dec.....Our Christmas social evening at "The Bull", Otford. Free food but you pay for your own drinks!! From 7.30 onwards.

Fri 23rd Jan....Group AGM at St Edith Hall, Kemsing. 7.30 for 8 pm. All members are asked to attend.

The HIGH PEAK MARATHON (Part 2)

Editor's note:- Observant readers will have noticed that yours truly has already reported on this event in the previous newsletter. Here is another view of that memorable occasion - this time written by RON ROWETH.

"Not So Much A Challenge Walk, More A Pantomime On Ice".

Two teams of four from the group, who variously chose to be known as the NorthDownsmen (Laurie Lowe, John Probert, Mike Wells and Mike Harman) and the Kent Koblers (Peter Barnett, Brian Buttifant, Ivan Verrell and I) together with Phil Hastings and Ernie Bishop, who somehow got involved with a crowd called the Slithy Toves, were accepted for the High Peak Marathon - an annual frolic around the Derwent Watershed, and held this year on 28th Feb/1st March.

The smart Toves scratched, presumably hearing something about weather conditions, whereas the remaining eight travelled northwards on the Friday afternoon, looking forward to a weekend of 'Happy' and 'Gourmet' eating, to be interrupted only marginally by the walk. This attitude prevailed until we met the first snows west of Chesterfield, and a drive up the old Mam Tor road above Castleton just before dark, revealed the depth of snow on the hills, but the excellent food and wine at the "Cheshire Cheese" again diverted thoughts from the wintry scenes outside. Only on driving to the walk HQ in Edale did things begin to be taken seriously, with the few yards from the car park to the hall hard enough to cover.

At 10 pm. - an hour before the first team was due to start - the route was finally determined - the full Derwent Valley Watershed route had been abandoned two days earlier and now variant no. 1 was dropped in favour of a relatively low level 30 mile route, and at last we knew that the hills were in far from their normal bog-trotting condition.

The first mile was enough to show what was in store - an icy farm track fit only for skating and a slog up to Hollins Cross in deep snow, getting icier as we neared the top, and faster teams already catching and passing us. Then the ridge to Lose Hill into a bitterly strong east wind, the steep stretches already quite

tiring and the final section iced over. Going downhill was, as they say, something else! Ploughing through the deep snow was fine, but sliding on the ice-crust trickier and negotiating the narrow iced-up track down to the valley road quite chaotic. All over the place we were, marvelling at the same time as the sure-footed fell runners came by and staring in disbelief as the Gritstone Girls ghosted past.

Then it all started again on the long 1000 foot slog up to Win Hill, the summit of which seemed like a genuine ice-tower, with the checkpoint marshal perched defiantly on the top. Down again we stumbled over ice and snow and through the woods to Yorkshire Bridge. After anxious minutes of waiting, all eight of us had made it, more or less intact, but having taken 2½ hours for the five miles covered.

The map indicated a road section next, but soon the road disappeared for ever under the snowdrifts and again the going was hard, with the icy wind whipping snow into our faces and some of us genuinely started to suffer. Steep snow slopes led under Stanage Edge and then over the open stretch of Moscar Moor, the wind now roaring down from the right and pushing us onto what seemed like endless icefields. The lights of Moscar checkpoint seemed like a real port in a storm. On reaching the road the two teams, luckily together again, were forced to regroup, with John joining the Koblers and Brian, together with the three other Downsmen, dropping out and being bussed back to Edale. Eleven miles covered in 5½ hours was a fair indication of the difficulties.

The long stretches round the Derwent Dams were on easy snow-tracks, but daylight brought no relief from the bitterly cold wind, nor was there a welcoming sunrise. At least the two remaining uphill sections - over to Alport Castles and from the Snake Road to Edale - were ice-free and plodding through the deep snow was boring rather than difficult. Finally the sun did appear and turned the Edale Valley into an almost alpine scene, and the team finished in remarkably good shape at about noon.

Life quickly returned to normal as we drove back to Castleton, after food and treatment to cuts and bruises; beer until closing time, an afternoon nap and an even more substantial late-evening meal, then many more hours of sleep!

Next morning the sun was bright, the wind gone and the hills inviting us to walk all over them. No-one volunteered to climb Mam Tor however; we just got in the car and drove home! But everyone had been impressed and those of us not familiar with the Peak District were amazed at its beauty under snow. Come the summer, the 'Heritage' should be well supported!

THE DOWNSMAN HUNDRED - 24-26 May

This year's annual 100 mile event attracted entries from a record 31 Kent members. With good weather conditions and a relatively easy route so far as navigation was concerned, drop-outs were few. Notable among our finishers were two husband and wife teams - Moira and Peter Rickards and Susan and Ivan Verrell - each couple walking the whole distance together! It was nice to see so many first-time completions from some of our newer members, in fact our first man home was first-timer Richard Oddy. Peter Rickards notched up his 8th hundred.

A full list of finishers is shown on the next page:-

Richard Oddy.....25.56	Robert Mumford.....29.46
Gordon Sharp.....26.13	Kevin Taylor.....29.46
Gordon Beattie.....27.37	Laurie Lowe.....29.59
Peter Barnett.....27.42	Derek Smith.....30.24
Len Wilson.....28.00	Ivan Waghorn.....31.03
Michael Harman.....28.45	Don Scott.....32.21
Richard Tombs.....28.54	Moiria Rickards.....32.32
Anthony Bounds.....28.55	Peter Rickards.....32/32
Jack Burgoyne.....29.37	Susan Verrell.....32.50
John Probert.....29.37	Ivan Verrell.....32.50
Trevor Blake.....29.39	Paul Hatcher.....33.33
Brian Buttifant.....29.39	Neal O'Rourke.....33.33
Ron Roweth.....29.39	Peter Sharp.....37.59
Mike Smith.....29.41	Paul Sharp.....37.59
** Don Newman.....27.28 (listed as Surrey in results- sorry Don, I missed you! Laurie.)	

Kent Group members were also active at checkpoint 9 as the following report by Dave Cowley describes:-

Saddlescombe Checkpoint - 67 miles.

The 29 members of the Kent Group who completed the event will know that the above checkpoint was manned wholly by 'volunteers' from the group. We opened at midnight on the Saturday and within minutes the first walker arrived! Due to the ideal conditions we had more than the anticipated numbers through but we were still able to close ahead of schedule at 13.00 hours on Sunday when the last two walkers left.

I would like to thank Trevor Blake and Graham James for the use of their private caravans - they and the group's tent, provided just the right amount of covered accommodation for the checkpointers and walkers. My thanks also to Roy and Win Warman, Debbie and Ian Waddell, Terry Smith and her son and daughter, Eileen Lowe, Pauline Barnett, Jim Oddy, Graham James, Simon Rickards, Colin Harris, and Phil Hastings for all their help in running the CP.

Dave Cowley.

THE KENT SUSSEX BORDER PATH - 6/7th June

Don Newman

Continuing the Kent group's healthy tradition of long-distance social walks, the 'Magnificent Seven' (Ernie Bishop, Peter Barnett, Brian Buttifant, Gordon Beattie, John Probert, Keith Porter and Don Newman) assembled at east Grinstead on Friday evening. With Ernie in the lead, we waved goodbye to the 'supporters club' and set off towards Cowden. Would we make it to the pub before closing time? It was a fine evening and the going was generally firm. 'Just follow the Gatwick flightpath!' Navigation proved a little more difficult than that, but Ernie got us there in time to deprive the locals of all the remaining pies and pasties.

Suitably fortified and in a jovial mood, we set off again through the village. Darkness had now fallen. 'I used to live here.' someone said. Five minutes later we were lost! We eventually found the well concealed bridge, then another and another! 'Haven't we crossed this one before?' Black and white cows (and their droppings) obstructed our path. 'Don't trip over these Dalmatians!'

Joking aside, Ernie's navigation was superb. With hardly a signpost in evidence, each field we entered called for a decision as to direction, and Ernie got it right each time. We rested twice, in a well stocked barn (This isn't doing my hayfever any good!) and beside a pile of logs. As we walked on through the night, the native cows became more restless, stampeding alongside us and gathering around the stiles. We passed under a railway line several times. 'Wouldn't it

be easier to just walk along the tracks?'

At 3.30 am it was getting light, and Wealden Waters veterans soon recognised the terrain. We were treated to the sight of the sun rising over Bewl Bridge reservoir. A long trudge round the banks was followed by the highlight of the trek - the breakfast stop! Having covered some 40 miles we were all happy to lounge in Ernie and Celia's garden for a couple of hours. Porridge was served first, followed by a full cooked breakfast. 'This is the best checkpoint I've ever been to!' Tea and coffee came in large mugs. Blisters and sore feet were treated. Reluctantly we stirred ourselves at last, and followed Ernie and his four-footed pathfinder Clementine out onto the trail again.

Four miles further on we stopped again, to collect Maurice Faircloth. Maurice made us tea and broke the sad news of England's poor performance against Morocco in the World Cup. Undaunted, we strode off along the tracks towards Bodiam. By now it was getting hot.

Bodiam Castle made a fine sight as we strode downhill towards it. 'It's all downhill from here to the sea'. Here we were accosted by a strangely clad lady who tried to talk us into playing games with her and her friends. We declined on the grounds that we were all too tired. She gave us a leaflet, which no-one was in the least bit interested in. (By the way, who has it?)

A pub stop was the next necessity, and we headed uphill to Ewhurst Green. Again the locusts struck, devouring some very good pub food served by two 'lovely boys'. (There are some strange people in this part of the world) Then it was out into the hot afternoon sun again, and into the next hazard, a head-high field of rape seed crop. By now everyone was looking forward to the finish, but there were several more miles yet. First we had to find the river Rother, which Ernie did despite tricky patches of woodland, undergrowth and barbed-wire fences where there should have been stiles. The river bank seemed endless as it curved around with the hills on our right. 'I used to live here. We'll see Rye any minute now!' About an hour later the ancient town came into view. One last stop for a final refreshing gulp of electrolytic liquid, and then it was on towards the objective. Final encouragement was provided by the ever faithful supporters club who strode out along the bank to meet us.

All good walks should end in a pub, and 'The Ship' provided a suitable venue in Rye. Ernie and Celia (and Clementine) had certainly done us proud on this little jaunt. Estimates of the distance covered varied from 65 to 70 miles. What was certain was that Ernie had navigated faultlessly and Celia can cook a great breakfast! With a final flourish, Ernie produced a batch of 'Kesssex Border Path' T-shirts to make this an even more memorable occasion. Watch this space for the next epic account. (The Sursex and Hamsex Border Path?)

THE POPPY LINE MARATHON - 22nd June.

John Probert (524)

So I thought I would go and do the Poppy Line Marathon at Sheringham in Norfolk. Asking around, some of the Kent group indicated that perhaps they would do it as well, so I made up my mind to go by train. On the 21st June, I left home for the station and was promptly given a bonus of a special ticket that would take me anywhere on the special map for £3 and would cover the underground as well. It took me to Manningtree just this side of Ipswich, so it cost me just £9 instead of £18.50!

It was good to sit back in the train and enjoy a leisurely journey even if you did know that the train was doing over 100 miles an hour - on the Colchester stretch you could see the cars on the road dropping back! Arrived at Sherringham at 5.20 pm and the second B&B that I tried had a single room and where did the landlady come from? Richmond in Surrey!

A quick wash and a freshen up and out on the town, and what a town, a bit like Sundridge late Saturday! However, after a meal at a good restaurant, I sat in a pub and watched the football, supped a pint and wondered what all the fuss was about. Then back to the digs and an early night.

An early start in the morning with an enormous breakfast and down to the youth centre. This was to be the first walk that I have been to where there was not one face that I had seen before. Where were all of the Kent group? Nary a one.

150 walkers started off at 9 am. sharp; and it was good not to see 50-60 runners charging off in front. Along the Cromer road at a very leisurely pace and talking to a local walker, I found that we were dropping further and further back to the rear, until we were last. "This is no place for me." I said, "Come on, let's catch some of the front ones" And this local said "Well you can if you like" or at least, I think that is what he said. I came to the first of what Norfolk calls hills, changed gear and passed about thirty walkers before the trig point on the cliff top. We are heading for Cromer in the sea mist, downhill now and over the level crossing. Down a hedge-lined lane to the Cromer road with the local policeman holding up the traffic for us. Continuing along a wide track to a caravan site - lots of holiday folk came out to see what all of the peasants were doing charging about with rucksacks on their backs. On to a Roman campsite and down through an archway of trees to a field of corn at least three feet high and wet with sea-mist to another caravan site. Turn right along a hedge to tarmac lane and into a wood through a kissing gate to the Cromer road again and into CP1. Looking on the checklist, I see that I am 11th - not bad going from last - in 5.5 miles. Time - 1 hour 12 minutes.

Straight along West Street and after about a mile, turn right onto Weavers Way through a potato field, very funny walking on earthed-up potatoes - good ankle breakers! Then to Felbrigg Church, a large church in the centre of a very large corn field, sort of miles away from anywhere. Lots more metalled road now to Fellbrigg House and CP2. 9.4 miles and have moved up to 7th place in just over two hours and fifteen minutes. Move on through the village and at an old stone cross turn right into a green lane and farm track. Quite flat now with the local bobby car coming to meet us and running through all the cow pats and puddles that he can find and splashing it all over the peasants and having a great time.

CP3 - The Wheatsheaf - 13.2 miles. Man would not let me see my position on list! Straight on - did not go into pub, just as well as this was a good place to drop out - only two miles back to the start! The route description read as if it was OK to follow, only to find that you were on the retirement route (lots more went wrong here) Three minutes and I knew that I should be going the other way. Made a quick about turn, meeting others that had made the same mistake. Back on the route again through farms, fields and rough tracks to Selbrigg Pond and CP4. Forget about the time and place, very hot now. Bright sun and no sea mist, wish I had put the shorts on! Cross Warren Road into Warren Farm and onto green road again. We are made aware of the hazards of walking by four or five cars charging up the green road. On to Warren Heath and six cross tracks to pick up a footpath dropping downhill with high banks on either side - very hot down here. Over a stile into field to Meadow View Cottage and CP5 - 21 miles. Then along shingle bank and the sea, turn right along shingle for 1½ miles to top of cliff leading back to Sherringham and past the steam railway and onto the finish. 26 miles in 6 hours and 20 minutes - tenth overall. But why did they call it the Poppy Line Marathon?

To sum up. The walk was good, a bit different and quite flat. The food was good with plenty of it. This is a very condensed description, but should you wish, I will point out the best route next year when I see you at the start. The badge and certificate are good. The train journey home was quite exciting - dodging the drunks and cadgers on Victoria Station!

SOUTH DOWNS WAY and LDWA HUNDRED COMBINED. 28/29th June. PHIL HASTINGS

This was to be a solo trip along the South Downs Way from Winchester to Eastbourne. As a result of a very active year's walking, I was unable to do the Marshals' walk or to take part on the official walk in May. For me this was the first clear weekend in a crowded year and a balance between other 100 mile events. In fact this weekend clashed with the Blackheath 24 hour event.

I started out from Winchester at 7.20 pm Friday evening to join up with the SDW 80 mile run which was to start at 9 am on the Saturday. This meant a 20 mile solo night hike along a fairly familiar route to Buriton. I was given a lovely hot cup of coffee by the officer of the watch at H.M.S. Mercury at about 1.30 am. As much as I would have liked to stay on, I had to press on to Butser Hill and Q.E. Park. Martyn Greaves was the first runner to come past me in the morning. It was becoming rather warm and too hot to walk, the temp. was rising all the time. I sat down for two hours in the shade. I was to hear that 50% of the runners retired due to the heat. I stopped off at the Riverside Restaurant in Amberly for lassange, chips and sos roll, washed down with a glass of cold milk. I drank gallons of water which was freely and readily given by the checkpoint staff. The organisation was very good and a well appointed promotion. I had lots of confidence in their ability, with St John's First Aid in attendance and C.B. radio links between checkpoints and H.Q. I was pleasantly surprised to meet up with Peter Rickards. Due to the heat of the day I had to struggle through a second night. Odd short cat-naps at CPs allowed me to make the best of the long trek. I must say I felt better at the 80 mile mark than at 35 miles. I completed the 100 miles, my 9th LDWA 100 mile event early Sunday morning. The finish was again at the Eastbourne Rugby Clubhouse. I was able to avail myself of a breakfast for which I paid 50p.

All round, I was extremely grateful to the organisers for their assistance throughout the weekend. It was reassuring to know that there were people about to help if needed. Back to Victoria Station by train. Scooped a Casey Jones Burger special on the way home. Exhausted!!

THE ULTIMATE ACHIEVEMENT.

KEITH WARMAN.

Life is for living. Life is a challenge. From the cradle, through all stages of life to the grave are various levels of challenge, each to be met and surmounted.

Many long-distance walkers tramp the footpaths and by-ways for reasons of fitness, camaraderie, fresh air or even for the sheer purpose of travelling for travelling's sake. I would suspect that many join social walks and enter events for the challenge of travelling from A to B over a pre-determined route, battling against the terrain, the weather, the route description, etc., and for the expectation of a successful completion.

During the past few years I've tramped through peat bogs, strode across wind-swept moors, slithered through star-lit nights and stumbled across cropped meadows. I've been snowed upon, sleeted on, hailed upon, rained on, sweated, boiled, scorched and burnt. Nothing however, can compare with what I have now achieved, the Ultimate Achievement!

I am not thinking of the elation of my first long-distance path (Pennine Way), the good feelings of my first 30-miler, 40-miler and overnight walk (Sevenoaks Circular, Oxon 40 and Surrey Summits), The satisfaction of my first Hundred (Pilgrims) or the relief of my second following the trauma after 93 miles (Dartmoor). Oh no, I am thinking of something which pales each of these landmarks into insignificance.

I have just realised that, for the first time in 6½ years, I am the proud and delightful owner of TEN PERFECTLY-SHAPED, PRISTINE WHITE TOENAILS! Long may they shine!

(With inspirational thanks to the "Laurie Lowe Mobile Toenail Exhibition".)

THE RED KITE TRAIL

Laurie Lowe.

Backpacking has always seemed to me to be an attractive way of carrying out an extended walk. The theory is that one travels as far or as fast as one wishes, with the essentials for day-to-day survival on your back - no need to book accommodation ahead or to have to stick to rigid schedules of time and distance. However, I had never had the determination to give it a try.

If you listen to experienced backpackers talking, you are left with the impression that it is a mysterious craft - with talk of devious ways of reducing the total weight to be humped about, gourmet dehydrated foods, how to drink from puddles, choosing places to pitch tent etc, etc. In addition, one has a bewildering choice of special gear to purchase - tent, sleeping bag, mat, stove etc, etc, and of course, an enormous rucksack to hold it all. I expressed my interest (and my doubts and reservations) to Peter Rickards and John Probert. Peter offered to lend me the gear and to take me for a trial trip. He even let me choose the area we were to walk in!! Peter and John waxed lyrical about the many pleasures to be gained from this mode of travel, omitting to tell of the time when Peter contracted some dread disease through pitching his tent in the dark on a rat-infested rubbish tip. He let this little gem slip out on the second day of the trip, while I was examining the wildlife in the pan of water he was intending to use for a brew-up!

Thus it was that Peter, John and I set out late in July to tackle the Red Kite Trail. This is a 75 mile (approx!) anytime challenge route in the Cambrian Mountains of mid-Wales. You are expected to devise your own route between four towns which encompass the Southern Cambrian Mountain Range and in which there are designated hotels which act as checkpoints. As the name suggests, this area is the home of the Red Kite, of which there are currently only approximately 50 breeding pairs in Britain.

First we checked in at The Neuadd Arms Hotel in Llanwrtyd Wells, where Gordon Green - who has devised the walk - gave us some advice on routes. Then we set off at about 5 pm. to do about 6 miles to our first intended campsite near Llyn Brianne. This short distance was a good move on the part of my two companions, as it gave me the chance to slowly adapt to carrying a 36 lb burden on my back. As it was, my leg muscles were starting to complain when we reached an idyllic spot at the side of the reservoir. This was great! A warm sunny evening, a stream of pure water nearby and a magnificent view. When I took the 36 lb encumbrance off, my body seemed to float above the ground! I then observed Peter perform a conjuring trick which he was to repeat each evening. He placed his rucksack on the ground, a tent leapt out and erected itself. His stove lit itself and prepared his evening meal while he was washing at the stream and in no time, he was into his sleeping bag and ready for bed, while I was still struggling with the stupid little aluminium poles which were supposed to keep my tent up.

My first meal was a disaster! I managed quite well with the instant soup and a mug of coffee, but the savoury rice had the consistency of lead shot and the vegeburger welded itself to the bottom of the frying pan. Traces of it were still there four days later. On top of this, every midge in mid-Wales had turned up to see the fun. I eventually retired to my sleeping bag, zipped up the tent only to find that a few hundred midges were playing hide-and-seek in my beard. I discovered later that my exotic diet of dehydrated foods, combined with my complete lack of culinary skills, gave me the ultimate anti-midge defense system! (Send £5 for details)

These irritations seemed insignificant when I emerged from the tent at about 5 am. (call of nature) to see the sun rising over one side of the valley while a full moon set on the opposite side. It was a glorious morning as we ambled down the valley to the dam at the end of the reservoir. Here we had the spectacular sight of a giant fountain of water gushing from the outlet pipe under immense pressure and glistening in the morning sun. Later, while having a brew-up on Mynydd Malleen, we saw a pair of the famous Red Kites soaring over some crags close by.

We reached the first hotel checkpoint at Pumsaint at 2.30. The landlord was expecting us and he had kindly kept the bar open! The late afternoon brought drizzle but we made good progress and made our way north to pitch our tents in the shelter of the ruined farmhouse at Blaen Cothi. It was here that Peter's confidence got the better of him and he spent two hours trying to heat up some lassagne over an open fire. The smoke from the damp wood was quite impressive. My second attempt at a vegeburger was almost edible.

It rained heavily during the night and it was still wet as we packed away the tents and set off on the next section. Our combined navigational skills resulted in us striking a forest road at exactly the intended spot and we then followed it down into Llandewi-Brefi, where we had a pub lunch. In order to make up time we took the B-road into Tregaron, where we checked our cards at the Talbot Hotel. By this time the weather was much improved and after a pot of tea and a quick bit of shopping, we left the town and made our way by minor roads and tracks to Strata Florida. From the site of the abbey we headed east and climbed steadily to arrive eventually at Llyn Egnant which seemed a good place to spend the third night. It was here that the water we were to use was teeming with wildlife (Peter's description was "brackish"). John threw in a water purifying tablet for good luck, but the creatures threw it back, so we just boiled the critters and hoped for the best!

The next morning I was amazed when I awoke and found that I was still feeling no ill-effects from either the water, the diet or the effort of carrying the heavy load over rough terrain. I was really surprised just how quickly one adapts to the heavy rucksack. The most difficult problem was getting the load on and off, and I had already noted that the piece of equipment used for compressing a sleeping bag down to a manageable size, would probably double as a truss if the need arose! This curious gadget seemed to have a variety of possible uses - (Send £10 for details)

We left Llyn Egnant in heavy drizzle and mist. The first three miles were extremely difficult and we were confused by what little we could see of the surrounding terrain in the mist. It did not seem to agree with the contours on the map, but we decided to trust the compass and eventually arrived at the bridge at Claerwen as intended. The weather improved rapidly and after a hard climb we picked up the ancient trackway which runs east towards Rayader. I had walked this track two years previously and I was saddened to see how badly it had deteriorated as a result of increasing use by trail-riders. At Pont-ar Elan we brewed up among the tourists sitting in their cars at this popular spot, before continuing along the same ancient road into Rayader. Here we checked in at the Elan Hotel, had a pot of tea and then did some shopping before heading down to Elan Village. From the dam, we skirted the shore of the reservoir and then climbed steeply to find an overnight stop above the forest. This was another good site and we were able to enjoy the warmth of the sun on our backs while preparing the evening meal.

The fine weather held for our final day as we followed a good trail over Carnau and down to the strangely deserted and derelict Pen Cae farm. The final miles to Llanwrtyd contained a sting-in-the-tail as the route traversed a series of steep-sided valleys which were hot and airless at the bottom. We arrived back

at the Neuadd Arms at 3.30 pm and were kindly offered the use of the hotel bathrooms free of charge. Once we had cleaned up, we went across to the Drovers Restaurant where we amazed the staff and customers by ordering and consuming in rapid succession fifteen assorted fizzy drinks (five each) and working our way through a substantial menu. During this feast, two local ladies came in for a pot of tea and were promptly assigned kitchen duties in order to help with the extra catering! We then staggered back to Gordon Green's hotel to collect certificates and one of the best embroidered badges I have ever come across.

So ended my first experience of backpacking. I enjoyed every minute of it. It was an excellent route in a remote and beautiful part of Wales. Even the spells of bad weather were an enjoyable challenge, met in the presence of such good companions. Along the way I learnt a lot from them. Thank you both Peter and John!

P.S. If anyone is interested in doing this walk, I have the route which we followed marked up on sheets 146 and 147.

RACE WALKING REPORT - St. Oedenrode, Holland. May 10/11th. Phil Hastings.

Last year, having won a couple of team trophies for the 100 English miles and 100 km events, we felt obliged to make return trip to St. Oedenrode to select a walk or two from their multi-staged road walking events. It is not difficult to find good reasons or excuses to go over to Holland to take part in these friendly walks. There is always a warm and sincere welcome extended to the English walkers who make the journey to St. Oedenrode.

Throughout the year we had made some gentle-paced arrangements, gathering together a group of interested people to join our Cantlum venture. It was only at the beginning of the year that we realised that these walks would clash with our own national 20 km championships at York. A number of walkers who had shown interest had to withdraw. Although we may have felt a little guilty at the time, we went ahead with our arrangements. It is well known that many Dutch walkers come over to England each year to take part in our Centurion walking events at Ewhurst and Leicester. We in our turn felt it would be returning the compliment by taking part in their event. The 10 Centurion walkers in our party would not upset the rankings at the National 20 km. None-the-less, we would be representative of that happy band of club walkers who turn up to every event never expecting to win a thing. The walks seem to be of the friendly nature, rather than the serious competitive type, that is except for one or two acknowledged exponents of the ultra-distance events.

Throughout the year people within the Cantlum R.W.C. take on the responsibility for arranging various aspect of the venture to ensure a happy and successful trip. While I was passing out general information and gathering together the interested walkers, Roger Michel would be checking out all our travel arrangements and ferry bookings. Mick Marshall was to be our road manager again. Richard Brown was able to negotiate the use of a Ford Transit van and financial sponsorship from the Ford Motor Company. This was a great help and much appreciated by all who went. During the run up to May, a couple of walkers had to drop out with more pressing club commitments. At the last moment both Roger Michel and Chris Hayes had to withdraw. This reduced our group to five walkers in the 100 mile event and three walkers in the 50 mile event.

The 100 miles started at 3 pm followed by the 100 km walk at 8 pm. Last to go were the 50 milers at 10 o'clock at night. Apart from some early rain, it held off for the duration of all the walks. Mick Marshall really came into his own and earned his corn as our road-side chef de cuisine, with Rennie as the sous chef. Now gone are the days when an attendant simply handed out an orange squash or

lemon drink. Our checkpoint-cum-feeding station was able to cater for a wide range of exotic eating habits :- Nicuraguan fish soup, Hungarian strawberry jam, whole wheat bread, honey current loaf, cheese and Turbo drink. For the more traditionally minded there were sos sandwiches, rice pudding and lashings of tea. A very careful and detailed lap chart was kept, giving individual requirements and estimated time of arrival. Like the Leicester 100 mile course, there is a 10 mile lap and so it is roughly 2 hours before you return to HQ. It is therefore essential that our attendants get the act together. This they did magnificently, which is borne out by the walk results. All the walkers responded to Mick's administrations and Big Hans' verbal encouragement.

Martin Jones of the Dawlish and South Devon Club, together with Richard Brown of Surrey W.C., were soon out in front. They held onto this lead for the full 100miles. Martin eventually won the race in a magnificent time of 18 hours 22 mins. Richard was second in 19 hours. Ian Bradwell and John Bellwood were also well placed in the final results. Young Gordon Beattie of the Medway club gave us the most satisfying result in his first ever Centurion walk. The big boys did us proud having also won the team trophy. Those of us who chose the soft option to walk in the "Kennedy Friends" 50 miles, also excelled themselves. Frank Dolan won the event in a modest 9½ hours while I came in second some 45 minutes later. Roger 'Rambo' Le Moine played a blinder to be placed 4th overall. Here again we won the team trophy.

This was again a most successful venture by our little Cantlum R.W.C. Our most grateful thanks go out to the Ford Motor Company for their sponsorship. Before leaving St. Oedenrode a very warm invitation was extended to our group to return again next year.

WARMAN'S WAMBLE 20th July

Laurie Lowe.

An exceptionally good turnout of walkers assembled in the Avenue of Remembrance in Sittingbourne for this the second of a series of excursions led by Keith Warman. It was good to see several new (and young!) faces in our midst.

As the police approached laying a trail of "No Parking" cones, we marched off briskly on a route which led us through some attractive but, I suspect, rarely visited Kent countryside. This was truly the Garden of England with much evidence of fruit growing. However, even here the 'foreign' crop of rape seed was evident and on occasions slowed our progress as Keith hacked his way through this barrier. Keith and Roy had obviously reconnoitred the route well, as there were no hesitations in finding the correct line. Only once did we falter before a barrier of head-high nettles.

Lunch was taken in the pub garden at Eastling where our numbers were increased by the arrival of supporters and some late starters in the form of the Rickards family. The highlights of the afternoon route were the cool drink previously hidden away alongside the route by Keith and passing through cherry orchards laden with ripe fruit which unaccountably just fell into our hands!!

A most enjoyable day out in mid-Kent. Thanks Keith!

REPORTS WANTED - I need the co-operation of all members in compiling this newsletter. In particular, I would like reports on group activities, especially group walks. If you take part in a walk and are willing to write a report, let me know as soon as possible so that I can plan its inclusion in the next issue.

Laurie Lowe, Editor.

FAMILY WALK AND LUNCH - Cranbrook - Sunday 23rd November

The walk will be at a reasonable pace for all the family to enjoy and will be approximately 5 miles in distance.

Meet in the public car park near the windmill in Cranbrook in time to start the walk at 10.30 prompt.

A meal has been booked at "The George Hotel" for 1 pm.

The menu is as follows:- Soup

Homemade Steak & Kidney Pie with veg in season

Homemade Sherry Trifle

Coffee

Cost £7-20 (Inclusive of VAT and service)

Please send your bookings to Ted Laundon (by 15th November the latest)

Booking for lunch at The George, Cranbrook, Sunday 23rd November.

Please reserveplaces at the lunch at £7-20 per head.

I enclose cheque/postal order for £.....

Signed..... Date.....

BARGAIN BASEMENT..... As previously offered at discount prices

KARHU SYNCRON TRAINERS

Unit price for orders of ten or more is £37-50.

Also available at a discount are the

SOFT OPTION DAYSACS

These normally retail at £22 but for orders of 5 or more the price is £17.

If you are interested in either of these items contact Pete Barnett

who is willing to put together bulk orders.