



LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



"Grin and Bear It!"

TED LAUNDON (LDWA 3226)

It was with sadness that we learnt of the death, at the age of 67, of Ted Laundon. He died on March 2nd from a heart attack. He had felt unwell for about a week and as a result had scratched from the Seven Sisters Marathon.

Ted was a good friend and an active member, joining the LDWA in 1978 and the Kent group in 1980. He was always a great help in the organisation of our challenge events, in particular manning the H.Q.'s at the Wealden Waters and Sevenoaks Circular events and checkpointing at such places as Ightham and the Weald.

Ted was elected group Treasurer in 1985 and was re-elected to this position at this year's AGM.

After a long and dedicated career in teaching, punctuated by war service - some of which was spent as a POW - Ted was able to actively pursue his love of walking. Over the years he had completed the South West Peninsular Path and in 1980 he successfully completed the Downsman 100. Having a connection with East Anglia, he pursued his passion for coastal walking and such events as the Poppy Line, Blackwater and Shotley Peninsula became his favourites.

Many of us have bought group sweatshirts from Ted and he will be remembered for his vigorous promotion of these items whenever the opportunity presented. More recently, Ted and his wife Mary lost a night's sleep in order to provide a superb refreshment stop at 3 am on the group's winter night walk in early February. A week later Ted enjoyed his last walk with us on Trevor's 20 mile social walk from Farningham.

Ted was a loyal member of the group who will always be remembered and who will be greatly missed by us all.

Brian Buttifant, Sec.

KENT LDWA - PROGRAMME OF WALKS TO JULY 1987

- SAT APRIL 25th 22 Miles from Trosley Country Park. Meet in car park off A227 (GR 633 611) for a 9 am start. Leader Dave Sheldrake.
[REDACTED] [REDACTED].
- SUN MAY 3rd MAIDSTONE CIRCULAR. This is a 22 mile walk starting from Cobtree Country Park car park, Forstal Road, Allington. GR 747 586. 9 am start. Leader Peter Barnett.
- THUR MAY 14th Evening walk from Farnborough (Kent!) Meet at 'The George' in Farnborough village for 7 pm start. Leader Alan Ball.
[REDACTED] [REDACTED].
- THUR JUNE 11th Evening walk from Farningham. Approx 8 miles. Meet at Farningham Church (GR 547 669) for 7 pm start. Leader Laurie Lowe. Tel. [REDACTED] [REDACTED].
- SUN JUNE 21st WINDMILL WALKABOUT. Join Keith Warman [REDACTED] [REDACTED] for an undulating perambulation of 25 miles from Rye (E.Sussex) 8 am start from car park (30p) in Rope Walk, off Cinque Port Street. GR 921 206.
- SUN JULY 26th GREENSAND WAY EXTENSION (part of) 22 miles. 9am start from Potters Corner lay-by on A20 (GR 991 448) Leader Paul Hatcher. Tel. [REDACTED].

Two walks are being planned later this year for the strong long distance walker:-

1. The Vanguard's Way
2. The Sussex Border Path (part 2)

Further details later.

1987 COMMITTEE

The membership has shown their confidence in the Group Officers, so the holders of these positions remain the same. Graham James and Keith Warman were the two retiring members of the old committee, their efforts in committee and general help in group activities have been greatly appreciated, the latter I'm sure will continue.

There were six nominations at the AGM for the five committee places. The meeting agreed that the committee number be extended to six. Details of Officers and Committee for 1987 are:-

Chairman - Peter Barnett
Treasurer - Ted Laundon *
Secretary - Brian Buttifant

Committee - Trevor Blake, Anitra Harper, James Oddy, Peter Rickards, Ron Roweth, and Dave Sheldrake.

* Ron Roweth has agreed to act as treasurer as a result of Ted's untimely death.

Brian Buttifant, Sec.

THE WHISTLE

by 'PARERE'

Usually about 65 mm in length, made in hard plastic but sometimes in mono-metal, loud enough to blast the ear drums off the person blowing it and can be heard on a still day at up to one thousand metres, but quite useless, in my experience, in any sort of cover or bad weather.

Having tested the plastic type whistle on various occasions; it is usually found in the depths of the rucksack filled with gunge and fluff that evades all efforts to eject it for quite some minutes. I found that a person in a wooded area was unable to hear any sound from my strenuous efforts although I was able to hear his shouts - this with a slight wind blowing from me to him. On open moorland, the same whistle failed to attract the attention of a couple of walkers who appeared to be more concerned with each other than the plight of some boghopper on Kinder Scout who had the strangest feeling that there was no way out of plight that he had gotten himself into. On other occasions, the same whistle was used to attract the attention of a walker in fog who had gone off in the wrong direction, but without success - again on quite a still day. Open moorland is hopeless as the sound is immediately absorbed in the peat and heather and the only answer you are likely to get is 'Back, Back, Back' from an infuriated Red Grouse. The best time to use the whistle is at night when the air is clear and still. A long blast after midnight in a not too built-up area will get lights popping on where you did not expect to find light available, and with the added accompaniment of "Shut that *#*#@! noise!"

The powers that be tell us that we should carry our whistle in the hills at all times and know how to use it. I carry one; but how do I use it?

EDITOR :- This article raises a number of points, and since part of its author's intention was to encourage debate, here goes!

The problem of the whistle gravitating to the furthest depths of the rucksack and filling up with fluff can be overcome by attaching it by means of a split ring to the toggle of one of the sac's zips. In this way it is always to hand, does not become blocked with fluff (although if you wallow in bogs it may fill with peat or mud) Also, it makes a useful handle for the zip, especially when your hands are cold or wet.

I am not able to comment on the effectiveness of the way in which the sound of a whistle will carry over various types of terrain, but in an emergency, what alternatives are there? Possibly shouting is more effective in certain conditions, but six blasts on a whistle is the internationally recognised emergency signal. Of course, at night this should be backed up by torch - again using a sequence of six flashes separated by an interval of one minute.

One warning! I once had a metal whistle with a cork 'pea' which did not work when wet because the pea became swollen and jammed! For this reason I now favour the modern orange plastic type with no moving parts.

The most effective use of a whistle that I have experienced was in France, where it is favoured by the police. We were on tour with a team of young competitive swimmers in a small town in Northern France. The tour leader used his whistle in the street to attract the attention of his group of swimmers who were window-shopping. The effect on the local population was dramatic. Within seconds they had all vanished from sight and taken refuge indoors on the assumption that the blast heralded a police raid. The only people remaining outdoors were the visiting Brits!

Laurie

THE WEALDEN WATERS WALK - 1986, "A View From The Rear.".....Ron Roweth.

Providing sweepers for our challenge walks is a relatively new feature for the Kent Group, but many of us are now convinced of its usefulness, particularly on the longer events. Last year a sweeper was introduced for this event and even managed to get himself lost! This time two of the older plodders decided to try their luck.

Once more the weather was attempting to destroy the event's early reputation so what could be better, we thought, setting out an hour after the field, than an uninterrupted chat through the first twenty miles in beautiful autumn weather. Well, its as easy to be fooled at this game as any other, and before Bayham Lake we caught up two stragglers. They quickened up slightly, especially when paced for a while by the event organiser Mike Smith, but their grim determination seemed ominous for us, and sure enough we had to see them through to Weir Wood before they finally gave up. This of course dictated the pace of the walk for us - tedious at times but compensated by long stops and much eating and drinking at all the checkpoints (even including the first number check!)

At times progress seemed to be like the Pied Piper's procession in reverse - catching up tail-enders, watching them make the oddest errors, pointing out what the route description said, and then dropping to the back again. I'm sure we soon became mighty unpopular ! Still, at least the early check-point marshals appeared glad to see us arrive, since it helped them to clear their missing numbers and close down more or less on time.

After dark we decided to do the leading, if only to avoid getting too many miles behind the rest of the walk, and except for a refreshment stop at "The Half Moon", we kept up a fair speed with a gradually increasing group through to Weir Wood, 15 minutes before their closedown.

The other walkers retired there, and so we set off again almost an hour after the last group, thinking that this would relieve us of sweeping duties until about daybreak. Getting rather careless, we made a hash of the section to Forest Row in the mist, but four miles further on we caught up the next set of wandering torches. Luckily they walked well throughout the night, as did others collected between New Barns Farm and Bough Beech. Not so the lights we approached near the Hever rail bridge - they just vanished into the night, and only at Bough Beech did we discover that one was carried by no less a person than last year's disappearing sweeper!

After daybreak things got rather easier, and the surprisingly large number of walkers at the back of the field all seemed capable of finishing within the time limit. There appeared to be several variants of the last section in use, but they must have been of roughly equal length, as everyone had regrouped before the finish.

Our thoughts at the end, apart from realising how extremely tiring it can be doing a long walk at other people's pace, and having stops much longer than is normal at each check-point, were chiefly on the very professional quality of the Group's check-pointing and feeding arrangements throughout the walk, and we heard many comments on this. Towards the end the marshals were most helpful to the tired stragglers - even to the extent of convincing Phil Hastings that he could make it to the finish. It was also nice to see other group members out on the route in the final miles, giving encouragement to the weary, which by that time, of course, included us.

Thanks to Harry Bishop's daughter Meryl for the cover illustration on this newsletter.

FAMILY LUNCH WALK.....23rd November 1986.

The group returned this year to Cranbrook for the popular family get-together. In spite of appalling overnight weather and a forecast which did not promise much improvement, there was a remarkably good turnout of waterproof- and wellie-clad persons. The only problem was the embarrassing absence of the walk leader! This resulted in a slightly delayed start with Peter Barnett, aided and abetted by Peter Rickard and Maurice Faircloth, making up the route as they went along the way!

The weather was on our side - with a dramatic improvement overhead neatly timed to coincide with our departure. The conditions underfoot were, however, too prove less friendly. All went well for about an hour. The route passed through pleasant farmland and several orchards. Here the honest restricted their activities to picking up windfalls, while others helped themselves to the better quality merchandise already in packing cases!

During the second half of the walk route finding was less certain. After some hesitation at a farm, we headed up a track which started off as very muddy and rapidly became impossible! Liquid mud (I think!) lapped around the tops of wellies. Brian lost one boot in the slurry, did an impromptu impression of a stork, standing on one leg while he retrieved the boot before it disappeared beneath the surface forever. We eventually struggled to the top of the hill while a herd of cows looked on in amazement at what some humans will do for enjoyment!

After a short level stretch, with more frantic consultation of maps and compass, we plunged into a wood, and in the absence of any evidence of a path, we soon found ourselves faced with a steep-sided gully barring further progress. There were two options - either paddle the swollen stream or cross by means of a fallen tree which formed a crude bridge. We were soon all safely across and scrambling up the far bank. From here on the route was fairly straightforward and the pace quickened as the appointed hour for lunch approached.

We made it back to 'The George' only some 15 minutes late. This was probably one of the most exciting and good-spirited family lunch walks that we have had! Fortunately the less hardened walkers amongst us took it all in good part in spite of the fact that at times it resembled a commando assault course rather than a family walk.

At 'The George', we met up with more members and friends to enjoy the lunch which helped to restore those who were feeling the after effects of the morning's activities. In one respect this was a sad occasion. It was farewell to Debbie and Ian Waddell, who were moving to Wiltshire. Let us hope that we will meet up with them again on future LDWA events.

Laurie Lowe.

IT TAKES ALL SORTS.....

" Mr Russell Fox, the independent-minded Edinburgh councillor, was an individual who did not always see eye-to-eye with the Labour Party, or with the voters he represented. His hobby was collecting election addresses. As director of The Rights of Way Society, he campaigned successfully for walkers maps to be displayed at the foot of the Pentland Hills. As Miss Ruby Todd, he was a leading member of the Scottish Trans-sexual Group, on whose behalf he led, though failed to win, the fight for special seating on Lothian Council Transport for transvestites. "

The Scotsman 8.1.1987.

Bryan Clarke.

FOLKESTONE - BOULOGNE TRIP - 1st November, 1986.....Graham James.

For the second year running, our Group sent an invading party to picturesque Boulogne. This time there were nineteen of us and we left Folkestone at a more respectable hour - 10 am compared with last year's 7.30am!

The sea provided an interesting rolling swell with a predominant, strong south-westerly wind blowing up the Channel. However, the conditions didn't prevent anyone enjoying the very pleasant one hour and three quarters before we docked at Boulogne quayside. A few minutes later I saw a sight to gladden and relieve my worries - a shopper returning heavily laden from the Champion supermarket. The problem had been that many months ago we had chosen November 1st as the date for our trip and it was only a few days prior to the trip that I had realised that it was one of the many French national holidays! Fortunately, Champion, Prix-Unis and most of the restaurants were open. Brian Buttifant, Alan Knight, Colin Harris and Maurice and Joanna Faircloth had other ideas though. They headed off in an easterly direction to the Foret de Boulogne and even found some French footpaths, which are none too frequent in this area. Pete Barnett and a few others enjoyed a meal at an inappropriately name "Welsh Pub", which in fact served excellent French cuisine, whilst Pat, Sheila and I passed a couple of hours at "Chez Pitch", another recommended restaurant. They really do choose some unusual names for their eating places!

I'm glad to say nobody missed the returning ferry which reached Folkestone at 21.45 hours. The memories of the trip linger well on to Christmas and beyond as we opened that special bottle of wine on the 25th.

How about joining us next year?

GROUP PHOTO ALBUM

As I mentioned at the AGM, it has been suggested that the group should start to keep a photographic record of its activities. This will be in the form of an album (kindly donated by Pauline Barnett) containing prints and brief notes relating to the photos. Over the years it should provide an interesting record of the group's history.

I have been assigned the job of getting it started and although it is obviously not possible to cover all of the past activities, it would be nice to have some of the photos from the past. These can be either black and white or colour prints and should be identifiable as recording a group activity, i.e. members on group walks, challenge walks, dinners, checkpoints, etc. So to help me get started, I would like to receive suitable prints from anyone willing to donate them. It would also be a great help if you could also supply details to be recorded alongside the photos, i.e. approx. date, occasion, location, names of persons identifiable in the photo, etc.

I would like to get this initial phase of assembling photos from the past completed as soon as possible. Once this has been done I will be after you for current photographic records which can then be entered in chronological order. I don't want vast numbers, just representative records of each of the group's activities as they occur. Please contact me at the monthly meetings or at the address below:-

Laurie Lowe, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER.....It has been suggested that the newsletter should contain more 'informative' articles to augment the regular diet of reports on events.

There must be a wealth of knowledge and experience held by our members and which may be of interest and use to more recent devotees of long distance walking. Ideas and practices which some people take for granted may be a revelation to other members!

If you have any useful tips, or are willing to relate your experiences in dealing with any of the problems which occur during the execution of our chosen pastime, please put it down on paper - it need only be a brief note, or it can run to several pages.

To set the ball rolling, I have jotted down some of my experiences in dealing with the problem of preventing blisters. Perhaps, having read it you will think my ideas are crazy and yours are better. OK, then say so! If, on the other hand you agree with my approach to preventing blisters, then find your own subject to write about!

Ideas for future topics:-

Cameras suitable for carrying when walking (weight, weatherproof, etc)

Torches for overnight events (again weight and weatherproof considerations)

Coping with wet weather.

Map reading with poor eyesight!

BLISTERS - HOW I AVOID THEM! (Well, most of the time)

Fortunately, I do not normally suffer from the problem of blisters. However, I recently returned from an evening stroll of only six miles to discover that I had managed to generate a real beauty on my heel. On reflection, I realised that it was due to careless preparation and a lack of attention to the warning signs, which had led to dire results over such a short distance.

I had set off wearing a pair of boots which are normally quite comfortable, but on this occasion I wore only one pair of socks. I realised that all was not well within the first mile, but the discomfort soon disappeared and it was not until near the end of the walk that I again became aware of any sensation of pain, and by this time the damage had been done!

This incident illustrates a number of points which are important to understand. First, the main cause of blisters is friction between foot and footwear. Because I wore only one pair of socks, the boots were loose and my heel moved up and down relative to the boot with each step. Secondly, it is a fact that one becomes less sensitive to pain during exercise. We all know how painful even a small blister can be after a period of rest, and how the pain seems to diminish once exercise is resumed. The final point is that by the time the blister makes its presence really felt, it is too late to do anything about it!

Thorough preparation of the feet before a long walk is the secret of avoiding the problem. The most important thing is to avoid any movement of the feet relative to the boot or trainer. I achieve this by wearing three pairs of socks inside training shoes which are large enough (but not too large!) to accommodate all this padding. Next to the skin I wear a pair of thin, patternless socks (Marks & Spencer) Over these I pull a pair of loop-stitch long socks, these provide most of the padding. The final layer is made up of a pair of short

wool/nylon mixture socks (M&S again!) which have an extra thick underside to the feet. This last layer provides more padding and when rolled down over the tops of the shoes, prevents mud and grit from getting inside. Now, with the feet encased in this cocoon of soft wool, the shoes can be laced up tightly. You should be able to walk over uneven ground without any discernable movement of your feet inside the shoes.

In the case of trainers, this ideal situation may not last long. I find that they tend to stretch slightly in the first few miles and will need re-adjustment of the lacing to maintain the perfect fit. If it is wet, then they will most definitely stretch and tightening the laces will be essential for continued comfort.

The routine detailed above will eliminate the friction between foot and footwear. However, friction between the toes may still occur. This is best dealt with by the liberal application of vaseline (or lanoline) between the offending appendages. Do it before the walk - don't leave it until trouble starts. The use of talcum powder between the toes - as recommended by the authors of many books on walking - is, in my opinion, a recipe for disaster. Once the feet start to sweat (or perspire, if you are a lady) the nice dry powder turns to an abrasive paste which can be guaranteed to maximise friction on the skin of adjacent toes.

On very long walks - in spite of all these precautions - you may still develop a blister under the ball of the foot. A technique which I use for walks in excess of 30 miles, is to apply a strip of plaster across this part of the foot. Use zinc oxide plaster which is thin and smooth. Do not use the thicker elasticated type. Buy a two inch wide roll and apply a strip to the underside of the foot - making sure that the skin is dry and free of talc or grease. If applied carefully it will not wrinkle up. This stuff really sticks. I have known it to be still in place after 100 wet miles. You may need surgery to remove it!

Finally, a tip for the real aficionados - if in spite of all my advice, you find a hot spot developing towards the end of a long walk - then keep your feet wet! Paddle in streams, puddles, cattle troughs, etc. Water is an ideal lubricant for skin and it brings instant relief to hot, aching feet. But be warned! When you eventually complete that second day of a hundred and come to take your socks and shoes off, you will find that your cool, moist feet will resemble a pair of albino prunes! But then who has ever heard of prunes getting blisters!!

Laurie Lowe.

"WEATHERCALL - SOUTH EAST"

You may not realise that there is now a local weather forecast service provided by the Met. Office. It is called 'Weathercall' and is available by ringing 0898-500-402.

You will hear a recorded, detailed forecast for the Kent, Surrey and Sussex area. The forecast covers a 24 hour period and is updated three times every 24 hours. A call after 6 pm will give details for the whole of the next day - ideal for deciding what ensemble to wear for the next day's event!

MISSING EQUIPMENT.....

The following items of group equipment have gone astray:-

Double gas burner and gas bottle. Large teapot.

If anyone knows the whereabouts of these items will they please contact Brian Buttifant.

SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR REPORT..... 15th March 1987.

This was the 13th promotion of this popular event but luckily the weekend weather was better than first predicted, so entrants - hopefully - enjoyed a fine but cold day. The route, which was the same as last year, wasn't without mud but this was not a real problem.

Second time mayor of Sevenoaks Bill Finney started the walkers off at 8.50 am and our chairman Peter Barnett set the runners off at 10.30 - a larger number of entrants than usual.

Mark Pickard was first home in 4 hr 20 min, and the first lady - Hilary Walker of Serpentine R.C.-came in joint fifth. Of the 350 starters, 56 were from youth groups and a total of 299 completed the course with 26 who were outside the time limit. Both of LDWA's septuagenarians, Henry Bridge and Bill Sterling finished in under ten hours.

We hope you enjoyed the day out - thank you for coming and we hope to see you next year.....20th March 1988!

Acknowledgements to:-

Sevenoaks Town Council for the use of Raleys Centre.
Sevenoaks Town Mayor Bill Finney.
Sevenoaks District Council for the use of Chipstead Green.
Mrs Patmore of Ightham Mote Farm.
Mr R. Norman of St Clere Estates.
Mr Rawlings of Whickhurst Manor.
Otford Scouts for use of the scout hut.
Lady Boswell School.

Our hard working members and friends were:-

Number Checks - Shipbourne - Anitra Harper, Paul Bourne.
Row Dow - Paul Hatcher, Neil O'Rourke.
Ide Hill - Don and Ian Scott, Andrew Melling.

Checkpoints - CP1 Moat Farm - Martin Berry, Trevor Blake, Gordon Beattie, Ann and Ivan Waghorn and their daughter.
CP2 St Clere - Bryan Clarke, Andrew Clarke and members of the 4th Bexleyheath Scouts.
CP3 Otford - Kath Coulson, Eileen Lowe, Jennie Adams, Pamela Prince, Susan Verrell, Dave Cowley, Ken Heath.
CP4 Chipstead - Pauline, Chris and Peter Barnett, Martin Davey, Nick Nicholson, Mrs Redgrave, George Rogers John Probert.
CP5 Weald - Celia and Ernie Bishop, Moira and Peter Rickards.
Sweepers were Paul Bourne and Ron Roweth.

Others on duty at Raleys were :- Mike Attewell, Jim Oddy, Brenda and Fiona Buttifant, Iris Cowley, Jenny Keeley, Eileen Emery, Roy and Win Warman.

On behalf of all the walkers - thanks to you all.

Two items of property left behind were a camera and a pair of gaiters. If claiming please contact me with details.

Brian Buttifant.