



# LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

## Kent Group

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

# NEWSLETTER

-SPEEDMARCHING

"The Rambler"  
("wambler")

24<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1981



Number 14

August 1987.

Question... Who does this remind you of ? For a clue see the bottom of page 10

KENT LDWA COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN..... PETER BARNETT

TREASURER.....RON ROWETH

SECRETARY.....BRIAN BUTTIFANT

COMMITTEE MEMBERS....TREVOR BLAKE, ANITRA HARPER, JAMES ODDY, PETER RICKARDS,  
DAVE SHELDRAKE.

PROGRAMME from August to December 1987

September 18 -20th

Group weekend in the Brecons. Hotel accomodation available. Take part in the Mystery Mountain Marathon. Contact Pete Barnett for details.

October 10-11th

Wealden Waters Walk. The Group's 100 km challenge event. Contact Mike Smith on [REDACTED] if you are able to help on the event. \*\* See the note below on the problems of marshalling this longest of Kent events.

October 20th

Video Evening at St Edith Hall, Kemsing. Start 8 pm. On show will be the Dartmoor Hundred and the London Marathon.

October 31st

A repeat of that Winter Night Walk, only this time in daylight hours, when you will be able to see the scenery and what's more, the pubs will be open!! 25 miles from Charing church starting at 9 am. Pub lunch. Leader Pete Barnett

November 14th

Another popular repeat of the Day Trip to Boulogne with optional short walk or shopping/eating/drinking. Contact secretary for details.

November 29th

Christmas Family Walk and Lunch. Starting with a 5 mile walk from Donnington Manor, Dunton Green at 10 am. Returning at 12-30 for a meal. Bookings to Peter Rickards on [REDACTED] by November 22 at the latest.

December 11th

Christmas Drinks Evening. Venue to be decided. Ring Peter Rickards on [REDACTED] for details.

WEALDEN WATERS WALK, OCTOBER 10-11th 1987

**\*\* YOUR GROUP NEEDS YOU !!**

Offers of help are requested for checkpointing - Please give this serious thought before entering to walk the event.

It is your committee's hope that this year some new faces will come forward, thereby allowing regular checkpointers to walk if they so desire. Our group has sufficient membership that with a little give and take, all the jobs can be filled and the hardworkers of previous years can have their wish.

Please - all of you out there - give the organiser or committee your name and we can have another successful event. Remember, no checkpoint or start and finish staffing, no event and this applies to the whole of the LDWA. There has never been an event cancelled through lack of volunteers to run it. Don't let Kent be the first to falter. Let us have your name now. The committee thanks you in anticipation of a good response.



BACKPACKING THE TWO MOORS WAY.....BRIAN BUTTIFANT.

This Easter the weather was excellent, so this gave me a good introduction to backpacking. My four colleagues were Paul Bourne, Laurie Lowe, Keith Porter and leader Peter Rickards - all experienced backpackers who tolerated the new boy well. Peter had organised the trip some months earlier and had given me considerable advice and lent me various items of equipment. Our schedule was from midday Thursday 'till lunchtime on the following Tuesday.

After a pasty and pint at the Bridge Inn in Ivybridge, we started in warm sunshine on our 104 mile trek across Dartmoor and Exmoor to the N. Devon coast at Lynmouth. The first part across Dartmoor was familiar to some of us, and memories of the two LDWA Hundreds came flooding back as we strode across Ugborough Moor on the old railway track. Our first night's pitch was at Chalk Ford on the banks of the R. Mardle and this we made by 6 pm. Cooking didn't start in earnest here as I had eaten well that day and I had some sandwiches to be consumed.

Friday morning we were ready for walking by 8.30 which was the pattern for each morning to follow. Whilst Peter enjoyed his egg and bacon, tea, muesli and a Ryvita was sufficient for me! This was to be our first full day's walking and it was getting really warm by 11 o'clock, so when Peter came back with some ice creams from the P.O. at Ponsworthy, we found them very welcome. In fact, we all went down to the shop afterwards to sample the apple pasties. On Hameldown, an old lady told us of approaching rain but the sky looked good to us. In fact, that evening we camped in a pasture field on the banks of the R. Teign near Chagford Bridge. A good pitch with the river inviting us in - I more reluctantly than the others! After my first successful and satisfying cooked meal, I was feeling pleased with my tired self. I was determined to get organised for the morning and so declined a trip to the pub and was asleep when the others got back later that evening.

Any walk of Peter's has to have its bit of excitement, so next morning, as we walked by the river near Castle Drogo, Peter decided we should be up on the high level path and so we scaled the heights, getting steeper and for me more scary. As we climbed higher and higher, my packframe pushed my head forward and down so I could not see the beckoning climbers ahead. A rescue party came to my aid as I eventually froze by a tree. We eventually made it to the top of the ridge more or less in one piece.

We stopped in Drewsteigton to down a litre of orange juice as again it was getting hot. Soon after we were out of the National Park and over the A30. This next section between the moors was on lanes and field paths for some 20 or so miles. In many of the farms we passed through, we saw old buildings constructed of clay and straw, many in disrepair.

Our third camp was on a farm at Black Dog. We were in a field that had not been grazed and as rain was threatening and the wind was getting up, we soon got on with cooking, but without good wind protection my cooking took longer than it should have done. This was my first good night's sleep, due either to a longer walk the previous day or the absence of the sound of running water. Our previous pitches had all been by rivers!

Sunday morning brought a bad blow for Keith, who has a history of back trouble. He had spent a bad night and felt he could not go on, but decided to give it a go, only to have to give up after a very short distance. Peter took his pack back to the farm where he would rest and work out a plan to get back to his car which was left at Lynmouth.

More lanes and muddy bridledways brought the remaining four of us to Witherage, where unfortunately we were too early for morning coffee at the village pub. So we contented ourselves with some drinks from the village shop. After a brief wayside lunch stop, we encountered some very heavy hail storms and at one stage we took refuge in a stable.

As we approached Exmoor, we obtained some water from the last household before the open moor and climbed up to Anstey Common to look for a site out of the wind which was now getting very strong. I haven't mentioned my menu so far, but after my Vesta curry, I again enjoyed my much talked about instant semolina mix. Laurie even took a spare packet for his breakfast! The next morning we awoke to the sound of pounding hooves as some riders were exercising their horses nearby. It was 8 am when we started our fourth full day and we were dropping down to the famous old clapper bridge at Tarr Steps and along the four mile walk by the beautiful R. Barle to Withypool. The primroses were prolific as was the case in all the sheltered valleys. We eagerly found the Royal Oak in Withypool at midday for a much needed drink. No sooner had we downed the first pint when Keith arrived in his car! We all went inside to have a Somerset pasty and chips and to catch up on each others news. We were certainly on schedule for an 11 am finish in Lynmouth where we would next see Keith.

Our pitch for the final night was by the river at Hoar Oak. This is a tree which marks the ancient boundary of Exmoor Forest and is on the present county boundary of Devon and Somerset. This was to me the most beautiful site, set in a picturesque valley between the hills. It was a lovely evening and after dinner I lay in my open tent and attempted to sketch what could be seen.

Our last morning walk was across the moor through sheep fields to Hillsford Bridge where the Hoar Oak Water joins the Farley Water before flowing into the East Lynn. We crossed the A37 to go along some attractive hill paths on Myrtleberry Cleve and then down Lyn Cleve into Lynmouth - 10.55 am! After a reunion with Keith, he drove us back to Ivybridge to pick up Peter's car for the homeward journey.

What a memorable introduction to backpacking, helped greatly by the superb weather and of course good company - will they take me again? I really did enjoy the experience.

#### HEARD ON THE SURREY SUMMITS.....

I walked for some time with a big burly Yorkshire chap who told me that last year one of his friends had suggested that they get a team up and go down and show those Southerners just how it's done. Seven of them set out for the start and arrived late, one of them did not start at all (he did not say why) four of them retired at about half way, one of them finished with an hour to go and the other finished over an hour out of time!

I congratulated him on the turn out and on his honesty!!

John Probert (524)

#### **RHYTHM METHOD**

~~Researchers initially developed to measure~~  
~~distances walked by humans are now being~~  
~~used to help farmers decide when cows are~~  
~~ready for mating. Researchers have found~~  
~~that cows in oestrus tend to be more restless~~  
~~than those not on heat. By fitting~~  
~~pedometers on the cows' hind legs it is~~  
~~possible to establish a typical pattern of~~  
~~daily activity. Any marked deviation from~~  
~~normal behaviour has been found to~~  
~~coincide with the cow's oestrus.~~

Despite a number of detection aids the success rate of picking cows in oestrus in most herds is between 40 and 60 per cent. Trials using the pedometers produced detection rates of 70 to 100 per cent with cows on heat walking up to seven miles a day, over twice their normal distance of two to three miles.

Dr Clive Phillips and Ann Schofield, at the University College of North Wales, are now hoping to develop an electronic pedometer which calculates normal daily activity automatically. When the cow is in oestrus, her increased activity will trigger the pedometer to produce an audible signal.

**THE OBSERVER.**

Could this explain why my mileage chart is so erratic? Ed.



THE ALTERNATIVE MAIDSTONE CIRCULAR.....3rd May.

Michael Attewell

You could only qualify for this walk if you either found yourself on the wrong side of the Medway at 8.50 am or you had decided to walk the four or five miles from home to the start. As a consequence you then had to arrive at the start in the Country Park between 6 and 8 minutes past nine and be prepared to leave at 9.10!

Thus Gordon Beattie and I found ourselves ready to set off in hot pursuit of the main bunch in the knowledge that we had to choose the right course and cut a few corners to catch up any group led by Pete Barnett. In the event we chose the totally opposite direction!!

I'd provided the map and compass and Gordon provided some local knowledge and we chose what seemed the only logical route for 22 miles if we were to avoid many of the estates that seem to abound on the peripheries of Maidstone. Having galloped ( my expression, not Gordon's) for an hour or so we passed through the village of Detling and climbed to the top of the escarpment on a main road which was hairy to say the least and made more so by the number of lost wheel caps we passed on this stretch. After a while we went through a narrow belt of trees to emerge overlooking a magnificent stretch of countryside, albeit one that had suffered from some very intensive farming methods, leaving great tracks of it unbroken by trees or hedgerows.

Giving up all hope of making contact with the main bunch, we paused for some time to admire the countryside and discuss the nature of the infamous farmer in these parts. We had further cause to discuss the farmer when on leaving this spot we tracked along the Downs on what should have been a path but was now ploughed for no other reason, it seemed, than to spoil it for walkers - and, I would have thought, at some danger to the ploughman. On reaching the ground we had admired from above, we headed almost directly south for a mile or two on quiet roads through pleasant countryside and past some nice houses to the outskirts of Bearsted. We had toyed with the idea of taking in Leeds Castle but discounted that as being impractical because of the distance involved, so now we settled for the Tudor House, the grounds of which will soon sport a golf course. The path in these parts will have to be realigned when the course is in play but in the meantime we skirted the greens and crossed the River Len with no problems.

The weather had been very pleasant and warm until now, but now a dark patch of cloud enforced an early lunch which we had with our backs to some trees and the weather, which at one point consisted of hailstones. Continuing on our way, we came across Boughton Monchelsea. "Came across" is an apt description of this delightful village, nestling in high ground and very reminiscent of a village in the Dordogne both in architecture and location.

In Loose we made a rapid detour both round the church and around the ancient yew tree that is over a thousand years old. The walk around the church was to locate the path; that around the yew was to ascertain just how large and old it really was. It's been suggested that Loose got its name from the way the river that winds its way through the village loses its way - or just disappears. After leaving the village we again had to take shelter from another heavy hailstorm. It only lasted a few minutes and the weather prospects looked so promising that we continued in the rain without bothering too much with our wet-weather gear. Soon after this we broke cover from our rural retreat and started to encounter the outskirts of Maidstone. At first we moved along beside the small lakes that make up the Loose valley, enjoying the scenery and the abundant wildlife on these stretches of water.

We then encountered the rural industries such as hand-made paper and mills, that back in Victorian times must have been attracted by the huge amounts of water available near here. When we finally broke clear of both the rural proper and the rural industry, it was with startling contrast as we made our way into the very heart of Maidstone, past derelict factories which only a few years ago must have echoed days past of Victorian industry, but now are making way for massive new supermarkets. This did not last too long as we quickly made the banks of the Medway past the historic Archbishop's Palace and the beautiful church on the opposite bank and on to the city centre which we had to negotiate before passing through an industrial part that had nothing to recommend it whatsoever. Fortunately, with this out of the way, the remaining three miles were probably the best of the whole route.

Apart from the natural beauty of the river and its trees, we encountered a rowing regatta for fours as well as other river craft on this popular stretch of water. Later we passed Allington Marina (where I almost started the walk!) and the old castle of Allington. We skirted the weir and for a short while negotiated the tidal reaches of the Medway before passing Sandell Perkins dockyard and made our way back to the finish.

Not quite a circumnavigation of Maidstone but a thoroughly enjoyable walk full of interest and pleasant walking almost throughout. Gordon would certainly get my vote if he ever decides to lead a group walk!

#### GENERAL ELECTION DAY, 1987.....PAT CLARKE

Thursday 11th June was - as you all know - a very important day for us all, being election day, and it will be forever imprinted on my memory as my first outing with the Kent LDWA. "You must come on our evening walk" said Bryan, "You'll enjoy it!" "Will I be able to keep up?" I asked. "Of course, nothing to it, only a couple of hours on a nice summer's evening." was the encouraging reply.

So I arrived along with twenty other members of the electorate in Farningham which was knee deep in water and at the tail-end of a thunderstorm. The rain petered out (Peter wisely had not turned up) and we splashed off to the first obstacle - a near vertical mud bank which we scaled on the principle of two forward and one back. "Better than going down" said Laurie, our leader, jovially. For our next test we marched off at breakneck speed (I thought) upwards, ever upwards to Farningham Woods having already stripped off some of our outer waterproof layers. The conversations were interspersed with the slurp of muddy boots and the steadily increasing drips from our leafy arbor. We hastily donned the cagoules again, discovering on coming out of the wood that there was now a heavy downpour. It was indeed a nice summer's evening. We remarked how green the countryside was. No wonder!

However, the rain did ease off and the sun even attempted a showdown with the clouds as we marched sturdily through the fields. A field of dense rape caressed our legs lovingly leaving those of us with no more sense than to come without waterproof trousers in a somewhat bedraggled state. We crossed the road and went down through Westminster Fields to Horton Kirby and through that deserted village street. No doubt the inhabitants were peeping through net curtains at the odd assortment of people splashing past. Perhaps they thought it was a political demonstration - Green Peace maybe!!

Up through the estate and across the fields to the M25 and the bridge over it. Round another field and a pause (thank goodness) while we waited for stragglers. Note the proud 'we' - Yes, I was up there with the front ones. From then on it was mostly downhill as we made for the lights of Farningham.



Mind you, our boots felt heavier as they collected a goodly amount of Kentish chalk on them. We arrived back just after 9.30 and Mike discovered that he had left his car lights on and run his battery down. So it was perhaps a fitting finish to use up some surplus(?) energy by pushing his mini along the road until it started!!

Thanks Laurie, I think we all enjoyed it and who knows, I may venture out on an evening 'stroll' with you again.....

Leader's note:- My thanks to all who turned out on such a wet evening. I was quite certain that no one would turn up on account of the appalling weather and had actually made a note of the TV programmes that I was going to watch that evening! Still, it was good fun wasn't it?

WARMAN'S WINDMILL WALKABOUT....21st June, 1987.

Harry Bishop.(4734)

The third Wamble organised by Keith Warman started appropriately enough in the heart of the sheep country - Rye, East Sussex. Young Warman or Woolman as he is affectionately known by every Blackface in the county, comes from good country stock, indeed Roy, his dear old dad pruned himself away from his private vineyard to join us.

At the Rope Walk car park on the 21st June, some 20 of the luminaries and indeed some supernumeraries of the Kent Group, plus one dog, gathered to follow kinetic Keith across the countryside hereabouts checking on the windmill movements. Sheep and sun are my two main memories, hundreds of sheep all around, the mums and dads all naked after their recent cut and the lambs now a fulsome size, but still bawling wildly for their kin when confronted by our party.

Winchelsea Beach could be seen to our left early on and the blue/grey sea to the rear. It was humid and getting hot. This part of England is not renowned for hills but there are a few ups and downs, there's certainly plenty of fields of wheat and barley, some of rape, of orchards and strawberries. A lovely part of England's garden and one that tests the walker to keep to tracks midst waist high crops, to follow the path in a maze of apple trees and to navigate the stiles, often broken and wired up.

Brook Farm came not a moment too soon for the red-rimmed eyes of one young supporter who had dwelt too long on Bacchus' golden horn the night before. There we stopped and had a bite to eat and a drink or two. Tenses (not Elevenses) - we'd got away at 8!! It was hot now, necks were reddening and our more corpulent members were fairly glistening with perspiration. The pace slackened a little on reports that we would be too early for the pub, then it quickened, generally when a certain Peter got in front. He was given the dog to look after, hopefully to slow him down.

Through wood and dell, past farm on farm and over Brede and Tillingham's streams, we came unto a sweet old country church where it was learnt that our valiant leader had plighted his troth some years ago. Did we really have to have a party search for his stamp collection in the long grass that he swore he'd lost that far-off romantic day?

Three windmills in the morning painstakingly counted and shortly a big white building hove into sight, the blessed port of call where we were to spend our lunchtime - The Cock Inn, Peasmarsh. At ten to two, several pints, some chilled Camparis and a full meal (and sweet) later, Keith pleaded with the team. Eventually one by one they crept onto the forecourt and post-prandially doddled forth. Three members opted out at this stage including he of the red eyes, and decided a short walk in the hot Sussex sun was quite enough.

More cornfields in the afternoon, an orchard, a bit of tarmac and to Wittersham we came. There's a good looking wine shop there, must go back some time. The windmill at the Stocks was open for inspection and whilst we vacillated the main party went on, so surrendering our urge to inspect, we hastened our pace and caught them up.

The hot afternoon passed, the forecasted rain did not arrive and neckerchiefs were sought by some. Opposite the church at Stone-in-Oxney we rested on a grassy slope and had our afternoon tea. There it was that one old boy refused to get up, but a quick kick and a prodding stick and he was on the move again. Not far on, near Cliff Farm, the thoughtful leader had hidden a store of eau, brilliant, quite enough really to have a bath. So the troops drank the water and handed all the bottles back to him to carry home, there's gratitude!

A field or two more (or was it the twenty fifth ?) of corn and we came to Iden Lock. Decisions had to be made. Were we to continue on route or take the Canal path back to Rye? The leader's fate hung in the balance. His dinner was at 6 pm. and his only chance was the canal, we took it. I suppose some faint hope existed in the minds of 15 people that we'd share a dinner with Keith and his Dad. We shambled along the bank top trying to induce Clem, the dog, to have a swim. She was more concerned to keep the party together however. So we hove into Rye (can one ryed into Hove? ED.) past the wet fish shop, up the slope, down the Rope Walk and finish.

Yet another (the third) successful and hot walk masterminded by Keith Warman. We look forward to the '88 event and hopefully another good day.

#### WALKING IN THE VELAY.....by BRIAN HAIGH (Surrey Group)

"We should turn right under the bridge carrying the chemin de fer and follow the path up the wooded valley" said Laurie Lowe as we walked along the tree lined road away from Vorey in the Haute Loire. Last night we had stayed there in a small inn by the side of the river after spending the morning and afternoon sightseeing in Le Puy, an ancient city and centre for pilgrims, set nearly 2000 feet up in the crater on one of the many extinct volcanoes which make up this part of the Auvergne in central France. We had enjoyed a lazy day visiting the cathedral containing the famous Black Virgin, and climbing up the Notre Dame statue, made from 213 cannons seized at Sebastopol, which overlooks the town from its position on the Rocher Corneille, a spikey plug of volcanic rock.

Now we were on our way. The sky was blue, the hills green turning to dark blue in the distance and in front of us was the GR40 (GR = Grande Randonnee) a 160 km circular walk known as the Tour du Velay. It was 1st May, 1987 and this was to be part of Laurie's training for the LDWA 100 mile event later in the month. With rucksacks weighing 25-30 lbs and several hard climbs, it was to be useful training with the added enjoyment of walking for the first time in France.

Our goal for the first day was Allegre, 23 km along the GR, but first of all we had to pass through the small hamlet of Labroc. Here some dogs took an interest in us so it was not long before we cut a stick apiece from the wood a little further up the track. Later we were to smile with satisfaction as the few dogs we met slunk away as they saw our sticks.

Although we were now above 2000 feet and over 3000 in places, the countryside was dotted with farms in a patchwork of fields interspersed with pine forests on the higher ground. These forests were a delight to walk through because the trees were spaced well apart allowing the sunlight to filter through and



the ground to be covered with vegetation including clumps of wood violets and other wild flowers.

Bread, cheese and fruit for lunch in a clearing on a plateau above 3000 feet before we descended to C'eaux d'Allegre was to set the pattern for the days ahead. We had thought of washing it down with red wine but decided upon beer at 50p a litre and readily available from village supermarkets. Late in the afternoon we climbed Mt Bar (1175 m) before reaching Allegre where we found a small hotel, appropriately called Les Voyageurs, and enjoyed a splendid evening meal. Day one had been very pleasant and we looked forward with keen anticipation to the remainder of the walk.

The following day was hot again so once more it was shorts and sunhats as we walked the longest section, 36km, to Bains. Bains is off the GR but lack of accommodation on this section of the route made a detour necessary. During the day we climbed to the top of La Durande (1299) and were reluctant to move on because of the magnificent panorama of extinct volcanoes, all green now, spread out below our feet. Towards the end of this long day the weather began to break and as we approached Bains from Fay, a hamlet tucked under the protection of a hill called La Garde de Fay, we were greeted by a rainbow arching over the houses and farms at the entrance to the village.

The next day was grey and overcast but nevertheless enjoyable as we followed a trail along the edge of the Forêt Domoniale du Lac du Bouchet at about 1200m. Near the village of La Glotonie we met one of the locals out for a walk. He told us Goudet, our destination, was "tres jolie" but Les Etables, our goal for the following day was "tres froid". How right he proved to be!

Shortly afterwards we left the GR on a waymarked variant to walk around the edge of the Lac du Bouchet, a large lake in the crater of a volcano which R L Stevenson failed to find when he was in this area 109 years ago. The GR was rejoined at le Bouchet St Nicloas then it was on through Bargettes to Goudet. Goudet, 760m, situated on the Loire in a steep sided valley cut into the plateau was very pretty and after an early dinner we watched an animated game of boules in the square by the church.

The night was bitterly cold and when we looked out before breakfast of bread and coffee, we were not surprised to see a sprinkling of snow. The temperature was close to 0 degrees, so it was on with the thermal underwear for the climb out of Goudet up to St Martin de Fugeres on the plateau. By now it was snowing moderately and the wind was increasing. Further climbing was in front of us and as we reached Freycenet Lacuche (1215m) the conditions were arctic. From here it was only 7km to Les Etables but the route was blocked with snow drifts and there was still another 500 feet to climb. Shelter was urgently needed so after knocking on a few doors in the small village we were fortunate to obtain the help of Madame de L'Arbre, who opened up a small hall where we stayed the night. The following day started no better, snow had been blown up to the top of the doorway and the small square and roads were still blocked with deep snow. To go on was clearly impossible so we dropped down to Le Monastiere sur Gazeille (950m) where R L Stevenson had started his travels with his donkey Modestine in the Cevennes in September 1878. At this level the snow was beginning to melt but it was not until the following day when we joined the GR3 at Chadron on our way to Le Puy that we left it behind. In Le Puy the newspaper headline "L'hiver en Mai" said it all. 3500 people had had their electricity supplies cut off by the wintry conditions. Snow in the beginning of May is very unusual.

Only one day now remained and we decided to stay on the GR3 to Vorey. This, our seventh day of walking was magnificent. The sun came out again, the clouds rolled away and as we climbed continuously up a track through a pine forest which reached 900m we felt it was good to be alive. From a vantage point high above the Loire we admired the view of the Chateau Lavoute-Polgnac, almost

surrounded by a bend of the river, and then descended steeply down to Lavoute-sur-Loire where we had lunch sitting by the river. Vorey was now not far away and without saying anything we slowed our pace in the afternoon in an attempt to prolong an experience we had enjoyed tremendously and would remember for a long, long time. Tomorrow it would be train to Lyon via St Etienne and then plane to Heathrow. Au revoir France.

#### THE COMPASS.....by JOHN PROBERT (524)

It is estimated that around 2,500 BC, some clever Chinese person discovered that a certain ore floated on a piece of wood, turned until one end pointed in the general direction from which the sun shone, halfway between sunrise and sunset, the direction he knew as South, the other end obviously pointed North. Out of this discovery emerged the compass needle, a strip of magnetised steel balanced on a pinpoint and free to swing in any direction. When left to its own devices, it eventually comes to rest with one end pointing north.

The force that attracts the needle is the magnetic field of the earth, with the compass pointing towards the north pole. Unfortunately, the magnetic north is located some 1,400 miles south of the true north pole, somewhere north of Hudson Bay on the north coast of Canada. Therefore, we have a true north which is shown on the map and a magnetic north as found with the aid of the compass which makes life rather complicated and needs some little adjustment (about 8 degrees in this area) and is marked on the map as True North and Magnetic North and goes under the title of Mean Declination.

After the invention of the compass someone had the bright idea of protecting it by enclosing it in a brass case and the needle was suspended on a point in air - this is the standard compass. The next step was to find a way to stop the swing of the needle quickly to make for more accurate way finding. This damping was achieved by filling the housing with alcohol. The aircrews of the second world war are said to have topped up their drinks with it with quite permanent and horrific consequences.

A Mr Bjorn Kjellstrom and his brother Jan, who were well-known orienteers in the 1960's developed the Silva compass as it is today, with its base plate, compass, protractor and ruler in one single instrument. The housing has the cardinal points on the upper rim and degrees on the lower, and is marked from 0 to 360 degrees.

The compass comes in various shapes and sizes, from the small button compass to the large precision compass in a ship's binnacle - not really suitable for the walker and about as much good as the button type. The first button compass that I ever laid eyes on was screwed into an airforce tunic button, and issued to most aircrews. I was very envious of its owner and set out to acquire one at the first opportunity - without success I might add! It is no longer on my list as I have met a few walkers who have lost expensive button compasses that were too small to hold with gloves or cold hands and once dropped were lost forever.

The Silva is quite the in-thing with the walking fraternity, large enough to handle, easy to use and a must for every hill walker. They come with a silly little cord that is too short to attach to a belt or map case as this restricts accessibility

The sighting compass is an accurate piece of wayfinding equipment. Simple to use, it has a mirror in the folding top and one takes a sight over the top of the mirror and reads the bearing that is reflected. The range of Silva compasses from a modest £9 to £17 are quite adequate and not too expensive if you are inclined to mislay such things. At the £17 end we have the Silva Militaire with tritium aiming mark complete with radioactive label and government health



warning! I would rather do without being able to see the damned thing in the dark and know that my eyesight was not about to be impaired by small amounts of radioactivity.

The compass, large or small, is as good as the person using it, but if used correctly (and we all know how to use one, don't we?) is an accurate navigational necessity in any wild terrain whether mountain or moorland, but it does have a habit of pointing in one direction when you know very well that you should be going the other way!! For your own sake, TRUST IT!!

### THE SELFISH TRAMPER

2.

We met upon the staircase,  
Some dusters in her hand,  
Two Hoovers on the landing,  
A conspiratorial band!

"You can't come pass", aloud the cry,

"Oh what do you want now?"

My boots, my dear, my boots so dear,

"Oh please don't let us row".

"Well come on then, just squeeze through here,

And mind that tin of polish",

In all respects a well made course,

Such obstacles must flourish.

I body swerved a pair of steps,

And sidled past the cleaner,

She shook the mop at me and said,

"Oh come on now you dreamer".

Upon the furthest landing,

In a cupboard way up high,

I find my boots, my walking boots,

Old friends of mine and why?

'Cos in that household jungle,

Of soap and pots and pans,

Of cleaning cloths,

Of brooms of new

- and variegated cans.

Those boots to me are freedom,

A path that leads outdoors,

A way of richer promise,

Than the irksome household chores.

I tiptoe down the top flight,

Avert my eyes from hers,

Then slip upon the polish

And hurtle down the stairs.

I'm lying now in hospital

Two nurses at my side,

My boots are underneath the bed

A leg above is tied.

My wife will visit me today

I know that she'll be glad,

There's not a speck of dust to see,

But she's bound to bring her Dad.

She does "and serves you right" says he,

Your capers on the moor and fell,

Will surely lead to harm - and hell!

Stay home and help your good wife,

To dust and cook and slave,

Don't go unto the hillside,

At your age, it's the grave.

They've gone and I turn over,

The nurses hold my hands,

I dream of moor and mountain,

Of sunlight streaming bands,

Of rivers, tracks and bothies, of the

good times that I'll have.

I can do without the cleaning pail,

I can't live without the trail.

This item is from the pen of our own long distance poet.....Harry Bishop

This month's cover picture is provided by the poet's son Barry. They are an artistic family the Bishops!!