



LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



KENT GROUP



The only Event I have ever been Awarded a Bath!

This drawing was sent to us by Jill Green of the Wessex group. It records her experience at the finish of the 1987 Wealden Waters Walk. She must have enjoyed it - she came back for more this year !

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIRMAN :- Peter Barnett

SECRETARY:- David Sheldrake

TREASURER:- Ron Roweth

COMMITTEE MEMBERS :- Bryan Clarke

Peter Rickards

Laurie Lowe

Susan Verrell

Jim Oddy

John Vinells

NEWSLETTER EDITOR :- Laurie Lowe

EDITORIAL

In this issue there is a letter from a member who lives east of the Medway, and he has a number of suggestions relating to the type of activities which are promoted by the Kent group.

You may or may not agree with the points raised in the letter - but either way, let your views on the way the group is run and the type of activities which we undertake, be known to the committee. If you have useful suggestions or constructive criticisms, convey your thoughts to any of the members of the committee listed above.

Remember, the AGM is to be held on Friday 27th January. This is an opportunity for you to put forward your views. Better still, why not put yourself forward as a candidate for election to the committee ?

Friday 16th December

Pre-Christmas drinks evening at "The Bull", Otford. Meet from 7-30 onwards. Sandwiches provided.

Friday 13th January

FRIDAY the THIRTEENTH!!! WINTER NIGHT WALK near (but not in !) the Thames Estuary. Meet at "The Staff of Life" from 9.30 for an 11 pm start from the pub car park. Cooling Street (GR 746 747), 5 miles north of Rochester Bridge. Distance 20 miles approx. Ring Pete Barnett ([redacted] [redacted] [redacted]) or Laurie Lowe [redacted] for details nearer the date.

Friday 27th January

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - at St Edith Hall, Kemsing, nr Sevenoaks. Agenda and nomination forms will be circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

Sunday 26th February

20 mile walk from Chilham. Meet for 9 am start from the bottom car park just off the A28. Pub lunch. Leader Laurie Lowe [redacted]

Sunday 12th March

Marshals' Walkout for the Sevenoaks Circular. Meet 8 am in Buckhurst 2 car park in Sevenoaks.

Sunday 19th March

Sevenoaks Circular - The Event! See Strider for details. Volunteers needed for checkpoint duties, start/finish, etc. Contact Brian Buttifant with your generous offers [redacted] [redacted].

Sunday 23rd April

CONIFERS AND CASTLES WALK. About 25 miles on the Kent/Sussex border. Meet at 8.45 am for 9 am start at Bedgebury Pinetum car park, 4 kilometers south of Goudhurst on B2079 (GR 715 838) Pub lunch. Leader John Vinells, [redacted] [redacted] [redacted].

FORTHCOMING - A slide show on the Alpine Pass Route, date and venue to be arranged.

DEAR EDITOR

Thank you for your August Newsletter for the Kent Group of the LDWA. I understand your disappointment at receiving so little contribution from Kent members but may I be allowed to enter two complaints (or helpful suggestions)?

Your monthly meetings are held in the western extremity of the county and that, plus the addresses of the committee members, would hardly warrant the title of the Kent Group. The centre of Kent is closer to Charing than Chipstead.

I know it is difficult to suit all tastes when arranging walks. My own preference for a one day outing is to walk about 20 miles, with a pub stop at lunchtime, but I don't expect all walks to fit into that category. However, I was disappointed to see that your future plans show only one walk in that category. A glance at the national programme of walks in Strider would show that a 20 to 25 mile walk is perhaps the most popular choice and I think there should be more of them and less slide shows, family rambles and walks in the middle of the night.

This isn't meant to sound too critical, because I know that producing newsletters and sitting on committees is hard work, but try and find time to come and visit Kent occasionally. It's a nice county, the natives are friendly (mostly) and we've got lots of footpaths!

Roger Tuckey

Rainham, Kent. 13.8.88

THE SUSSEX BORDER PATH (part 2)

Brian Buttifant

Having walked the eastern section from E. Grinstead to Rye two years ago, it was the intention of a small group of Kent members to complete the 150 miles. path. So at 7.45 am on a Saturday morning in mid-August, those that could make it met up at Emsworth on the Hampshire coast. Don Newman, who had previously researched the route, was our leader, and Peter, Ernie and I were happy to follow his confidently led and brisk pace under a warm but cloudy sky. Celia, who had brought Ernie down, met up with us at approximately 5 mile intervals offering a selection of refreshments. After 20 miles we stopped for drinks at the 'Rising Sun' in Rake and a mile down the road we had a super picnic lunch. By this time Eileen and Laurie had joined us to take over as our support team. Celia then left us to go home to do the gardening (or so she said!) - thank you Celia for your support.

The afternoon took us over interesting walking areas including Blackdown. Our evening meal was pre-arranged at 'The Sir Roger Titchbourne' for 9 pm. We arrived there on schedule and enjoyed two hours of good company, food and drink, until we remembered that this was a walking weekend!

Laurie had worked out all the road intersections on our route and, as in the afternoon, he and Eileen met us throughout the night and indeed until we finished. Eileen had arranged on excellent selection of delights, these really were checkpoints 'par excellence'. The night was warm and dry and this was the weather pattern throughout the walk.

There was a time in the night when fields and woodlands were difficult to navigate but Don got us through to the checkpoints without Eileen and Laurie getting concerned about us being overdue. At about 5.30 am the main runway at Gatwick came into view as we approached 'on foot'! Half an hour later aero engines were being tested and at 6.30, the first charter flights were taking off. Our route took us around and through the airport before we again met Eileen and Laurie, this time for a very welcome breakfast. As we sat and had our cereals, charter flights appeared over the hedge every minute.

We had to tear ourselves away to do the last few miles to E. Grinstead, finishing at the old station at 11.45 to a welcome from wives and friends. Jackie brought along a bottle of champagne to toast Don's 7th birthday, thus making a nice conclusion to a very successful weekend walk.

NEWS FOR ROHANISTS

The following item is taken from a trade journal:-

The Rohan clothing chain, recently acquired by West Country shoe manufacturer C and J Clark, is planning to open a shop in every key UK city and town as well as important cities throughout Europe.

Currently there are 12 Rohan outlets in the UK and a mail order business. The chain is said to have some 60 UK towns in mind for expansion and the first European site is likely to be in Milan. Specialising in practical rather than high fashion, Rohan is hoping to widen its appeal. By 1990 Paul Howcroft, the design mind behind the operation, wants to be able to supply "the complete travel system, from clothes to luggage."

Last year Rohan had a turnover of around £5 million.

THE MOUNTAINS OF MOURNE

Tom Sinclair

"Oh Mary! This London's a wonderful sight...." begins one of Percy French's best known songs, but the last line is probably better known - "where the mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea". That was where Jenny and I, with our younger two - Howard and Gemma (we were all at the Christmas Lunch) - spent a week in June.

The weather was glorious, particularly on the Thursday when I set out at 8.40am from our cottage in Newcastle, County Down, to spend a day in the hills. After walking through the seaside town, I entered Donard Park and soon found a well-trodden and waymarked path which led up the Glen River (which provides Newcastle with its water supply). The path through leafy woods, later changing to conifers crosses from right to left bank, steadily growing more boulder-strewn, and crosses two contouring forest roads. Emerging from the woods, I crossed the Glen River to follow a sheep track by a tributary stream which cascades down a fairly awesome slope known locally as "The Black Stair". Nestling among the boulders were lovely wild flowers, including I believe, an orchid - anyway, I took a photograph which is available for inspection by budding botanists with blurred eyesight.

On then by the heather-clad banks of the stream to the saddle which lies between Thomas' Mountain and Slieve Donard which was my first objective. Unaccustomed as I was to steep gradients, covered first with heather and bog-myrtle and later with boulders and blaeberrries, my ascent to the 2,796' summit was much punctuated by stops to take photographs, eat, rest and to admire the views of farmland, coastline, woods, lakes and distant spires as they unfolded beneath.

Nearing the summit, which was reached simultaneously by a party from the Bloody Bridge side and myself at 12 noon, the views of the Kingdom of Mourne itself became increasingly better. The top of Slieve Donard which takes its name from an early saint and hermit, is the highest point of the Mourne Wall. This was built in 1910-11 by local labour from Mourne granite to encircle the whole catchment area of the Silent Valley Reservoir which is Belfast's main water supply.

Crossing the wall near the summit I feasted my eyes on the panorama before me and then followed the line of the wall down to the 1,900' col which lies at the head of the Glen River Valley to the north and the Annalong River to the south. Keeping the wall on my right I was able to observe some of the erosion which caused the annual Mourne Wall Challenge Walk to be cancelled some years ago. The soil is gradually healing and on the way down from Donard, I had spotted a lady with binoculars who, I was later told, was probably someone appointed by local conservation bodies to try and preserve this magnificent countryside.

Alas, as the wall neared the summit of Slieve Commedagh (2,600') signs of vandalism were only too evident. The large granite slabs which cap the wall for all but the most precipitous parts of its 22 miles, had been hurled to the ground. The wall doesn't actually go over the summit but the small detour was well worthwhile for the different views. Then back to the wall in whose lee I basked in the sun while taking some much needed sustenance.

On westwards by the wall to a narrow col above the Pot of Legawherry (Cwm to the Welsh) which lies NE of Commedagh and NW of Slieve Corragh which is the wall's and my next high point at 2,000'. Meanwhile to the south (my Left) I have had as a constant and frequently visible companion, the Brandy Pad (path) which is widely believed to have been used for smuggling in days gone by. About

this time the film in my camera runs out and the views of Ben Crom Reservoir in one direction and Castlewellan Lake in another are tantalising, not least because I have been on the high ridges in the heat of the day!

On then over Slievenoglogh (The Mountain of Rocks) and down to join the Brandy Pad at the Hare's Gap (1,400'). Through one of the few gates in the wall and down a steep boulder-strewn slope to follow a wide quarry track down the valley of the Trassey River (but not before slaking thirst and soothing feet with cool water of said river)

Nearing the road I met the first person I had seen since the "conservation" lady on Donard, and stopped for "a crack". Thomas' legs were now beginning to tell him that they had carried him a long way from the mountain of the same name! About that point I joined part of the Ulster Way (which will eventually encompass the whole province with its great variety of scenery) going north into Tollymore Forest Park via the Clonachullion Gate with the Shimna River below to the left. Pausing on a bridge I spotted a deep pool in a tributary stream. Rapidly stripping under the bridge I plunged into the pool which lay in a rock cleft and had been shaded from the sun all day. The icy waters were balm to my heated leg muscles and I was soon trudging happily through the Forest Park to the main entrance before crossing the Newcastle-Bryansford road and finding my way by farm tracks and country lanes to our cottage. After a shower and change, a brisk (!) mile along the morning's route brought me first to my aunt's home and awaiting family, and not long after to one of the best pints of Guinness I have ever tasted.

Guinness apart, I had spent a wonderful day in what another song-writer has called "This dear land of Mourne".

FROM KENT TO KENT

Keith Warman

Excitedly, I thumbed Strider. Thought I'd have a social stroll in the north whilst on holiday. North Yorks Group....nothing; Northumbria.....no luck; Westmoreland and North Lanc.....ah! My eyes lit up. "Wed. June 15th, Strickland Arms, Sizergh, 7.30 pm". Sounded interesting, an evening walk. I eventually found Sizergh on the map, just south of Kendal.

7.20 pm and I duly arrived, with no other walkers in sight. Was it April 1st? The Strickland Arms was a large old stone inn, with a huge canvas awning on scaffolding framing. A disco was being set up and tables erected. Hmmm, this Westmoreland Group take their social walks seriously, I mused. It was a clear evening with a cloudless sky and car loads of young casually-clad boppers swarmed around. I felt uneasy. I wondered if they'd seen the Rohan-bag romp or the Brooks-trot at their local dance-hall. Through the noisy ensemble I spied a cluster of rucksac-clad brethren and joined them. Our leader, Frank Hodson and his wife, steamed in and at 7.40 pm. Ten and one dog, set off on a six mile circular.

I had actually travelled 65 miles (each way) for this walk, but one lady came from New Zealand...

Through lush pastures we tramped, crossed the A590 and headed for Levens Park. Here we spotted the unusual black deer, before seeking out a path through a beautiful rhododendron clump. Entry into this floral palace was achieved via the tallest ladder stile I had ever seen, quite 9 feet high over a presumably deer-proof fence. We were clinging onto bushes as 50 feet below us the River Kent chuckled by in a flat limestone ravine. Leaving the rhododendrons, the path continued across rich grassland and between mature trees to join the road at Levens Bridge.

Distant views were glimpsed of the 16th century Levens Hall and its topiary gardens. Across the bridge and back down the other bank of the river, now

a silent sheet of water, slipping by on its final stage before entering Morecombe Bay.

Our return journey took us through an avenue of ancient oaks, one mile long, and past an assembly of "Bagot" goats, imported I believe from mid-Europe. A pause to inspect the site of an early settlement before the road was re-joined. The entrance to Sizergh Castle was passed and eventually the pulsating sounds guided us back to base.

The place was packed. The contrast with our sylvan serenity was frightening. The scrum at the bar was rewarded with a jivers' supper and a jar of Theakston's Best. Like aliens we retreated to the garden.

A fine walk was rounded off by the orange sunset and silhouette of Lakeland's eastern fells seen from Shap summit on my way back home.

YOUR LOVABLE PET or A FEARSOME FIEND ??

John Probert (524)

Most of the Kent Group, I would think, have crossed the Channel to France or beyond, but are you aware that Rabies is only just 21 miles away from our county?

We have AIDS at the moment, that was brought in from abroad, but one only dies with that!! It is only a matter of time before we are stuck with Rabies - and that is another thing altogether! I don't propose to be an authority on the subject but I do know that a bite from a rabid dog can be fatal. The wound would probably be treated by one's self, a dab of antiseptic and a plaster or two and it will heal in no time. But when you arrive home after two weeks in the sun, the leg has started to swell and is quite painful - and by this time it is too late!

The treatment discovered by Louis Pasteur in the 1880's is injections into the stomach and is quite horrific - or so I'm told. The symptoms do not appear for one to six months and when they begin there are violent spasms of the throat muscles, choking and delirium, ending in death. Drinking makes the throat spasm worse, hence the name 'hydrophobia' which means a fear of water. Rabies is rife in the Black Forest and the authorities there have tried to contain it by gassing the foxes and have made the forest almost uninhabitable by the lethal use of cyanide. So beware campers and backpackers in the Black Forest.

Your pet is far safer at home than crossing the channel with you, but if you do take him with you, don't smuggle him back in because if you get caught, there is a two thousand pound fine and you deserve every penny of it shaken out of your piggy-bank. A fox or dog with rabies is quite fearless of man, sometimes it is frothy at the mouth and may lose its fur, especially from the tail. With the advent of the channel tunnel we could get a dog or a fox walking through. The authorities tell us that precautions to stop even a mouse walking through are being built into the tunnel - but what precautions? The last time a suspect animal escaped into the country, groups of guns shot everything in sight. Let's just hope that it does not happen again.

DEAR MR PROBERT.....

Oh John, dear John,
Ooh ! you are so naughty,
You mustn't be so haughty
And my English frown upon.

I've tried my best,
Unlike the rest,
My odd odes are first rate,
And you'll be proud of me
When I'm Poet Laureate.

Now in your pithy comments,
I hope I've spelt that right,
You appear to have forgotten
Educashun today, is rotten.
Reeding,
Riting,
And arifmetic,
Are lessons of the past,
For sums are done (sooner or later)
On each kid's precious calculator,
It's just a blooming farce.

So that's ruled out all the younger ones,
Let's talk about their elders,
Those poor old chaps like
Buttifiant and Cowley,
Warman R., and me and Verrell,
Who put ourselves in peril,
By the hard and fast lives we have led,
When really we should be tucked in bed,
Where you can come and in shorthand or long,
Note down our news, a poem or song
But make sure, without fear,
Or there'll be a few tears,
That when you turn up,
You bring all the beer.

With this helpful advice,
For which there's no price,
You'll fill young Lowe's letter,
He'll feel much better
And if all that fails John,
We'll stroll hand in hand
With large, feathered hats on,
Spouting poetry and prose
With glorious passion,
On Smith's Wealden Waters,
In the usual wet fashion.

Harry Bishop (4734)

And now as a special treat (and since I have nothing more which will fit
into this last half page) - another of Harry's harmonious homilies !!

UNDISCOVERED DESTINATIONS - (Whilst waiting at Athens Airport)

The plane is late,
Four hours to date,
The board shows up 'Delayed',
I'm glad we stayed,
For indicated on 'Departures',
There's some very strange new pastures.
Manchester and Glasgow -
Whilst Gatzick appears now,
Where's this place called Vienni ?
Gleaned from an unknown map, if any.

I feel a little poorly,
As I notice Parisoorly,
If that plane arrives ,
I hope the bloke,
Just for a joke,
Puts the names upon the board,
Juxtaposed and far abroad,
We end up in Hawaii and so,
We'll cheerfully miss the rain and snow,
At dear old London's Health Wow.

WARNING If you do not contribute more articles for the next issue,
I shall be forced to fill the pages with more of this
stuff !!

Laurie Lowe