



LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER

....and what is more Madam, that is
no way to wear the Group
Sweatshirt - so there!



No. 22 ~ August 1990

COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN.....PETER BARNETT
TREASURER.....RON ROWETH
SECRETARY.....DAVE SHELDRAKE

Committee members.....TREVOR BLAKE
BRIAN BUTTIFANT
PAUL HATCHER
JOHN PROBERT
NEAL O'ROURKE
SUSAN VERRELL

Newsletter Editor:- Laurie Lowe, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED].

SAT AUG 4 Tunbridge Wells Circular Marshals' Walk. Meet 8.30 am. at the Assembly Halls in the centre of T. Wells. Details from Dave Sheldrake - [REDACTED].

SUN AUG 19 Tunbridge Wells Circular - the Event. See Future Events in your copy of Strider.

SAT AUG 25 Chairman's Real Ale Ramble. Leader is Harold Mann, Chairman of the Swale Footpaths Group. All members are invited to join this 18 mile ramble which includes 7 pubs. Start at 10.15 am. at Faversham BR station, finish at Selling station to catch train back to Faversham. [REDACTED].

SAT/SUN Wealden Waters Marshals' Walk. Contact Brian Buttifant for SEP 15/16 further details, [REDACTED].

SUN SEP 30 Hever Hike - 20 miles approx. Meet at Hever Village Hall near Edenbridge (GR 475447). Leader is Nick Woollett- [REDACTED]. Tea will be served afterwards in the village hall.

SAT/SUN Wealden Waters Walk - See Future Events in Strider for details. OCT 13/14 Offers of help on the day to Mike Smith please.

SUN NOV 25 Annual Family Walk & Dinner at The Moat, Wrotham on the A20. Meet for a short walk before the meal at 2 pm. Details and bookings from Trevor Blake on [REDACTED].

FRI DEC 14 Pre-Christmas Drinks at The White Hart, Brasted, near Westerham. From 7.30 pm. - free grub available!

MEETINGS are held on the first Monday in the month at the White Hart, Brasted. New members are always welcome.

SECRETARY

Dave Sheldrake, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

LEADERS We need people who are willing to lead walks during the period January to May 1991. Please let Dave have the details before the 14th September. This is to ensure inclusion of the walk in the next Strider.

CHUB HIGGINS

The sudden death of Chub Higgins at the age of 53 was a great shock to all, especially those of us who were with him at the time.

The incident occurred during the marshals' walk of the Chiltern Hundred. It was a heart attack which happened soon after midday on the Sunday at about 73 miles.

We all knew Chub as a quiet man and as a strong and keen walker who enjoyed group social walks, and walking holidays with his wife Shirley. Both Chub and Shirley were keen members of Maidstone R.A., and prior to joining us four years ago, he was one of their executive members.

Our greatest memory of Chub must be his quiet and cheerful dedication to walking. To Shirley we extend an invitation to join us whenever she is able.

Brian Buttifant.

Chub's funeral took place at Watlington Church on the 14th May. At least twenty Kent group members were among the very large number of mourners who attended. Wreaths were sent on behalf of the LDWA National Committee and the Kent Group.

Dear Peter,

Please could you convey to the members of the Kent group my heartfelt thanks for all the flowers, cards, letters and messages of sympathy that I have received since Chub's death.

At present I just miss him so very much and find the sense of loss almost unbearable, but I know time will heal the hurt and I shall be able to enjoy happy memories of our time together. We were only married for 18 months but it was a wonderful happy time - he was such a gentle, loving husband.

I hope I shall feel able to walk with the group again before too long.

Shirley. 17 May 1990.

WALKING FROM TELFES IN THE STUBAI VALLEY, AUSTRIA.

Bryan Clarke.

A brief account of a week's holiday with Holiday Fellowship (HF)

SATURDAY - It was about 1 hour 20 minutes by air from Heathrow to Munich on a British Airways Boeing 767 at 39000 feet. We met our leader at Munich Airport and then travelled about 100 miles by mini-coach to Telfes with a stop for lunch. On the way we weaved past the huge Europa Bridge which is part of the motorway to the Brenner Pass and Italy. The scenery was mountainous and well-wooded mainly with conifers. The Hotel Tyrol in Telfes was our destination and proved to be very comfortable and served good food. A packed lunch could be ordered, but except for Sunday, we bought rolls and bits for our own picnics. Telfes, at over 3000 feet above sea level, is situated in the Stubai Valley with snow-streaked mountains all around. The village is basically a farming community with a few hotels and guest houses. There is a bank, post office, tourist information centre and two general stores. A bandstand gave concerts occasionally. Telfes is a ski centre in winter.

SUNDAY - An easy walk to start the week took us on a circular route from Telfes over the River Ruetz, which flows through the valley, to Mieders. Then we walked along woodland paths to come back across the river to Fulpmes and thence to Telfes.

MONDAY - Because Pat had developed an untimely fluey-cold, we travelled by the local train to Innsbruck while the others went on a walk to a nearby mountain hut. When we reached the busy streets of Innsbruck, this tram-like vehicle joined the city's tramway system! Innsbruck is very pleasant with many attractions including an excellent Folk Museum. It rained heavily as we left in the early evening for our return journey. This was the only daytime rain we had during our week.

TUESDAY - After the rain during the night we awoke to find the high parts of the surrounding mountains covered with a fresh fall of snow. We caught the bus to near the head of the valley where we saw snow-covered firs and mountains all around us. The other members of the party went off to do a high walk to the Sulzenauhutte and the Blaue Lacke, while Pat and I set off through snow to walk about eight miles down the valley to Volderau. This was very pleasant with the snow falling from the trees as we passed, but by the time we reached the bus stop at Volderau, there was no more snow underfoot. We passed some spectacular waterfalls and the scenery was always magnificent. The bus took us to Fulpmes and after a look around the shops and some refreshment, we walked back to the hotel to enjoy a steam bath and sauna before dinner.

WEDNESDAY - This was a "rest day" with no led walk. Most of the group took this opportunity to visit Innsbruck but Pat and I left Telfes by bus to go up the valley to Neustift. We took the ski-lift up to over 5500 feet and then walked up to the Elferhutte which seemed such a short distance away, but it took a long time to go up the extra 650 feet by a zig-zag path. From this area we watched colourful hang-gliders and para-gliders taking off and soaring around before either landing back on the mountain pasture or going down to a landing field in the valley. From the hut we walked along the Panoramaweg which gave incredible views across the Pinnistai to a range of peaks and bleak mountain-sides called the Serieskamm. We retraced our steps and caught the bus from Neustift to Telfes.

THURSDAY - The complete group (we were eleven) went by bus to Mutterbergalm at the upper end of the valley at over 5000 feet. From here we took the skiers' cable-car up to the Dresdner Hutte at over 7000 feet from where we set off to circle up, round and down to Mutterbergalm. However, an extensive

snowfield on a steep slope blocked our route and we returned to the Dresdner Hutte for our picnic and coffee in the hut. Some of our group did a quick walk up and down a nearby peak from which they had magnificent views all around. While we picnicked in the hot sunshine we watched a few skiers coming down from the permanent snowfields on the glacier which was out of our sight. They had to pick their way from one small snow patch to another but presumably they enjoyed this method of descent to coming down in the cable-cars as most other skiers were doing. We saw two marmots sunning themselves near the hut. Taking the path down alongside the ski lift we descended to Mutterbergalm and caught the bus back to Telfes.

FRIDAY - In a hired mini-bus, we went to an adjacent valley where we came to the Maria Waldrast Monastery at 5000 feet. From this point we took a path which led us after about four miles to Serlesjochl at over 7000 feet. Serlesjochl is a col or saddle between two peaks, Waldrastspitze and Lampermandspitze, both at over 8000 feet. The climb was the hardest we had undertaken that week and involved crossing snow fields and scree slopes as well as being very steep in places. We had a good view of three chamois from this path. The effort was well worth it as at the col we were able to enjoy tremendous views both back into the valley we had come from and the other way into the Stubaital. We rested and picnicked at the col while four of the group went quickly up to the top of Waldrastspitze where there was a large cross guyed by strongcables to support it against the wind. We made a leisurely descent to the monastery for coffee and then walked down the pilgrims' path to Mieders and then Telfes. A long, tiring but excellent day.

SATURDAY - After breakfast we had a mini-bus trip back to Munich Airport through beautiful scenery and then the flight home to Heathrow.

It was a super holiday. Although we went with a walking group, we found footpaths are so well marked that we would have no hesitation in going on our own. However, walkers wishing to take advantage of the ski lifts and mountain huts would be well advised to go later than the 1st June as after the skiing season some close down for maintenance.

Kent Group member Ron Roweth organises and leads walking holidays in Austria. Contact him for details.

THE STUBAITAL, AUSTRIA.

A cold, green river
Rushes and gushes through the grassy valley
Taking water from the melting snows
Way up in the rugged mountains
To the sea far, far away.
Meadows are fragrant with scents
Of softly waving
Rainbow-coloured flowers;
Their short lives soon to abruptly end
As farmers reap the precious winter fodder.
And above it all tower the mountain ranges,
Green or craggy, or sheathed in snow
That sprinkles delicate patterns
On the higher firs.
Their moods dominate the peoples' lives below.
Sometimes grey clouds swirl mysteriously
Round the moody tops and rain drips
Steadily over all the land.
But then the sun appears and every peak
Holds up its proud head against
Perfect sapphire blue.

Cotton wool clouds float gracefully by
And human-kind accepts the challenge
Freely offered -
Walkers battle ever upward.
Puffing and turning to admire
The immense eternal backcloth
As triumphant they reach their goal.
Gliders challenge the skies and
Drift in blobs of colour
Against the mountain side.
Skiers twist and turn and weave their
Exhilarating way to the valley,
Only to be lifted back by
Cable cars in perpetual motion.
In the valley farmers tend their
Land and all the business of the Tyrol
Carries on with smiling effort.
And all about the fields, the chalets,
The whole Stubaital
Echoes the happy memories of those
Who come and then return, refreshed,
To other worlds
Where all is toil and bustle.

PAT CLARKE.

THE KENT HUNDRED - 1992

Trevor Blake.

The working party are pleased to report that good progress continues on the organisation for 'our' event.

A start/finish venue at Wilderness School, Sevenoaks looks to be a firm commitment by the headmaster at an approximate cost of £600. The school has excellent facilities for our needs - toilets/showers, adequate space, cooking facilities and parking for at least 500 vehicles. There will be a need for transport to ferry participants to the start at Knole Park, as the narrow lane would be dangerous for the large number of people involved. Therefore, we will go to tender and select a reliable company to provide this service.

The entire route has now been walked out and is a viable route mainly consisting of using the Greensand Way from the Sevenoaks area as far as Pluckly, and then returning on the North Downs Way to Sevenoaks, with small linking sections at both ends.

The route unfortunately needs four O/S maps so Phil Hastings is now engaged in trying to modify the route so that it requires just two maps. He may or may not be successful in this task.

The experience we gained at the Chiltern 100 will no doubt be useful to us in future. The working party has been divided into five groups, each group covering 20 miles of the route, and their terms of reference are:-

To write a preliminary route description.

Obtain checkpoint locations.

The group leaders are:-

Sevenoaks to Sutton Valence
Sutton Valence to Lenham
Lenham to Cuxton
Cuxton to Biggin Hill
Biggin Hill to Sevenoaks

Dave Cowley
Paul Hatcher
Harold Mann
Ken Heath
Ron Roweth

The following responsibilities have been assigned :-

Ron Roweth.....Treasurer	Dave Cowley...Publicity/Sponsorship
Pete Barnett.....Catering	Ernie Bishop..Nat. LDWA & O/S Liaison
Laurie Lowe.....Entries Sec.	Brian Buttifant..Local Council Liaison
Phil Hastings.....Cartographer and Route Compiler.	

Other appointments will be made when the need arises e.g. communications, transport, quartermaster.

The working party will meet again in the near future to re-appraise the situation and further developments will be reported via the newsletter.

I have already received a number of suggestions for title, badge and certificate designs and I have found that these show a great variation of ideas, making the choice of one particular design difficult. For this reason I would like everyone to send me their suggestions on these matters and in this way I hope to be able to obtain a true consensus of opinions of group members. Perhaps the final designs will be an amalgamation of ideas.

Don't worry if your drawing skills are minimal, it is ideas that I want, the artwork can be sorted out later. So, send me your thoughts on a title, badge and certificate.

Trevor Blake, [REDACTED]

WALKER DIES

John Probert (524)

"Solicitor Helen Bruce, 34 of Bridge of Weir, Strathclyde, died on windswept 2992 ft Beinn An Lochain after becoming separated from her walking companion." Taken from the Daily Mail, March 22nd 1990.

Yet again a walker is needlessly killed by our weather on the hills. The mountains are great in winter and not at all crowded and if you obey the rules, they can be enjoyed to the full. If you don't know the rules then you have no business on the mountains in the first place.

If you have walked on the Scottish mountains you will know that the weather can be as treacherous as any in the world. On making enquiries with the Mail, I was told that the young lady died of exposure and hypothermia. This is a great pity as death could have been avoided. Having been exposed to hypothermia on two occasions, I made up my mind that I would do something about it - hence the survival clubs that I belong to.

The basics of survival in any winter condition is first find or make shelter, keep warm, put on every bit of extra clothing that you have with you. If you have wet feet take your boots off and put your feet in your rucksack - leave your socks on if you have no dry ones. Look at the food situation in your sack. Stay calm and sleep as much of the dark hours as possible (you will be found in the morning) Don't waste time and energy blasting out distress signals on your whistle, wait until you see lights or hear shouts. In daylight lay out some bright garments to attract attention (an air search perhaps) You will get your picture in the paper, which is better than in the obituary. But then you would not place yourself in a position where you would get lost or exhausted would you? Don't you believe it, I once saw a young person carried off the mountains in June with hypothermia - fortunately she recovered - you may not!

FRONT COVER STORY.....

I offered a prize of a pair of bootlaces for the best suggestion for the caption to accompany the cartoon used on the cover of the April issue. I received only two replies and I considered one of these to be libellous ! So the winner of the competition is John Probert who is responsible for this issue's cover. You may see him sporting a new set of laces on the next group walk !

Martyn Berry has sent me the following information on the origin of the cartoon.

The cartoon appeared in Punch on 31 October 1891. Down at the bottom left you can see the initials J.T. - John Tenniel, for many years Punch's chief political cartoonist, but better known these days as illustrator for Lewis Carroll's 'Alice' books.

The threesome is the so-called 'Triple Alliance' of the 1880's - Germany, Austria-Hungary and - the female in the middle - Italy. The original caption was :- "Trying It On ! Russia - "Pss-s-t ! I want to speak to you, my dear!"

The fear at the time was that rapprochement between Russia and Italy would weaken the Triple Alliance. I presume the Kaiser is the one with the moustache while Emperor Franz Joseph is the one with the beard.

The following is taken from the Kentish Times :-

KNIGHT'S ERRAND FOR CHILDLINE

Alan Knight from Welling has walked his socks off when he trekked the 1700 miles from Lands End to John O'Groats for charity.

The £8,350 Alan raised was split between Childline, the free national helpline for children in trouble or danger, and the Eliminate Leukaemia Fund.

Childline arranged for Alan to present a jumbo cheque to Esther Rantzen, chairman (sic) of Childline, in front of a studio audience after a recording of the BBC programme That's Life on February 11th. Martin Hall was also there on behalf of the Eliminate Leukaemia Fund to receive his cheque.

Alan is a technician at British Telecom's Monument Exchange in London. Many of Alan's workmates contributed to the cause and BT's central Charities Unit donated £2,250 as well.

FOR SALE

ONE PAIR OF LOMER (ITALIAN) LIGHTWEIGHT LADIES
WALKING SHOES. SIZE 39. LIGHT TAN ANILINE LEATHER.

£20

They are virtually brand-new but do not suit the
intended wearer. Anyone who is interested should
contact Mike Cursons [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

The following four items have all been submitted by Martyn Berry.....

KENT WALKING - I have had my say on this, and am happy to draw fire from John and Ernie. I respect their views greatly, as they - particularly Ernie - reflect LDWA traditions far better than, as a comparative newcomer, I could hope to. If Ernie, as LDWA chairman, disparages the idea of honorary membership ex cathedra, then that is something which I must, and do, accept.

.....But I hope that they also respect my views !

The correspondence on this subject is now closed.. ED.

The SEVENOAKS OUTCROPS WALK - I hope that the Lowes and the Clarkes et al felt this was a gently worthwhile, and slightly different way of spending what turned out to be a lovely day ! This walk has happened, with minor variations, annually for at least a decade, and will continue to do so until I run out of steam. So watch this space for February or March next year.

'DID YOU KNOW ?' - No. 1. (see issue no. 21) Professor George Ingle Finch, FRS, was indeed a fine scientist. On Everest, he attracted a bit of mickey-taking from General Bruce ("Finch cleans his teeth once a year and has a bath the same day if the water is hot, otherwise he leaves it until the next year") but proved his toughness and competence and was probably shabbily treated by the Mount Everest Committee. I have a copy of his book 'The Making of a Mountaineer' (Arrowsmith, 1924) which anyone is welcome to borrow. Two other great scientist mountaineers were Professor J Norman Collie, FRS, the subject of a recent excellent biography by Christine Mill (Norman Collie, a life in two worlds: AUP, 1897) and Professor Noel Odell. I was fortunate enough to meet Odell several times over a period of nearly 30 years, the last time when he fell down a full flight of stairs at the Alpine Club at the age of 95; an experience which he survived with equanimity and humour !

BOOKS - I was delighted to see Laurie's list of 'foot-books', which included one of my own favourites - "A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush", by Eric Newby; better I think, even than his later excellent books. Another splendid book about the same area is "No Tigers in the Hindu Kush" by Philip Tranter (H&S, 1968), which was brought out by his father Nigel after Philip was killed in a road accident. Two excellent 'general' walking books are "Shanks's Pony" by Morris Marples (my copy is the Country Book Club edition of 1960) and "The Winding Trail", edited by Roger Smith (Diadem, 1981) The first is subtitled "A Study of Walking" and is very readable indeed; The second is a selection of 80 articles and essays. I can recommend any book by John Hillaby, and also by my old friend Hamish Brown: especially "Hamish's Mountain Walk", (Gollancz, 1978), and "Hamish's Groat's End Walk" (Gollancz, 1981), the latter of which contains respectful references to Ann Sayer and Arthur Eddleston.

If anyone is interested in poetry, much of which concerns walking in hill country, Hamish and I co-edited a massive (1.2 kilogram) anthology of 20th century British and Irish mountain poetry - "Speak to the Hills", (AUP, 1985)

I have copies of all the books named above, and would be happy to lend them to Group members.

Martyn Berry.

ALAN CASTLE has also written to me on the subject of books.....

"The Rucksack Man" by Sebastian Snow (Hodder & Stoughton, 1976) The story of a solo 8,700 mile walk throughout the length of South America from Tierra del Fuego to the Panama Canal, including crossing the infamous Dorian Gap.

Alan also mentions the two Hamish Brown books recommended above, of which he comments :- The first is a must for Munro-baggers, describing the first completion of the round of Munros in one continuous journey. The second is the story of a walk from John O'Groats to Lands End by a far from direct route.

"Mean Feat" (1985) by John Waite (Oxford Illust. Press) A 3000 mile walk through Portugal, Spain, France, Switzerland and Italy.

"The Cevennes Journal" by Robert Louis Stevenson, (Mainstream Publishing, 1978) The actual journal kept by RLS on his "Travels with a Donkey" in 1878. It contains many revealing passages that did not find their way into his "Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes".

"Touching the Void" by Joe Simpson, (Pan, 1989) Really a mountaineering rather than a walking book. It describes an almost unbelievable feat of endurance and escape from death after a climbing accident in South America. The best book of its kind that I have ever read.

MORE BALONEY FROM BARONI.....DID YOU KNOW No. 2 ?

That the marathon is run over a distance of 26 miles 385 yds and that this distance was first used at the 1908 Olympic Games. The start was at Windsor Castle. The distance of the race has remained the same from that time.

In the past 20 years marathon running has been well represented by women athletes but it was first taken up by the ladies of the USA. The first womens' championship was organised by the Road Runners Club of America in September 1970.

The most northerly held marathon is the Mayor's Midnight Marathon held at Anchorage, Alaska. On the 17th February 1980, an Irish wolfhound owned by John Reardon of Washington DC, ran the Washington Marathon in a time of 3 hr 29 mins. It is not known if the dog enjoyed it !

A RADNORSHIRE ROUND....

....Keith Warman.

Part 3 of an occasional series of offbeat excursions.

"Are we likely to see a buzzard today?" I enquired of my guides, John and Diana Wharton. "There's every chance", was the reply.

We left the car in the shade of Warren Wood for a gentle stroll around Radnor Forest. This was an unknown area to me and I was expecting several square miles of tree-clad hill - I was in for a surprise. We set off up the dry pebble bed of a stream on a promising morning towards a waterfall named "Water-Break-Its-Neck". Birdsong was the sole intrusion to our solitude, and very pleasant it was too. In a while, the dry bed became a trickle, and in front was the fall, today a mere moist wall to keep the clinging mosses damp. The dry summer was having its effect. In this serene amphitheatre, a grey wagtail was darting around and feeding on the waterfall face. In full spate this must be a glorious sight.

Steps were retraced to steadily climb up the forest track to leave the wood for the open moorland. A narrow sharp-sided valley (called a dingle) was followed, climbing slowly to the forest plateau. There were no trees here, it must have been an ancient forest. The narrow path clung to the hillside about 100 ft above the valley bottom and, nearing the summit plateau, we sat down in the soft grass for our lunch. Within minutes, a pair of buzzards flew effortlessly down the ridge opposite and began circling about 300 yards below us.

Soon a third joined them to fly back above us, perhaps to their nests higher up. Binoculars were fully employed as the pattern was repeated several times.

Nobody had been met so far, the density of population hereabout must be fairly low. Towards the top of the dingle, this one was Davy Morgan's Dingle, eight more buzzards were disturbed by our presence. A stiff climb and the plateau was attained. We swung leftwards to pass an ominously cold sign on the edge of Harley's Dingle. It's out of bounds as a Birmingham company tests rocket and mortar launchers in the valley, causing much local controversy.

A few hundred yards more of ankle-twisting tussocks brought us to the trig. point of Great Rhos at 2,166 ft. Just prior to our arrival, a couple seemingly from nowhere appeared, the usual pleasantries being exchanged.

Off westwards now to continue our circular loop with a warm breeze in the air. Views were a little hazy, but the vastness of this rural area was apparent. Everywhere seemed so lush, similar to the Yorkshire Dales, but with hedgerows in lieu of stone walls, and no crowds.

The heads of three more dingles were passed, each with fearsomely steep sides and fair valley gradients too. Swifts were feeding hereabouts, their dare-devil flightpaths being a joy to watch. At a dried-up ford, we halted for drinks and promptly all fell asleep. I could get used to this leisurely pace. From now on it was sheep, crows and acres of moorland. John's expert map-reading brought us to follow a path above Water-Break -It's-Neck, and we dropped to join the forest track back to the car. A marvellous walk of about 9 miles.

1990 CHILTERN HUNDRED MARSHALS' WALK -

Bryan Clarke.

Checkpoints 6 and 10 at Bix village hall were allocated to Bryan Clarke and Laurie and Eileen Lowe. They travelled up from Kent to arrive at Bix in time to run the CP from 20.30 hours on Saturday. The weather that day was very hot with temperatures of around 22 degrees C and little wind. We arrived at 19.30 and took over at 20.15 with no walkers having arrived yet. CP6 was at a distance of 44.5 miles. Our first customer was Chris Coy at 20.30 and the last was Harold Gray after midnight at 00.52. We had 25 arrivals and 24 departures. Paul Hatcher was the retirement, he decided that his very painful feet were too bad to continue, so not wanting to go on without them, he stayed to sleep at the hall until he could transport to the finish. We had a lot of comment from the walkers about the awful heat of the day and many walkers were finding that the high level of concentration required to cope with the necessarily detailed route description, together with the many ascents on the chosen route, was resulting in their rate of progress being much slower than they had anticipated.

Preparations were made for CP10 (65.6 miles) as there was to be a change of menu and then there was time to snatch a little sleep before Ken Falconer was the first to return at 03.37. He had completed the 21 mile loop in the dark from CP6 to CP10 in less than 6½ hours. We had extra help when we were joined in the morning by Trevor Edington of Thames Valley who was to close the CP and ferry left-over refreshments and the paperwork through to the finish. He was to realise that the very slow walking, due to the difficulties mentioned previously, was making a nonsense of checkpoint and finish closing times. All 24 walkers who had left CP6 arrived back at CP10. However, Moira Rickards and Harry Bishop were to retire here. Basically, they could not see any enjoyment in walking another day in such high temperatures. Our last walker was Gerald Bateman at 10.48. We cleared up and left the hall at 11.30.

As you can see from the times below, the time span from first till last on CP6 of about 4½ hours lengthened to over 7 hours at CP10 after the 21 mile night section.

Check Point 6:

2030 Chris Coy
2037 Shirley Hume
Chris Hume
Nick Kaye
2059 Ken Falconer
2209 Roger Cole
Chris Winn
2248 Mac McArthur
Alun Jones
John Bickerstaffe
2345 Peter Barnett
Don Newman
0018 Chub Higgins
Brian Buttifant
0022 Paul Hatcher
Trevor Blake
Peter West-Kelsey
0045 Harry Bishop
Bernie Pearson
0048 Moira Rickards
Roy Presland
Gerald Bateman
Chris Butterfield
John Cassells
0052 Harold Gray

Check Point 10:

0337 Ken Falconer
0428 Shirley Hume
Chris Hume
Nick Kaye
Chris Coy
0746 Roger Cole
0811 Mac McArthur
Alun Jones
John Bickerstaffe
Chris Winn
0847 Peter Barnett
Don Newman
0911 Chub Higgins
Trevor Blake
0915 Brian Buttifant
Peter West-Kelsey
0932 John Cassells
0933 Bernie Pearson
1016 Harold Gray
1027 Roy Presland
Chris Butterfield
1028 Moira Rickards
1033 Harry Bishop
1048 Gerald Bateman

The sad death of Chub Higgins, who collapsed suddenly at 70 miles, came as a great shock to all involved in the marshals' walk. His genial presence will be greatly missed by everyone in the Kent Group.

THE CHILTERN HUNDRED

SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS from DON SCOTT.

I was glad when it was over! I might as well say that at the start and give the brief reasons for making such a statement straight away. But I want to emphasise the good points at the end too so don't think this is a catalogue of complaints.

1) There was too much ascent/descent for a non-mountainous area. This meant that comparatively speaking, to pack the climbs in, the route was mostly going up or down something and whilst 'ups' were not too bad, the 'downs' were a bit wearing on my spongy knees.

2) Whenever there was some flat respite it was often broken by the incredible number of stiles to be crossed. Somewhere I heard or read there were over 300 of the things, adding another 1000 feet to the total ascent. Why is it most of the stiles seemed designed to impede progress by their difficulty? Whilst on this subject, the number of stiles in the first section particularly, meant there were often long queues to get over them - a stern test to the patience of some.

3) Navigational problems are sometimes dictated by terrain. Whereas on the Brecon Beacons there were places you could stride out for long spells without more than a glance at the route description, in an area such as the Chilterns constant reference had to be made to it. Whilst this is part of the challenge, it does mean the walker who has not had a chance to 'reccy' the route misses some of the pleasures of enjoying the views to a greater degree than might otherwise be afforded. Compare this situation even with the Downsman Hundred, for example. It is a difficult one this and is a problem to avoid in 1992.

4) No drop point for spare gear to change into or leave may have been introduced with the idea of making the event more tough. This is alright if people live up to the spirit of it but there were a few who had support that made a nonsense of such a condition. In a sense they were advantaged over others. This is not a complaint about them but about the condition that makes inequality inevitable.

5) The organisers cannot be blamed (if that is the right word) for the weather. Yet with a forecast that a two-year old could see was going to be fulfilled, the rule about having to carry cagoule and overtrousers should have been suspended at the start, leaving it to the discretion of entrants whether to carry them or not. The qualification walk rule meant that entrants were sufficiently experienced to exercise sound judgement and there remained, very rightly, the checkpoint officer's power to retire anyone judged unfit to continue.

6) The presence, absence or quality of any food available on walks never bothers me. If there is something there I fancy, I'll have it, otherwise I'm not worried. Some are though! I heard quite a few complaints, first about there being nothing to eat until 22 miles (was there really nothing at Whiteleaf Hill??) but more often about the standard of food at checkpoints, except the finish about which I heard no complaints.

Was this the result of a low entry? Assuming the income is down by, say, £1500, the hire of school, village halls, contribution to St. John's etc. still has to be met in full, presumably leaving less for food. Is the choice of Hundred location, actual or hype about difficulty, presence on the calendar of another, though 'unofficial' Hundred later in the year causing numbers to be down the last two years and bearing on the food, or what?

7) The woodland was a blessing and a curse, offering welcome shade during the day, seeming to retain some warmth at night, although also -in parts- being a severe obstacle test to weary limbs by the amount of fallen timber to negotiate; often a question of whether to go over, under, round or through a tree!

8) By and large the route description was splendid although I would always be in favour of (accurate) bearings being quoted for all posts in fields, turnings, etc.; especially useful at night.

9) Thanks are due to the splendid signposting in those accursed woods. It was very reassuring to see the occasional 'C100' on a tree or on the ground in the middle of the night.

10) As usual, the help and welcome given at the checkpoints was a great morale booster. I could, but won't, mention about half a dozen favourites.

11) Can anyone out there advise me how to stay awake on overnight events, please? This seems to be my main problem. I normally only sleep 5/6 hours a night but obviously require this. Even by 6pm on the Saturday I was reeling, so put my head down for half an hour of rest, feeling much more refreshed afterwards. If there is a secret to staying awake, what is it??

Well, now my last Hundred is finally over, I just can't wait to see where we'll be going to in Lancashire next year!

DUDDON LANDSCAPE WALK

DON SCOTT

SATURDAY 14TH APRIL

An 800 mile round trip to do a 23 mile walk may seem like overdoing it but if the event concerned is in the Lake District and a couple more days can be incorporated for other things then it is well worth making the effort.

The entry form described it as "a tough 23 mile route for experienced fellwalkers" and how right it was to do so. The use of the phrase "rough terrain" was not out of place either. Paths of any sort were few so it was not surprising that there was no route description of the type more familiar to most of us. Grid references alone marked the manned or unmanned checkpoints, only two of which were roadside ones. Retirements were few; once committed to the walk your only chance to drop out came after 9 miles or 6.5 miles from the end.

About 170 people gathered at Victory Hall, Broughton between 0730 and 0800 to register ready for the 0830 mass start from the nearby Market Square. For the gruelling, trackless country ahead the weather was cold but fair, at least to begin with. In fact on the ascent from The Old Forge after 1 mile it was too warm and a few walkers stopped to shed some of their extra clothing. But by the time the first summit, Buckbarrow, was reached the temperature had dropped considerably and a strong south-westerly wind was blowing. It had seemed a long 4.5 miles and the next summit, Whitfell (not Whitefell as per the entry form), a further 1.5 miles, could be clearly seen in the distance. Once that second unmanned checkpoint had been reached the weather deteriorated further, first hail, then snow and eventually rain - and hard rain at that! - quickly fell. Out came the cagoules, brightening up the landscape by their colours. Hoping the wind would soon drive away the rain (oh, foolish hope) overtrousers were left in our sacs. But hat and gloves were pressed into service there as well because the cold had become intense.

The cross-country slog over and down Ulpha Fell to Devoke Water to the road checkpoint at Birker Fell was the first sustained descent of the event. The small tent was exposed to the elements, tea beginning to run in short supply and a couple of dozen customers hoping for something to sustain them. This led to a confused and frustrating time in the cold before some little food and drink was obtained. By this time Liz and I had surrendered to

the inevitable and donned overtrousers.

Time to go again! A bit of roadwalking, uphill of course and with the wind and rain seemingly coming strongly from opposite directions, before taking off at a bend to tackle Great Worm Crag. Though not before a very boggy bit. I heard a scream of frustrated rage as Liz went into it over her boots and pitched forward, getting a fair share of mud from head to toe. I expressed my condolences but asked her to make sure she redistributed these bits of Cumbria further up the hill, which I am glad to say she did.

Surprise awaited us at the top, though: the checkpoint had been blown away!! Two courageous officials emerged from bivi bags sheltering from the gales to give the happy tidings that it would be perfectly alright to carry on without getting our tally cards clipped. So there was no escaping the next hard uphill quagmire to reach a tent nestling among the rocks on Green Crag, with some walkers having checked in dropping back down to get some brief respite from the fierce wind.

There now looked to be a straightforward, trackless stretch skirting Long Crag to the edge of the trees flanking Grassguards Gill. How misleading some appearances can be. The half mile turned out to be a gruesome trek up down and around peat hags. The mud and slime were there to be endured and suffered if the end was to be achieved and, at last, the wood reached. But if one form of torture was over another was about to begin. A steep, relentless, slippery hillside of 900 feet lay before the highest point of the walk, Harter Fell, was reached. Those on their way down looked well pleased with themselves, as well they should. Still in fine fettle, I think, we reached the top ourselves and immediately retraced our steps to the wood. The entry form refers to the descent as "via Birks, Grassguards and Wallowbarrow Crag" in the blurb although nobody in their right mind would reach Seathwaite that way - check it on your map.

The route to the road from the wood edge looked to be fairly straightforward but the track (yes, there really was one) through the trees proved to be churned up, muddy and strewn with fallen trees and rocks. Yet the rain had stopped and there was now some shelter from the wind. In fact as further height was lost and we emerged from the wood the weather abated altogether, and although the wind struck back from time to time the furious part of the day was over.

The next checkpoint, the second roadside one, lay ahead at Seathwaite but not before an exciting river crossing, utilising a wire stretched between banks to help jumping from one stepping stone to another more easy. Poising to make each leap one could not but be aware of the raging water flooding over and around the landing places. Once across, Seathwaite was soon reached and a more relaxed drink of tea and several chunks of madeira cake. By now overtrousers had been shed and only 6.5 miles lay before the

finish. The fact that there were to be two checkpoints in that short distance indicated that they were not to be easy miles.

Great Stickle Fell was to be the first of these, a straightforward journey provided you knew where to be aiming for! Several walkers made the mistake of ascending the higher and nearby Stickle Pike first only to find no checkpoint. Their feelings when they re-checked the grid reference given can easily be imagined. The true way up is a very pleasant route, the latter part being over short, springy turf, descending a couple of times before the final, brief ascent. Provided you resist the temptation of striking up to the ridge too quickly it is an enjoyable spell.

Some assistance in direction giving by the checkpoint lady helped enormously to take the correct direction off and find an important gate in a wall that is the key to reaching the road just where you want to. From then on you have cracked it. Along the road to the final checkpoint at Lower Bleansley Farm, down and up the long track to the next road and a few minutes later we passed the welcome sign telling us that Broughton was only half a mile away.

The village is so tiny that the edge is very near the middle! Across the square, round the edge of a pub and Victory Hall was but a few yards away. And awaiting all walkers there was a delicious, steamy plate of Lancashire Hot Pot with all the trimmings, beetroot, onion and red cabbage to feast on. Pipping hot tea and more madeira cake finished it off. All that remained was to collect the attractive certificate and buy an even more attractive badge as a memento/reminder of a tough day. It had been a demanding 23 miles and to finish it gave a strong sense of having achieved something worthwhile.

Next year.....well, who knows? If so, please let there be better weather. There is so much to see, unusual views of familiar, distant hills as well as the nearer beauties of Dunnerdale itself that it would be good to have the opportunity to enjoy it more.

One final thing is the accommodation. Eric Unsworth, the organiser, had sent us a list of places. They fill up quick. Also the Poll Tax has made quite a few cease to offer beds, at least so early in the year as they might easily breach the break point set beyond which they are charged for visitors. But we were well looked after by Sue and Jim Capstick at Whicham Hall Farm, Silecroft, Millom. Their friendly, informality exactly suited our style, even to Sue replacing the family joint in the Aga on Sunday with a day-old ailing lamb to warm it up! We recommend them if you intend entering next year, although they are officially limited to only three guests. Their telephone number is 0229 772637.

Don Scott.

It was with some trepidation that I set out for Faversham to start the third leg of my journey around the Saxon Shore Way, headlights and windscreen wipers being necessary for the journey. As if by habit, I parked in the identical space as I did for the second leg eight months previously; the rain had eased to a drizzle as the cagoule was donned for a dank start in a chilly wind.

Strolling along Court Street at 7.40 am., the contrast with the sweltering afternoon last August was most noticeable. The pub in Abbey Street boldly proclaimed "noted victuals", the accuracy of which I was not able to test.

The Fremlins brewery may be about to close, but Abbey Street, with many historical houses, has seen it all; even the house-numbering opposite was out of sequence. At the end, a quick left through a muddy lorry park brought me alongside the creek again for three miles to the open sea. The old oyster warehouse at Lion's Wharf appeared to have become one enormous aviary - a veritable hive of activity. I passed through an old shipyard, full of things maritime, including two huge black wooden rudders, and old railway van (?), several extremely free-range chickens and just about the dodgiest bridge crossed to date. The rocking, rusting contraption, a single walker's width with a sort of drawbridge affair on one end, crossed a creek inlet. I chuckled as I made the far bank safely, thanking Heath Robinson in the process.

Past Nagden Cottages and with a rape field inland, I avoided without hesitation (in true Group fashion) the inland track to Castle Coote which saves a couple of miles of the coastal path. Perish the thought indeed!! Where Faversham Creek meets Oare Creek, I spotted the Shipwrights Arms on the far bank, recollecting the day last August when it became an oasis. It was just 200 yards away as the seagull flies, but six miles as the Warman wombles. This lonely, isolated stretch is now the South Swale Nature Reserve and home of about 35,000 wintering birds, and I wished my ornithological knowledge was greater as I struggled to identify the large wader feeding at the waters' edge; it had the profile and size of a heron, but black ?

As I neared the road at the Sportsman's Arms, Seasalter, two joggers swept past me. My eyes, however, were on the hovering kestrel, moving gradually along in my direction, but always about 100 yards ahead. Some road walking followed and I wondered how the chalets, built on tiny brick piers, stood up. A few hadn't and appeared burnt down with the piers registering their previous positions. Those which remained had sort of seasidey names like San Remo, Sea-View and Chez-Nous. The Seasalter Yacht Club seemed a posh affair and much activity was beginning as the morning unfolded.

Along the private drive, walkers are reminded to respect the residents, sleeping policemen and signs inviting a 12 mph speed limit were installed. Over the railway, along the road, through the scrubland and across the golf course on a raised path to the coast again.

At Whitstable, a bit more road, but interesting distractions abound. Just past the Oyster Company Headquarters I paused for a drink at a new shelter, whereupon a local fido decided my trousers smelt like a lamp-post, but the fraught lady owner called to heel just in time.

At Tankerton, the concrete promenade was followed past beach huts (more Sea-Views, etc) and many strolling locals all the way to the seafront at Herne Bay. An odd sight is the pier head, about three-quarters of a mile from the beach, having been severed from land during a storm. It was now 11.30 am. and a welcoming cafe enticed me in for tea and a scone; it enticed me so well that

I repeated the order before plodding on, in by now quite reasonable weather, towards Bishopstone Glen and Reculver. At the Glen, low gear was engaged as the path meets and climbs the first cliff to date; the elevated grassland traverse to the latter was a delight, butterflies and moths galore. The twin towers of the Saxon church had beckoned since Herne Bay. Less of a delight, however, was the sight or site of caravans hereabouts. I am reliably informed that at the tender age of 12 months, I spent my first holiday in one of these, but I digress. Credit today must be given to the spotless new toilet block and new paths and signposts.

Here I bade farewell to the North Sea and the North Kent Coast (my friend for 75 miles) as the path headed south-easterly across the approximate line of the Wantsum Channel, which once separated the Isle of Thanet from Kent. This marshy stretch with wide vistas seemed very fertile, sprouting vegetables of many varieties. I spotted a barn owl on a post beside the path. It took off on a low, sweeping, semi-circular path to a perch about 400 yards away, again by the path. As I approached, it duly returned to the original post.

The old windmill at Chislet is a landmark for some way, its forlorn appearance being due to having had the sails taken out of its wind. The crossing of the busy Thanet Way road proved a little arduous (pedestrian tunnel - summer only-required here) but I was soon in Marshside and arguing with a noisy garden-bound goose. Soon after the pretty Invicta Cottage at Chitty the local cat frightened me by tearing across the path under my feet, from the hedge. Oil-seed rape was a predominant crop, but much to my relief the only footpath through it was properly cleared and marked.

Sheep and young lambs were passed before descending to cross the railway at the Grove Ferry Inn. The crowds deterred me from halting for refreshment, but, at 2.30 pm, my stomach was rumbling, so I stopped awhile on the grass of the picnic park just beyond.

The Great Stour was followed for a mile and the many pleasure craft occupied my mind for a while. Over more fields to cross and follow the Little Stour for a further mile, passing a pumping station with an ingenious trap for weeds, etc., complete with an overhead pulley system for deposition into land-based skips. Whilst struggling along the overgrown river bank, a two-man canoe paddled frantically by.

Towards the unlovely-sounding Pluck's Gutter, the Little Stour joins his big brother. To the left, as far as the eye could see, fields of vegetables; this time potatoes, oil-seed rape and broad beans. To the right, a neat line of poplars shielding a rather tidy orchard. Under the road bridge and past the tiny waterfront abode with its equally tiny front garden; a sort of lock-keepers cottage I suppose.

The path bears slightly away from the river for a stretch, until a professional gate decorated with an amateur "no-entry" sign is met. A quick left back to the river and the way continued alongside for the next three miles of splendid isolation. It was now nearing four o'clock and the day had turned warm and humid; Sandwich, the day's destination, was still seven miles distant. From Pluck's Gutter the huge landmark of Richborough power station loomed into view. Just this side was a new wind turbine generator, a sort of 21st century Chislet.

Alan Sillitoe said that his journey along this section was accompanied by many river boats. I saw none, met no one (baa a few sheep) and even the cattle encountered were on the opposite bank. The succession of broken gates and assault-course stiles, together with the rough going, made me ponder just how

popular some parts if this route actually were. I also wondered if I would ever reach the power station, which appeared no closer.

Just as I had seen the earlier train whilst approaching Kingsferry Bridge, so did I here - the 4.30 pm. from Sandwich clattered along in the distance, in miniature of course. Eventually I popped under the railway, where it crossed the river and opposite the huge white generator. The three fins seemed so flimsy. Later research showed each fin to be 90 ft long and 6 tonnes in weight; the mast is 150 ft high. Soon the waterside cooling towers were passed. The power station appeared derelict, with broken windows and flapping roof sheeting but I believe it is now operational again, as part of the privatisation programme.

To the right, the corporation tip made for a most uncomfortable passage along the perimeter. Where the machines had spread refuse against the 10 ft high fence, the weight had pushed it over, across the footpath, thereby allowing 4 - 5 ft of headroom for about 300 yards. There was no alternative to the constant ducking as the nettle-covered river bank was to the left.

The Great Stour here runs parallel with the coastline for a while and between the two waters was a large factory complex and a huge park of imported cars. Ahead, on a hillock, stood the Roman Richborough Castle, dating from the late 3rd century. Timespans can change pretty rapidly in these parts.

Having thankfully passed the confines of the tip, I paused below the castle for a drink, when the 5.30 pm. train from Sandwich whistled past. Another half an hour would see me at the station in good time for the 6.30.

A pleasant meander across green pastures, followed by a quiet lane, brought me to the outskirts of Sandwich. A town I had never explored, but the appetiser I was about to enjoy left me anticipating the main course of a future visit. An evening saunter along the old Town Wall, under the avenue of trees, with mellow sun-tinted cottages on one hand and the cricket ground on the other, was the perfect end to another enjoyable day, in total 34 miles.

At Dover Priory I raided the station buffet and boarded the connection to Faversham and the car. On the way home I realised I was just three miles from the English Channel, Martello towers and all. The activity and impact around the channel tunnel workings, plus the cliffs between Walmer and Folkestone, were keenly anticipated, and my jottings on my journey to Hythe will continue in the next newsletter.

N.B. Contrary to the footnote in the last article (issue no. 21) the route cards are now available from Mr Mick Whittingham, [REDACTED]

DATA PROTECTION ACT

For the sole purpose of distributing newsletters, etc., a list of members' names and addresses is maintained on behalf of the Group on a computer retrieval system.

The membership list will not be sold, hired or lent out. It will only be used in connection with Group activities. Under the provisions of the Act, you should advise the Secretary immediately, in writing, if you object to these details being held.
