

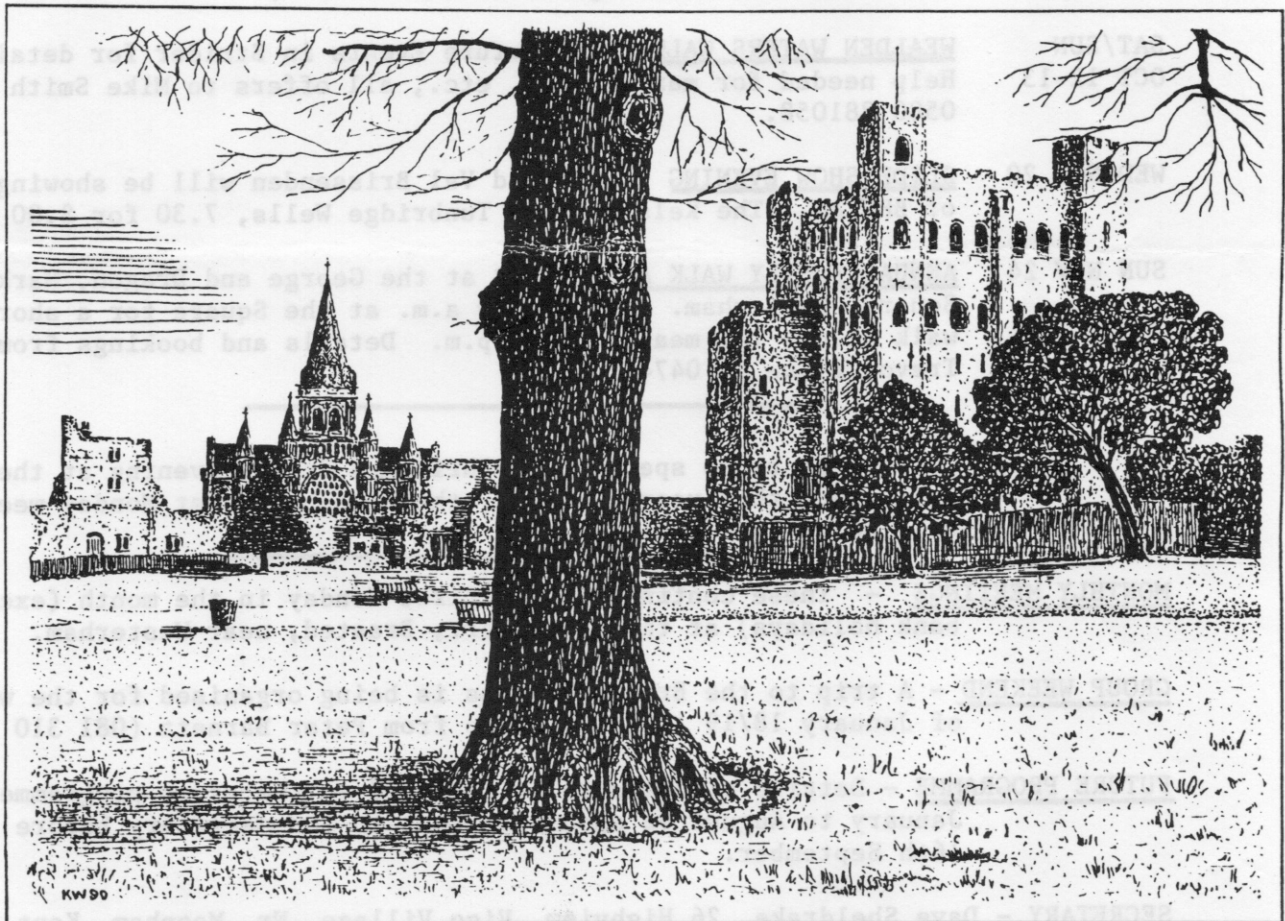


LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



- 1 -

COMMITTEE

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS...BRIAN BUTTIFANT
BRYAN CLARKE
PAUL HATCHER
NEAL O'ROURKE
PAMELA PRINCE
JOHN PROBERT

KENT GROUP PROGRAMME UP TO DECEMBER 1991.

SUN AUG 11 TUNBRIDGE WELLS CIRCULAR - See Strider for details

SAT SEP 14 PENSHURST POTTER. 20 miles approx. Meet 8.45 a.m. at Penshurst village layby on road to Leigh (GR 526 438). Pub stop. Leader Alan Ball, [REDACTED].

SAT/SUN WEALDEN WATERS MARSHALS' WALK. Meet 8.30 a.m. at car park in Duke of Yorks Road, Tunbridge Wells (GR 579 387)
SEP 21-22

SAT/SUN WEALDEN WATERS WALK - See Future Events in Strider for details.
OCT 12-13 Help needed for marshalling, etc., all offers to Mike Smith on [REDACTED].

WED NOV 20 SLIDE SHOW EVENING - Mike and Val Brissenden will be showing slides of BHUTAN. The Kelsey Arms, Tunbridge Wells, 7.30 for 8.00 p.m.

SUN NOV 24 ANNUAL FAMILY WALK AND DINNER at the George and Dragon, Market Square, Westerham. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Square for a short walk before the meal at 2.30 p.m. Details and bookings from Trevor Blake on [REDACTED].

There will be no special pre-Christmas drinks evening at the White Hart this year; however, the December first Monday meeting will be held as usual.

MONTHLY MEETINGS - These continue on the first Monday in the month (except bank holidays) at the White Hart, Brasted, near Westerham.

GROUP WEEKEND - A trip to the Brecon Beacons is being organised for the weekend of January 18/19 1992. Details from Peter Barnett [REDACTED].

FUTURE PROGRAMME - Details of walks to be included in the group programme from January to August 92 should be sent to the secretary before the 16th September.

SECRETARY - Dave Sheldrake, [REDACTED].

NEWSLETTER EDITOR - Laurie Lowe, [REDACTED].

COVER PICTURE - The drawing by Keith Warman, is of Rochester Castle & Cathedral.

TOUR DE MONT BLANC DAY TRIP

Don Scott.

As many of you know I'm not doing any LDWA events this year, except the Hundred and the Gatliff, perhaps. But I'm still a member of another Rambling and Climbing Club at work and not being active in it for several years had decided to go on some of their events. I was recently delighted to be asked to take part in a Day Trip to the Alps to do the Tour de Mont Blanc. Although I've done the Tour twice before and had no real wish to do it again, this seemed a special sort of challenge. Depending on which of the several variants you take, the distance is always going to be over a hundred miles and will involve over 30,000 feet of ascent, ranging up to about 8,500 feet.

The organiser was a friend of mine from Dublin, Shamus O'Zone, and as the participants numbered 115, a chartered flight was arranged. We left Luton Airport on the stroke of midnight 31st March/1st April.

In order to save time we parachuted into the nearest point on the Tour, Les Houches. It was unfortunate we had not been able to keep to the original plan, to land the plane on the Mer de Glace, but Shamus had thought numbers would have been fewer and a light aircraft could be used. As it was, the pilot refused to put down on the glacier at night, so parachutes it had to be. I had never used one before so count myself lucky I got down in one piece. Others were not so fortunate. 14 of the team were killed and a further 37 suffered various injuries of one sort or another that ruled them out from carrying on. 23 more failed to make the dropping zone, or rather we decided not to wait for them. Happily for the 41 remaining at the start the entire duty free stock of spirits, which we had filched from the aircraft, made it down without a single breakage.

Shamus had made it a rule that we all stick together on the walk. In true LDWA fashion, I wasn't keen on this but when he added that anyone who fell behind, had an accident, etc., would be left to their own devices, I cheered up. Regrettably, this didn't last long. Shamus entrusted the liquor to Hamish McNoodle. This was not a wise decision. 5 minutes after leaving Les Houches our numbers were down to 40 and we never saw Hamish or the booze again.

We lost the next lot on the Col de Voza. It was still dark then and a senseless, dreamy chap from Birmingham, who couldn't read a map, had no compass and whose only walking experience had been on Cannock Chase, followed the tramway lines up from there instead of going down to Pont des Place. It turned out from later enquiry he was a keen train spotter and had just instinctively followed the rails. As he was near the back of the column only 12 people kept to the rule and pursued him on his incorrect course. They all carried on for hours and hours, passing the d'Aigle, up the Aiguille de Gouter, over the Dome de Gouter, until they reached the summit of Mont Blanc itself. You probably remember reading the reports of their later rescue when they tried to descend the Brenva Face in the futile attempt to catch the rest of us up in Italy. It was a good job they didn't succeed as we couldn't have allowed their taking a short cut to stand. As it was, their Winter ascent of Mont Blanc in trainers, shorts and teeshirts without any kind of food, drink or survival gear was a pretty good performance. Rather different from Cannock Chase, anyway. The Italian police made a bit of a fuss, though and the coroner was discouraging in his report.

We were now 27 and until the Col de la Croix de Bonhomme only lost another 6 from the main party. But then, again, misfortune struck us, this time in the form of a blizzard. Experience had told me to be prepared, so out of my bum bag came my cagoule and overtrousers, and my Kendal Mint Cake. Well protected as I was from the storm, I had to pity the rest of the party. Most had come completely unequipped, although a few had cycle capes. But the dangers of these were obvious when 2 more of our company were swept up into the air by the force of the wind ballooning their capes. We last saw them sailing up towards the Aiguille de Bionnassay. They looked a grand sight and I was very sorry I hadn't brought my camera. Nobody was concerned for them; they had, after all, just done their first parachute drop a few hours earlier.

By the time we had cleared the Col de de la Seigne and ran down to Courmayeur, we were down to 17. Shamus was for taking what he called the "Tunnel Variant". I assured him neither Andrew Harper's book or the Topo Guide counted this as a genuine part of the complete round. He rather went to pieces on hearing this and actually started to cry. It was all somewhat embarrassing. I could only persuade him to keep going by promising him an ice-cream at the end of the Val Ferret. He said he'd prefer a Guinness but would come if he could have something called a tutti-frutti. So, our leader came with us, a sad fact in view of what happened later.

It still being Winter, no ice-cream (or Guinness) was to be found and Shamus started to sulk. This may have been responsible for his next bad decision, to take the Petit Col Ferret route in preference to the main pass. The elements still raged and Shamus insisted on wearing my overtrousers and cagoule as, he said, he was in the lead. Near the top of the pass his weakened body, unsustained by the ice-cream nourishment it had craved, slipped exhaustedly to the ground. How much he must have regretted the lack of boots, ice-axe, crampons and his insistence on my nylon protective gear as he began his plummeting slide, I'll never know. We watched him until he was out of sight, our main regret being that on his fall he managed to knock over several more of our depleted party, skittling them down the mountainside too. At the pass itself, a headcount revealed we were down to 11, although not for long. One reason the Petit Col is out of favour is the avalanche danger as you descend the small valley on the far side, and here it was we lost 3 more for that very reason.

It was now early afternoon and our small band jogged on down and then up to Champex, where we had our first real rest stop of 15 minutes. In that time we managed to knock back an equivalent number of beers...each! The question then was, "which way", the Fenetre d'Arpette or Bovine route? We were equally divided, myself and 3 others electing for the former, the remaining 4 for the latter. We had no time to settle the matter by consensus and since we didn't have Shamus' "stick together" rule to worry about, we went our separate ways. The Bovine group were never seen again. Afterwards we learnt they were lured into the fleshpots of a chalet party on a skiing holiday and spent the next ten days in Bacchanalian splendour.

I took a look at my 3 companions before we set off again. Horace Walker, (no descendent of the Victorian mountaineer) was another veteran of Cannock Chase, although he'd also "done" the Wrekin. Ram Jam Buttee was an absolute novice and had come by mistake; a friend of his in Leicester had jokingly told him the trip was a pilgrimage. Considering he'd never been in country no more serious than his local park, he had done very well. "Spider" Webb was the only experienced one, having done every 4000 metre peak in the Alps in addition to Cannock Chase and Leith Hill. We set off, reaching the col without mishap in just under an hour, then bombed down to the Chalet du Glacier and up to the Col de Balme, the French border. Here we had to leave Ram Jam. The French police were doing a spot check on passports and Ram, who had mistakenly left his on the plane, was denied entry.

The Gleesome Threesome, as Horace now called us, thundered down to le Tour and straight up to the Passage Dangereux, where Horace got stuck! However, his head provided a very useful foothold, enabling Spider and me to surmount the difficulty with more ease than we expected. Saying "Cheerio" to our friend, (who screamed after us that we were now The Gruesome Twosome and he hoped we'd be eaten by marmots) we ran along the Balcony, passing la Flagere and Plan Praz, before charging up the Brevant. Here, Spider came to grief. A Frenchman, looking through the telescope there, swung the instrument vigorously and clouted Spider a heavy blow to his head. In his stunned state, he accidentally joined the queue for the telgraphique and I soon saw him being borne valleywards. The plucky chap recovered in Chamonix and took the last telegraphique back to the summit to continue the Tour. It was bad luck he eventually arrived in Les Houches just 6 minutes outside the 24-hour deadline, thereby failing to get the coveted badge and certificate.

So what of me? Well, I had no problem descending to Les Houches, where a taxi whisked me off to Geneva Airport in time to catch the charter plane (now empty save for myself) back to Luton narrowly inside 24 hours to conclude one of the best April 1st's I had ever had.

Next years April 1st Day Trip is a Northern Triple Challenge: the Scottish 4000'-ers, the Lakeland 3000'-ers and the Welsh 3000'-ers in the one day. Shamus is again organising it. Entry is limited to the first 500 applicants. Anyone wishing to enter can do by sending me a cheque for £174.50 deposit.

Having had four warm days since Gravesend, I decided to walk the final 26 miles in cooler weather, so a grey and foggy figure stood numbly on platform 3 at Ashford station on a grey and foggy Saturday morning in November.

Whilst waiting for the train to Sandling to resume the route, my old digital watch, used only for walking, was an hour fast, being last worn during British Summer Time. I began to reset it and then remembered that it automatically jumps to 12 noon. Oh dear, I forgot! The only solution was to reset it at noon, but I wouldn't know when it was. So it was 4 hours 20 minutes fast, which meant arithmetical dexterity would be required.

I caught the 8.02 a.m. punctually at 12.22 p.m. and was soon leaving Sandling station, a far cry from the sylvan retreat earlier in the year. A couple of miles of road were to be retraced to the miniature railway at Hythe. Four pheasants were thrashing about in an old bean field seeking early morning morsels. The newsagent at Saltwood was doing good business, unlike the butcher. From here the road dropped steeply to sea level, passing the mushroom-covered bank of the Blairgowan Hotel. Ahead I could see the coastline curling away towards Dungeness, the Martello towers evenly spaced like upturned thimbles. I was not to see the power station once during the day, although in theory it should be visible all the way to Rye.

A good start was spoilt by taking the path on the south of the Royal Military Canal, although this was soon corrected. I glanced at the watch and wished I hadn't. Swans on the canal and anglers on the far bank were occasional companions during this pleasant grassy stroll. The going was good although the drizzle became steadier so the cagoule was reluctantly donned. Needless to say, it soon stopped altogether.

After the lane at West Hythe, the path meanders through young trees which barred any view of the sparse remains of the Roman Fort Lemanis, or Stutfall Castle as it is now known. I was aware, however, of the 300 feet high Greensand old sea cliffs - the original shoreline before Romney Marsh was formed. The path then follows the perimeter fence of Port Lympne Zoo Park, inside which I spotted a group of large deer who sensibly decided to stay in their house to avoid the damp morning, and me. Through the trees, my face was breaking a constant stream of cobwebs; a bit irritating for me, but much more so for their builders. Sorry spiders!

The trees ended and sheep were grazing up to the canal bank. Quite friendly, they didn't seem to bother about my temporary intrusion. After 4 miles with the canal, I reached the isolated Honeypot Cottage and turned uphill towards the old chapel at Court-at-Street. There were many sheep on this steady climb and I received the customary greeting of a urinating chorus.

The mist lifted slightly to reveal the vast open-ness below. Along with southern Sheppey, this must be one of the most silent parts of Kent. Just beyond the roofless chapel, a marshy patch had an old tree growing from its midst; it was uprooted but several branches were growing vertically from the now horizontal trunk.

I was by now contouring along at the base of the old cliffs - a strange, haunting landscape now lush grazing land. There followed a mile-long stretch devoid of a right-of-way, but which has permissive use. My 10 year old notes let me down, and the map gave little comfort as of course the path isn't marked.

A succession of ankle-drenching fields, gates and mushroom outcrops left me wondering or even hoping, for a blunderbuss up my derrière, from one of the palatial and exclusive mansions on the cliff edge. At least, I reasoned, I would be able to ask the way. It wasn't to be, but then Aldington knoll came into sight. Two more fields were gained and I joined the public foot-path around the base and out to the road. Here, I rested for a sandwich, a muesli bar and a cup of steaming tea. The map was studied, intrigued as to where I had just been (and where perhaps I should have been).

On around more field edges towards Aldington Church, then the path dipped below a cross track of overhead power lines, all humming nicely. The scenery hereabouts was very pleasant; quite undulating with isolated woods, lush pastures and distant views over Romney Marsh.

Following a short stretch along Mill Lane, the path crossed a stylish stile just past a timid white cat. Stiles were numerous here, through several paddocks; the last contained three horses, one of which was a rather strange pinky fawn hue. They sniffed around my rucksac, but the goodies therein were for my benefit only.

Tidy houses with tidy hedges were passed, not forgetting a pair of noisy labradors. Along the lane was the slightly run-down mass of Bilsington Priory. It had seen better days, I felt sure, but was nonetheless still imposing. I have often thought that gates and entrances are a good indication of the prestige of a building; the massive brick piers supporting iron gates spelt this property as being above average on my amateur scale. For the past two miles, I had been struggling to remove a piece of wheatgerm husk (from the muesli bar) lodged firmly in the upper-left molars. Here it finally dislodged itself, so I spent the two miles pondering whether to blame poor ingredients or indifferent dentistry.

Halfway along the grassy path through Priory Wood, I halted for lunch on a fallen tree. It was 12.30 p.m. give or take four hours or so. Suitably replenished, I took the path which left the wood adjacent to Fagg's Farm, then into the field opposite. It was brown porridge, and agreeing with the bearing on the waymark, I ploughed across the middle and over the hump of Dicker's Wood on the far side. Rights of Way Act 1990 beware.

It began to drizzle again and the woodland path petered out after 100 yards. Bright red fungi were admired. I retreated and took a parallel path to enter a sheep pasture. Having located the stile in the wood fence, I turned to happily follow a 10 feet wide swarth across to the plantation. This was bad news. The storms had virtually flattened the area and the pathline was soon lost. On a bearing, I stumbled my way to the far bridleway, which took me past more sheep to Horton Green Farm. Here, I made a stupid error by going the wrong side of the farmhouse and thrashed about for 20 minutes seeking a stile which wasn't there. Eventually, the correction was made, to pass Gill Farm and frighten away a startled heron resting by an old pond.

The way then enters Ham Street Nature Reserve, and nature's palette provided a superb array of autumnal tints, the grassy path being a pleasure. The distant throb of a diesel train was heard leaving Ham Street station, so I knew that it was an hour until the next one. The reserve was left, after not a step too long, and I wandered through the village to rest on the seat by the football pitch to drain the flask of the remaining tea.

In dropping temperatures, I hastened up to the station, checking the route for the final 12 miles to Rye. This railway line used to be the Hastings to Ashford line. Now, according to the timetable, it is the "Marsh Link" under the

auspices of "Network South East". Perhaps British Rail employ the same agency as Dover District Council do. I arrived back at Ashford at 3 p.m., reflecting on an interesting section with a few bits of tricky navigation.

In the previous Newsletter, I made mention of the RSPCA leaflet titled

"HOW SHOULD YOU COPE WITH AN UNFRIENDLY DOG ?" As this subject is close to many of our hearts (and legs!), I reproduce below - with the kind permission of, and thanks to the RSPCA - the full text:-

Compiled by the RSPCA Veterinary Department and based on information provided by Dr. Michael W. Fox MRCVS.

The following information is designed to assist people in understanding a dog's behaviour towards strangers when on its own ground.

There is of course neither a simple answer nor a set formula to solve the problems of the unfriendly dog but all dogs tend to conform to predictable rules of behaviour. When you are faced with a difficult situation this knowledge could assist you in avoiding trouble.

The following points should be remembered:-

1 Even friendly dogs will bark at you as it is their job to defend their territory. Talk to the dog in a firm but quiet voice and if he approaches in a friendly way - no snarl or hackles up - stand still so that he can sniff you.

Many dogs will respond to your greeting by wagging their tails. Others will ignore you but do not be too forward or over friendly.

2 As you approach a dog observe how he reacts to you. If he stays put or backs off, he probably regards you as a dominant intruder and so will be too scared to attack. If he walks or runs towards you with his tail wagging in a low position he is probably friendly and unlikely to bite. If he stiffens up, holds his tail high, snarls and stares at you then be on your guard. If he shows his teeth it may be safest to go no further, but don't turn and run - back away slowly.

3 Never run past a strange dog, or walk quickly away from it. This may release its chase response and you may get bitten as a result. Always walk slowly, even backwards, facing the dog, if you feel he may chase you.

4 Try to avoid showing any fear. A dog can read fear in your eyes and body movements. Keep calm, whistle, walk slowly or speak firmly to him.

Dogs rarely attack so do not be over-anxious about every dog you meet. Most are scared about getting into a fight but like to act tough on their own territory. Do not ignore dogs but behave in a friendly and confident way at all times. You will then lessen their own fear.

5 Never stare at a dog, staring is a threat and a dog may read it as a challenge and attack you.

6 Remember dogs can tell if you like them and a dog biscuit in your pocket is a better insurance than a stick or other form of repellent.

However, do not feel bad if you like dogs and they all seem to respond by barking and apparently hating you. They are just doing their job as you are doing yours.

7 Don't forget - many delivery people or occasional visitors get bitten as they are leaving a house. Remember the golden rule - if in doubt back away slowly, keeping the dog in your sight at all times.

RECOLLECTIONS of ALPINE WALKING HOLIDAYSJohn Probert.

Ron and I flew out to Switzerland three years ago for a longish holiday to walk from Liechtenstein to Geneva - my first visit abroad for quite a few years. Ron said it would be an experience and of course, it was just that. Forget about the usual "We started the walk at 8 a.m., etc, etc." - the lasting memories of that holiday (plus two others since) are what matters.

My first impression was of great mountains in the distance as we walked from the station, the rain slashing down, the cars coming towards us on the wrong side of the road.

The weight of the Bergen with too much kit, the long drag up the first hill, the distant tinkle of cow bells coming down off the mountain.

The horse-drawn bus with the canvas sides down to keep the rain out, it taking right of way over the other traffic at the cross roads.

The cow bells coming ever nearer until we have to stop and let the cows pass, the two Swiss lads leading the procession a little the worse for the tippie, the bells at a deafening clamour, the mess that the cows made (all 200 of them), the women with the buckets of water, washing the pavements down, the cars splashing it back again as they rush by.

The first guest house, the cold bedroom, the hurried walk around the village, the lovely flowers in baskets on every house, the ornamental ironwork.

The moving on in the morning our breath misty in the cold morning air, the climb up into the mountains with the weather bright and crisp, seeing my first snow avalanche with the thunder of its passage down the mountain and spreading over the valley below.

Moving on into higher ground wet underfoot as the sun breaks through, the clouds closing in around us, then on over the top to bright sun, the valley below green and lush.

Dropping down into the town - it does not matter which town - the urgent pushing on to the night's B & B at the largest hotel in town - the only one available before we get benighted.

The polite incivility of the staff, the skimpy breakfast - two pieces of bread with cheese handed to us from the basket.

The pleasant day in hot sunshine, pushing on and up for hours at a time.

The icecream, the enormous yoghurt, the memories of the days left behind.

Ron's ever-present smile when the going is really tough, the enormous meal in the evening, the beer from the bottle.

The worry - will I have enough cash to last out?

The ever-changing mountains, the tourists from Japan, the hundreds of clicking cameras, the fifty bed dormitory with just the two of us in residence.

The two (or too!) friendly Australians.

Climbing up under the chairlift, the posh hotel, the excellent meal, the clear blue lake reflecting the sky and mountains, the clear air hitting one's lungs first thing in the morning.

Losing my torch, my toothbrush and my towel all in the space of seven days.

Dropping down onto a glacier, dropping the Bergen and running across the snow-field just for the hell of it.

The warm beds, the window left open overnight, the shock of finding a nuclear shelter under the B & B chalet.

The circular path half way up the mountain that goes on and on, the army firing live rounds across the road about thirty feet above us.

The old dragon at the mountain hut who said we were wasting the hot water.

The first glimpse of a chamois (dead), the two hunters in the bar - six feet tall and almost as broad.

The hotel late at night filled with troops, Ron's winning ways with the landlady who gave us a room that was used by three sergeants but who had gone home for the weekend.

The thoughts of the flight home, the mud on the last day, the thousand steps down into Geneva, the hurried meal, the train ride to the airport, the change of clothes in the loo.

Clean, tidy, washed and shaved, too soon into Gatwick, met by the family, down to earth - was it all real?

This is what Ron's alpine holidays are about - a kaleidoscope of unforgettable hours and days cramming as many miles and memories in as possible. As soon as I am fit again, I will be there.

HORIZONTAL MOUNTAINEERING

Keith Warman.

A popular pastime in Holland appears to be mud-walking, or wadlopen, whose season runs from May to October. When the North Sea retreats, vast mudflats are exposed between the mainland and the Fresian Islands, and the tides allow up to six hours to cross. You are led by experienced guides, and catch the ferry back when the sea returns.

For an entry fee of about £3.25 you can choose routes of between 10 and 15 kms, but the committed and experienced squelcher can attempt the 17 kms, 4½ hour Schiermonnikoog.

Suggested equipment is simple; canvas boots, shorts and waterproofs. The Dutch refer to this activity as horizontal mountaineering, but there is no need to search for your passports. Just enter the next available Gatliff, Winter Tanners or Punchbowl Marathons.....and hope for rain!

LANCASTRIAN HUNDRED

As usual, the Kent Group was very well represented at the annual 100 mile event.

Congratulations to Peter Barnett, who this year completed his ten official hundreds and received the special 10 x 100 award.

Well done also to three of our newer members from Otford. They really have taken to challenge walking and have progressed confidently up through the shorter distances to complete their first 100 mile event. Well done Judy Rickwood, Ian Needham and Geoff Betts.

According to my information (official results not yet available) a total of sixteen Kent Group members completed the distance. Those not already mentioned were (in no particular order) :- Brian Buttifant, Ivan Waghorn, Trevor Blake, Ron Roweth, Don Newman, Don Scott, Keith Warman, Liz Higgins, Peter West-Kelsey, Jim Lindsay, Andrew Bowden and Phil Hastings.

THE FACTS

Well, approximately.

Bryan Clarke.

The New Shoreham Shuffle. Saturday 20th April 1991. Sixteen walkers set off at 8.50 a.m. from Shoreham. A comfort stop at Westminster Fields, Horton Kirby, from 11.30 a.m. to 11.50 a.m. Lunch stop at Farningham from 12.50 p.m. to 2 p.m. Some of us consumed bar meals at The Chequers and others picnicked over the river in the picnic area. Tea break at 3.30 p.m. in Lullingstone Park Club House. Arrived back at Shoreham 6 p.m. Distance twenty-two miles. Three people came for the morning only and one joined us for the afternoon. An icy wind kept us cool during the morning with snow and hail flurries from the cloudy sky. The afternoon gradually warmed as the sun appeared and for the last couple of hours we were able to remove some wind-proof clothing.

SOUTH ON THE WEALDWAY AND BACK ANOTHER WAY

On arrival at Western Road Car Park, Borough Green, soon after 8.30 a.m. on 9th June two or three had already found the meeting place without aid of the Group sweatshirt which I then hung on the entrance arch. By 9.15 a.m. lunch numbers had been 'phoned to the pub and 19 people and 4 dogs were crossing the fields towards the old brickworks at Platt only to find a group member, plus dog, walking in the opposite direction. After exchanges of greetings we went on through the industrial estate, over a railway bridge, across the A.25 and up an unmetalled road into Platt Woods where a blaze of rhododendron colour greeted us and kept us company as we turned South on the Wealdway.

Our route then led across Pigeon's Green, up Long Mill Lane and past Invicta Fencing Works into Shipbourne Forest where a steadily rising track took us to the top of Gover (how do you pronounce it?) Hill. Downhill more steeply through woods and fields before veering East along the Greensand Way which follows the same route as the Wealdway as far as Weat Peckham Green where we paused for refreshments. We then skirted and traversed several fields before crossing the A.26 to find that, since the Group Walk on 12th May, a path through a bean field and a cornfield had been cleared along the correct line of the Wealdway. Southwards then through Peckham Place and Crowhurst Farms to join the lane near Kent House Farm. Passing the farm we went South on the lane until it reached a stream which we followed upstream as far as the first footbridge. After a brief debate, largely centred on opening and closing times, we crossed the footbridge and continued South on the Wealdway through Barnes Street to the River Medway which we followed upstream to recross it by some lock gates before returning via a field of flattened oil-seed rape and Golden Green to the 'debatable' bridge.

North then through Style Place and West and North along by-roads past Goblands Farm to pick up a track through orchards and fields to the 'Harrow' at Hadlow where we were well 'fed and watered' according to our various tastes. Unfortunately those who had not chosen a roast meal were separated from those who had but we re-assembled in the garden where some repaired toenails and others enjoyed the seesaw before we set off again.

Our return route took us West to Steer's Place then North on a short stretch of road before crossing Oxen Hoath Park and up the drive to pass the house of the same name. We turned West along the Greensand Way just in time to avoid a past-Presidential rebuke for going back up our morning route down Gover Hill. The Greensand Way led through meadows and cornfields to Roughway, where the tall chimney of the old paper mill still stands, along the road past the 'Kentish Rifleman' (closed), across more cornfields, interspersed by a wood and Fairlawne Farmyard, and between gardens and houses to Shipbourne Green and a well-earned break.

After a short rest and sustenance we left the 'GW' markers behind and went North across another part of Fairlawne Estate before skirting Plaxtol Village via meadow, field and orchard to reach Yopps Green. We then followed a farmtrack until it stopped in a field full of dilapidated vehicles which did not enhance the view ahead of Gover Hill. Down a muddy path, across an infant stream and through an orchard to Winfield Lane which led us steeply downhill to the River Bourne. Upstream for a short way on the West bank before veering away to join a farm track, cross a lane and follow an overgrown footpath to an orchard which we went through on a farmtrack to pass Warren Farm. Resisting offers of barbecue food we went through another orchard, hearing the crack of willow on leather as we passed Ightham Cricket Ground, along a lane for a few yards and then through more fields and orchards to thread our way across, between and along the roads of Borough Green to the back steps to the Car Park.

The rain had held off all day and we had covered 23 miles (approx., more for the dogs). All seemed to have enjoyed the walk both those who had completed the 'Hundred' a fortnight before and such people as the chap whose youngest daughter remarked:- "It must have been a good walk he wasn't limping at all afterwards."

Tom Sinclair.

200th. ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEY

Keith Warman.

This year sees the bicentenary of the Ordnance Survey, which came into being in 1791 when the Board of Ordnance started mapping the country on a national basis for military purposes.

With the threat of the Napoleonic invasion, the south-east was the first area to be surveyed and the 1st. of January 1801 saw the first O.S. map published, of Kent, on a scale of 1" to the mile. This scale was eventually extended to the whole of England (replicas of these maps can be bought from David & Charles of Newton Abbot), but soon became too small for example, for engineers planning railway routes or sewer construction in urban areas.

Many disputes ensued over the choice of scales to be used, the final resolution, following Treasury intervention, being 6" to the mile for mountainous and moorland areas, 25" for rural areas, 50" for built-up areas and 60" for London.

Word of the cartographers' skills soon spread and the O.S. was engaged, amongst other overseas projects, to define the boundary between the United States and Canada along the 49th. parallel, around 1870. At the turn of the century, the general public had little knowledge of the work of the O.S. and with the increase in pursuits such as rambling, cycling and motoring, maps began to be marketed on a larger basis.

During World War 1, more than 30 million maps were produced for the armed forces, brave pilots using the new science of aerial photography behind enemy lines. Even deliberately distorted maps were printed to create confusion should they have fallen into enemy hands. Between the wars, a professional artist named Ellis Martin was employed; his work adorned the covers of the increasingly available maps, including an astronomical edition valid only during an eclipse of the sun in 1927 !

The task of creating a more accurate national survey was begun in the 1930's by the establishment of 20,000 triangulation stations on buildings, etc., plus 6,000 concrete pillars on prominent hills and upland areas. The O.S. remained in the Army's control until as recently as 1977 and government policy has since dictated a more commercial outlook. The vast mapping archives in the Southampton headquarters have been the basis for several commercially-successful co-publishing ventures.

Digital mapping has been increasingly used for nearly twenty years and computers mean rapid changes in the future. Tomorrow's car driver may have a dashboard-mounted screen to identify the location of traffic jams or to estimate journey times. Tomorrow's walker may consign his maps to the attic as he ponders his forlorn position on a mountainside; a rainproof VDU-screen might show his or her position, altitude, illuminated route line, or even the weather. Imagine carrying this around on a challenge walk just to satisfy a kit check!

Satellite surveys have meant that all but 270 triangulation pillars are now redundant and moves are afoot to suggest that disused ones will have to be locally maintained or even demolished, a sad state of affairs to these familiar and reassuring landmarks. Progress cannot be ignored, but I hope maps will be around for many years ahead.

THE SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR - and How!

John Probert (524)

Having put myself out to do the marshals' walk, I took on the daunting task of organising the erection of the 20 ft. square marquee for the eighteen mile checkpoint.

As soon as it was known that there was to be an erection, Brian mustered up some help in the form of two young ladies and several fellow members and with Thelma and myself, we made up a party of seven. The weather was fine but blustery with the promise of some sun and light showers.

For the uninitiated, i.e. those who have never put up a marquee, the top part is laid on the ground, the centre pole is pushed into position and three stalwarts hoist the pole into the vertical position and it is then held while everyone else mills around in confusion putting up the corner poles and getting the pegs and ropes in place. At this point the wind decides to get up and slams a sudden gust down the valley and threatens to hoist the marquee into the centre of Brands Hatch circuit, about half a mile away. The three unfortunates in the centre hold on for grim death while the rest of us manage to get the pegs in and the four corner posts secure. At this point I stand back to admire my/our work only to realise that the top had been stored inside out and that the hooks which should have been inside were on the outside and thus the side-walls, which should have been on the inside were, as you would expect, now on the outside. (This does make sense to me, if not to you, but you will understand in due course!) The top should have been taken down at this point and turned the right way, but with my usual aplomb, I thought "Keep quiet John, no one will notice." So we carry on and fit the sides which are now supported by loops onto the hooks around the outside edge of the top. The only drawback is that the apron which forms the weatherseal is on the inside, but taking it all round, it is a very good erection with just one minor hiccup.

Brian thought it would be a long night for Thelma and me camping out in the marquee but we had our own thoughts about that - only to find that Thelma had left the playing cards at home! We put up tables and moved the chairs in and our over-night food and then got on with the business of getting high tea and supper all in one. At this moment there is a loud crash of thunder and the heavens opened up with a real deluge which ran smoothly off the top and then straight down the inside of the walls of the marquee, which was quite funny but not catastrophic as it promptly ran out under the bottom of the walls.

After about an hour of the storm and having finished our eats and our third large mug of tea, we washed the dishes and to bed with two summer sleeping bags on a blow-up mattress. In my usual way I hit the pillow and instant oblivion, while Thelma lay awake thinking of all the nasty things that could happen if we were invaded by yobs in the night.

At 23.17 it happened. A car with headlights bazing turned into the field and came up to the marquee with the driver blowing the horn and using some choice words. He told us to stop doing what he thought we were doing. This little nonsense was ignored by both of us but we thought the guy was quite funny and a little pathetic, and after about ten minutes his drunken stupor took over and he drove off still casting aspersions in a loud voice amid much laughter from Thelma. I had a headover on and it covered most of my face - Thelma said that if the fool had come inside the tent, she would have said "You are too late mate, it has already happened." The rest of the night was uneventful apart from the occasional flash of lightening which only Thelma was aware of.

We woke to a fairly overcast day with the promise of blustery wind and showers but we were all set for a good Sevenoaks Circular. We walked the footpath opposite the checkpoint and while I drove fence posts in to keep the barbed wire out of the way, Thelma hacked any overhead branches or brambles out. This was not to make it too easy for the walkers but to save on first-aid at the

next checkpoint.

The first runners were coming through at about 11-45 and we were all busy for the rest of the day dishing out food and drinks.

It just remained to clear up and take the marquee down (into the wind if you know what is good for you) repack it into the basket and return it to the nearby bungalow for safe overnight storage. Our thanks to Mr Russell for looking after it. My thanks to Eileen, Judy, Thelma, June and Ann, also to Ivan, Laurie, Bob, Ian, Brian and Keith - I hope I haven't missed anyone. You all made my day.

If Keith's article on the ORDNANCE SURVEY (Page 10) has whetted your appetite, to celebrate its bicentenary, O.S. has published a book about its map covers. Forty of these covers are now available as post cards - attractively packaged in four sets. Each set of ten sells for £2-95.

"Map Cover Art" by John Paddy Browne, 144 pages, £10-50, records the art-work which formerly adorned the covers of O.S. maps. Many of the covers reproduced create a mood of nostalgia for a golden age of open roads and winding pathways. The golden age of such art was the 1920's and '30's. The classic design of the pipe-jutting hiker evolved in 1933 from an earlier design showing a cyclist. The map covers in the book are beautifully reproduced with explanatory captions.

The book reinforces one's feelings about today's dull map covers. The Land-ranger series, in its brash unpleasant pink, is at least now relieved by cover photographs - but this book will make you long for covers from times past.

Book and card sets are available from good bookshops, but in case of difficulty contact Ordnance Survey Information Branch on Southampton (0703) 792792.

Helen Livingstone - "Rambling Today".

LATE NEWS.....LATE NEWS.....LATE NEWS!

CONGRATULATIONS

Our sincere congratulations and very best wishes to Jackie Lancaster and Don Newman who are to be married on 31st. August.

Don and Jackie invited group members to take part in a celebratory 10 mile walk (the carefully designed route passed 6 pubs), followed by an evening barbecue at their place. This took place on Saturday 3rd. August and I hope that at least one person will provide a report for the next newsletter.

PUZZLE CORNER

Here is the answer to Don Scott's question "WHERE IN THE WORLD?" (Hands up all those who can remember the question!)

The answer to Where in the World....? is more difficult to explain because the places have no known names. The key to understanding it is to concentrate on the 1 mile being walked east. Imagine you are at a point near to the South Pole from which, if you walked a mile east would bring you round in a circle back to your starting point on the eastward leg. Now, a mile north of that circumference line, at any point along it will enable you to start on the 3-leg journey and arrive back at that start point. The circumference circle does not even have to be a mile. A half-mile, quarter-mile etc. circumference circle walked twice, four times etc. will do just as well. So there really are many, many places on the globe, all very close to one another, from which to make this trip.

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DOWN

1. See 11 down.
3. Alternative to 15 across.
4. These points are found all over the country.
6. See 6 across.
7. Dan's lead drew (anagram)
8. See 13 across.
- 9 & 17 & 19 across. A route along the hills.
- 11 & 1 down. A local roundabout?
- 14.H.M. has left the route! Caught.

ACROSS

1. Given point, this is where you are recorded.
2. Neither heavy nor dark.
5. Part of the burden we must all carry.
- 6 & 6 down. Kent challenge.
9. It will be a short one in June.
10. Powder, the Queen leaves a polishing cloth.
12. Walkers prefer it fresh.
- 13 & 8 down. One by the Kent group will be excellent!
15. "Watering" place.
16. Has been applied to 6 across and 6 down!
17. See 9 down.
18. Seems to get higher as a walk progresses.
19. See 9 down
20. Is this the way to describe a poor route description?
21. Can slow a walker down.

17. Waterproofs are redundant. 18. A rose by any other name - can hurt!
Crossword compiled by Bryan Clarke with interference by the editor!