



LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



Number 29

December 1992.

COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN.....PETER BARNETT

TREASURER.....RON ROWETH

SECRETARY.....DAVID SHELDRAKE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS..BRIAN BUTTIFANT

TREVOR BLAKE

BRYAN CLARKE

PAMELA PRINCE

NEAL O'ROURKE



KENT GROUP PROGRAMME TO APRIL 1993

- FRI 8 JAN COLDNUM NIGHT WALK. meet at the King's Arms, Meopham Green on A227 (GR 640 651) at 9-30 p.m. for 10-30 p.m. start. Approx 20 miles. Contact Ivan Waghorn [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- FRI-SUN 15/17 JAN GROUP WEEKEND IN SOUTH WALES. Walking weekend at the Danywenallt Centre, Talybont. Limited to 22 - 25 people. Price £45. Details/Bookings from Peter Barnett [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- FRI 29 JAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at St. Edith's Hall, Kemsing. Meet 7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m. start.
- SUN 7 MAR SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR MARSHALS' WALK. Meet at 8 a.m. at Buckhurst car park, Sevenoaks. Contact Brian Buttifant on [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- SUN 21 MAR SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR - See Future Events in Strider for details.
- SUN 4 APR NEWINGTON KNEES UP. Meet at 8-30 a.m. at main car park in Newington (GR 861 648). 20 miles approx. Pub stop probably at The Woolpack, Iwade. Leader Shirley Higgins, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
- SUN 18 APR WALK of approx 20 miles from Southborough. Meet at 9 a.m. at Southborough Church, just off A26 (GR 576 427). Pub stop. Leader David Sheldrake - [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

GROUP MEETINGS are held on the first Monday in the month (excepting Bank Holidays), at The White Hart, Brasted, near Westerham. Meet in the upper lounge.

Contributions for the May - August programme should be sent to the secretary by 21st January at the very latest. Anything received after this date will fail to be included in Strider.

SECRETARY - David Sheldrake, [REDACTED] t. [REDACTED]

KENT GROUP CHAIRMAN

As most of you probably know, Peter Barnett is retiring in January as Chairman after a long term in office. Peter announced his decision at the 1992 AGM. If anyone within the group wishes to nominate another member (with their permission) as chairman or would like to be considered themselves, would they please contact the secretary or any other committee member.

David Sheldrake.

The 1993 SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR WALK

The date for next year's event is Sunday 21st March and the venue will again be the Sevenoaks Rugby Club.

In order to ensure the event is a success, we need as much help as possible on the day and therefore all Kent members are asked not to enter until it is certain that all marshals positions have been filled. The more volunteers we have the more evenly the workload will be spread during the event. Offers of help to Brian Buttifant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] please.

David Sheldrake

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CLEVELAND HUNDRED 29/31 May 1993

The Kent Group have offered to run a checkpoint on the 1993 Cleveland Hundred. The checkpoint is to be at Hutton-le-Hole (41.6 miles) and opens at 18.30 hours on Saturday and closes at 04.30 hours on Sunday. It is hoped to split the duties into two or possibly three shifts depending on numbers.

Offers of help to Peter Barnett [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.....by Chris Foster of the Metropolitan Police Race Walking Club.

If you ever felt that you might like to consider something slightly different from race walking (but not too different) and want an alternative to going round and round in ever-decreasing circles on some multi-lap course, or even coming a cropper on the new Chigwell 'Champion Hurdle' circuit, or even if you are fed up playing Spot-the -Judge when these magnificent men amuse themselves by either lurking behind bushes or thinly disguising themselves as pillar boxes....then read on....

May I offer you instead a choice of one of several events organised by the Long Distance Walkers Association? I must admit that I was highly suspicious when fellow workmates tried to convince me that what I really needed on Sunday 1st March 1992 was a nice 30 mile jaunt up and over the North Downs Way. This event is known as The Sevenoaks Circular, an annual walk organised by the LDWA Kent group. I was guaranteed "a good day", "a chance to put a bit of mileage in your legs", along with a variety of other similarly encouraging remarks.

My workmates plucked this event out of the three-times-a-year journal, appropriately named 'Strider' as an ideal starter for me. How nice of them. Incidentally, this journal has taken on the role of a mini-encyclopedia, 98 pages crammed full of who is organising what and when.

I was duly told to cough up my £4 entry in advance and by return of post I received full instructions of how to get to the 8.00 a.m. start. Other information included what to wear and what to carry and this included a mapcase, map and compass....(blimey, this is getting serious all of a sudden). I was later to discover that this entry fee proved to be one of the best four quids-worth I've ever spent, but more about that later.

Upon arrival at the start venue I joined the best part of 500 others, including four M.P. race walkers. I was amazed to see such a complete cross-section of fellow human beings preparing for the start, in various states of dress and undress, and a quick look round saw that I was in company with more than the usual assort-

ment of nutters, perverts and paedophiles. I put myself in the 1st with a touch of the 2nd categories, although I suspect a few participants could lay claims to being in all three.

It was all very friendly and low-key as we were given full instructions of the route in nice large print. It was hard to decipher some of the coded riddles. For example, how about 'To X ST ahead along LHS of 2 FDs to ST in top LH cnr X ST and up enclosed path to reach and X ST (NDW). TL to RD (GR484591)' I found that my partner could understand it all so I worked out that it must be me that's thick. One clue....ST means STILE...something I'll never forget as there were hundreds of them. Right across the top of the instructions in even larger print was the emergency phone number. Slightly disconcerting but encouraging to know you can phone up if by some chance you hit Folkestone and the only barrier to prevent you going further south is the sea.

It was, however, good to learn that this was the 18th Sevenoaks Circular and this route was practically all on footpaths. I was looking forward to getting started by this stage.

There was no big spectacle about the actual start as at 8.00 a.m. we all assembled and ambled off at our own pace. This was in complete contrast to race walking - I'll never forget a certain starter saying at Chigwell recently "I'll say 'Get set' and then 'Go'. Ready Gentlemen? 'Get set'....'Off'!"

So off we all went through Knole Park, spectacularly close to the deer who reside within the park. Up front I saw various joggers disappearing into the distance. The judges would have had a field day but in this event it did not matter. In fact, true long-distance runners were catered for separately with their own 10.00am start. Blow that for a game of soldiers - running 30 miles. Bad enough walking it! It was interesting to note the different types of footwear ranging from trainers to heavy duty boots and gaiters. Similarly most folk carried rucksacks although some managed with just a bum-bag. One gent even carried a plastic Tesco bag. I feel that he neatly fitted into all three previously mentioned categories.

After 8 miles we reached our first checkpoint, set in the middle of a field under a canvas awning. We reached it in just over 2 hours on non-stop walking and I was knackered as I was trying to get accustomed to judging the pace. This was where we produced our checkcards to have them officially punched. We were then treated to food and drinks along with a much-needed rest. Imagine my horror when after two minutes I was told in no uncertain terms that we were off again. "But we've only just arrived" was my plea which was ignored. I managed to stretch the break to 8 minutes and was then made to feel guilty as I was severely criticised for time-wasting.

The next checkpoint was at the top of a very steep hill, 4 miles further on. This was a village hall where hot drinks, buns and chocolate bars were on offer. There were even platefuls of raisins and dates. I know only too well what they would do to me and I was pleased that I had a toilet roll safely packed in my rucksack amongst spare socks, cagoul, leggings and torch (who knows that it might be dark when we finish...)

Onwards another 8 miles to the next checkpoint, a church hall where we were entertained by a team of ladies offering what can best be described as a four-course buffet complete with rice pudding and a splodge of jam (memories of school dinners) I managed to drag out this halt to 10 minutes. Having done 20 miles by then I thought that I was entitled to it.

Another 5 miles of up hill and down dale saw the final checkpoint in a scout hut with several more friendly faces only too happy to look after you. I must have chomped my way through £4 worth of food by then. This was only a 5 minute stop as my partner had this mad idea of wanting us to finish the course in under 8½ hours.

I know it wasn't a race but he couldn't live down a party of grannies who nearly caught us up en route to the second checkpoint.

My partner actually had me jogging down hills at this stage and he wasn't impressed when my bottle of Lucozade jogged out of my rucksack and I had to stop to put it back again. We reached our finishing/starting-out point at The Rugby Club and checked-in upstairs. My partner clocked 8 hours 38 mins and I was furious to see that my certificate showed that I took a minute longer, mainly because I couldn't take off my muddy boots as fast as him. Mind you, I understand he always was a quick undresser.

So what did I think of the day? In a word "Fantastically different" (that's two words). So many genuine people organising and helping - a letter of thanks soon winged its way to the man in charge from Yours Truly. The reply to my comments from my four M.P. race walking colleagues told me that all L.D.W.A. walks were this well organised.

The aim of the L.D.W.A. is "to further the interests of those who enjoy long distance walking". Perhaps we should all get round the table as what I have just discovered could easily compliment race walking. Certainly, both could benefit from each other.

This article was written for and appeared in the Metropolitan Police Race Walking Club newsletter, April 1992. My thanks to Chris Foster for permission to reprint it here. Editor.

YOUR GROUP NEEDS YOU!

Laurie Lowe

1992 has been a very good year for the group so far as the organisation of challenge walks is concerned.

We started with the Sevenoaks Circular in March. This took a new route which included the final 20 miles of the then forthcoming Hundred route, and this proved popular with walkers from far and wide who were keen to travel to Kent for a preview of the final stages of the 100 mile route. An advantage for us was that we were able to put a tricky part of the route description to the test, and at the same time we were able to preview the layout and running of two important checkpoints under event conditions.

The Invicta Hundred in late May was a resounding success - not only in the opinions of the organisers - but also according to the numerous walkers who congratulated the group in glowing terms after the event. This is what one would have expected from a group with a relatively large membership and many years of experience at putting on challenge walks. Who remembers the Pilgrims' Hundred in 1982?

More recently the tenth Wealden Waters Walk went off smoothly - as indeed it should with ten years of accumulated 'know-how' behind us.

However, appearances can be deceptive. In fact it was a bit of a struggle to get together competent teams of marshals for checkpoints, etc., for both the Sevenoaks Circular and the Wealden Waters Walk. For each of these, we could have done with more helpers to spread the burden of duties. This problem did not arise with the Hundred because - exceptionally - it was made a rule that members of the Kent Group would not be allowed to enter the main event, but were expected to take part in the marshals' walk. In fact, 24 Kent members took part in the marshals' walk - 24 extra pairs of hands to help on the weekend of the main event.

The problem of finding willing helpers was discussed at a recent committee meeting, and it was agreed that we do not want to have to resort to applying a 'no Kent members' rule to our annual events.

Anyone who regularly takes part in either the Sevenoaks Circular or the Wealden Waters cannot fail to notice that they see the same faces organising the start and finish and the checkpoints year after year. Some of our regular checkpointers may be happy with this - I for one am beginning to feel otherwise. As one of the small group of people who regularly turn up at event HQ when it first opens, who subsequently helps to run a checkpoint out on the route, and then returns to HQ to help clean up the place when the last walker has had a meal and departed, I feel that the time has come for some new blood to come forward to help share the burden of work. Could some of the people who have walked our events several times, stop to consider the fact that if it were not for the regular marshals, there would be no event? Perhaps next year they could send an offer of help rather than a completed entry form.

In my opinion membership of the group should involve putting a lot into the group as well as taking advantage of the facilities which are offered by the group. If you enjoy challenge walking, think about putting something back into the events which you have previously enjoyed.

To be specific, we need volunteers:-

To organise checkpoints, i.e. take charge of a small group of marshals, make sure that the provisions are collected from HQ and are taken to the checkpoint location in time to get things prepared before the official opening time. To run the checkpoint efficiently during opening hours and then clear up and return surplus supplies and equipment to walk HQ.

To help at walk HQ with registration, providing drinks before the start. To help sort the provisions into piles for each checkpoint - ready for collection by the checkpoint team. To man the finish desk and to provide the refreshments at the finish. To assist in the clearing up of the hall at the end of the day.

In addition, we urgently need one or two people to organise the purchase and delivery of the supplies of food and drink which are used at walk HQ and at the checkpoints. Peter and Pauline Barnett have done a grand job of this for many, many years and they deserve the thanks of everyone, but they now feel that they want to hand over this job.

Some of you may want to help but feel hesitant due to lack of experience. Well don't worry - no one will be left to get on with it alone. There is a wealth of experience available to help you through the initial stages. Help and advice should never be far away. For example, Pauline keeps detailed records of every item that is used on checkpoints and very little changes from one year to the next.

One final point. Each of our events has a Marshals' Walk which takes place a few weeks before the main event. These walks serve two purposes - they give an opportunity for people helping on the day to do the walk and they act as a final check on the route and route description. The walks are supported, i.e. food and drink are made available around the route by a team of mobile marshals. Completion of a marshals' walk is rewarded with a certificate and counts as a normal completion in the event records. The Wealden Waters marshals' walk also counts towards the Southern Triple Challenge. So anyone who values such things has no excuse for not helping out on the main event. For the record, the dates of the 1993 events are as follows:-

Sevenoaks Circular	Marshals' Walk	7th March
	Main Event	21st March
Wealden Waters Walk	Marshals' Walk	21/22 August
	Main Event	9/10 October

I wish to make it clear that, while this article was prompted by the committee meeting discussions of this subject, the views expressed are my own and not necessarily those of committee members.

Laurie Lowe.

A BIRTHDAY ACCOUNT

'L I'm Getting Older -(51 if you're not Roman) by Jill Green.

1992 was my sixth Wealden Waters, and they have all been memorable in different ways. My first attempt in 1987 also fell on my birthday - how well I remember the wet checkpointers singing "Happy Birthday" to me in the pouring rain at Bowles Rocks. The rain kept on, and on, and on. The River Medway burst its banks, and this was even on the television news. My mother was quite worried about me, as she knows swimming is not a thing I've ever been much good at. We even had thunder and lightning and when I pass the bus shelter near Penshurst Place, I always remember sheltering there with Laurie Lowe because I was afraid of being struck by lightning. That walk took me 23 hours 30 minutes. However, only about half of us made it and I was rewarded with a bath at the end.

In 1989 I went round with Tony Twyman, so I had a very entertaining walk. Tony was complaining at checkpoints that we were both suffering from moonstroke. That was such a happy walk, and we got round in 18 hours 50 minutes, which just goes to show what a difference the weather makes. Congratulations to Tony because this year was his tenth. It was great to meet him in the carpark with a big smile, clutching a bunch of balloons that declared "Twyman's Tenth" on them.

I can never walk the long path around Weir Wood Reservoir to checkpoint 4 without remembering the year I was with Harry Bishop reciting his poetry. He was also good company. Last year I got lost and you may perhaps remember the limerick about that 'Silly old walker from Wight, who got hopelessly lost in the night'. Keith Warman rescued me and we composed several verses:-



The only Event I have ever been Awarded a Bath/

There was an old lady from Wight
Who got into a Wealden plight,
After denting her pride,
She followed her guide
Through the rest of the damp foggy night.



This year was Great - Thank You everybody! When I got to Swaylands there were "Happy Birthday Jill" balloons hanging up and I was given a Gingerbread Man (person) with pink buttons.

I was so overwhelmed that I went out of the checkpoint and promptly went the wrong way. Quite amazing that on the sixth time it is possible to do such a stupid thing.

The new posh Royal Tunbridge Wells Tennis Club is very nice, but it does lack that bath. The cool shower may have been invigorating but it's just not the same. I came out clean, wide awake, and ready to sample the gastronomic delights that the Kent Group are now famous for. What a surprise I had! The less famous Kent Group Choir sang "Happy Birthday" so loudly that they woke several people who were trying to sleep. I was then presented with a cake, complete with candle - it was all super. To add to the happy occasion I am pleased that Dave managed his first 100km walk in this country. The other one he did in Belgium wasn't the same - no long night, no mud!

Thank You to everyone for another great walk.

Jill

(Being number 6 in an occasional series of offbeat excursions.)

Neil Higham and I decided to join the Surrey Group on this 19th June midsummer night walk from Kingston near Lewes to Eastbourne. With the car safely parked in Lewes, we walked a couple of miles to the start in failing light to join the rest of the party.

"Windmill" walkers will know the climb from Kingston onto the Downs; we took this and met the South Downs Way on a cool, still night, the full moon partially masked by cottonwool clouds. To our left was the orange glow of Lewes and ahead, the brighter glow of Newhaven Docks. A distant ferry was slipping slowly into port. Torches were rarely necessary along the wide downland tracks.

Just before Telscombe, Keith Chesterton, our leader, announced that the next track was not a right of way but couldn't imagine anyone worrying at this time of night. Muffled laughter followed, but this was soon silenced at the road 800 yards later where we met the twin halogens of a fat-tyred pick-up truck which just happened to be driven by the farmer. A polite word and our misdemeanour was forgiven.

At Rodmell, we detoured to attempt to locate the Empty Coffin (hence the title). Keith explained that it may be seen on the anniversary of Virginia Woolf's death. Ten pairs of peering eyes failed to locate it despite our leader claiming to have seen it in 1977. Never a dull moment.

A sepulchral plod took us to Southease church, where we fought for the four spaces on the only bench for our first stop. Onward over the River Ouse, from whose bridge the aforementioned novelist apparently drowned in 1941. The high ground was soon regained as we purposefully climbed over Itford Hill, Beddingham Hill, with the twin radio masts, and Firle Beacon. Light rain fell as we dropped into Alfriston and a damp refreshment stop. The shower had receded by West Dean, where one of our group decided to call it a day.

Up the 227 steps to view the snaking River Cuckmere in nearly full light, silence and solitude. From the first of the Seven Sisters was a rather haunting sight. The turquoise sea lay billiard-table flat; the tide was out, exposing chalky rock; there were no waves, the whole scene appearing freeze-framed and very unreal. It made me think of the power of nature and how insignificant we really are in the overall scheme of things.

A notherly wind was brewing and despite regrouping on the fifth "Sister" we had split again by Birling Gap. At Belle Tout the wind had increased and just before Beachy Head I had to lay down on the Down for approximately eight minutes sleep. Following an emergency pit stop in the public toilet, Neil and I were joined by Tony and Ruby from Woodlingdean for the drop to St Bede's School. Along the seafront, past the ladies tennis tournament and along busy streets (the traffic was making quite a racket) to a nice cafe near the station. Here we all got our first services in and tucked into a welcome breakfast before catching the train back to Lewes. An enjoyable 30 miles in total.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT!! The next issue of the newsletter will be edited by Tom Sinclair. Please send your items for publication to him at :-

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I would like to thank all the contributors who have helped to fill the newsletter since the first issue in February 1983. The cover design on this issue also appeared on that first edition - only his number has changed!

Laurie Lowe.