

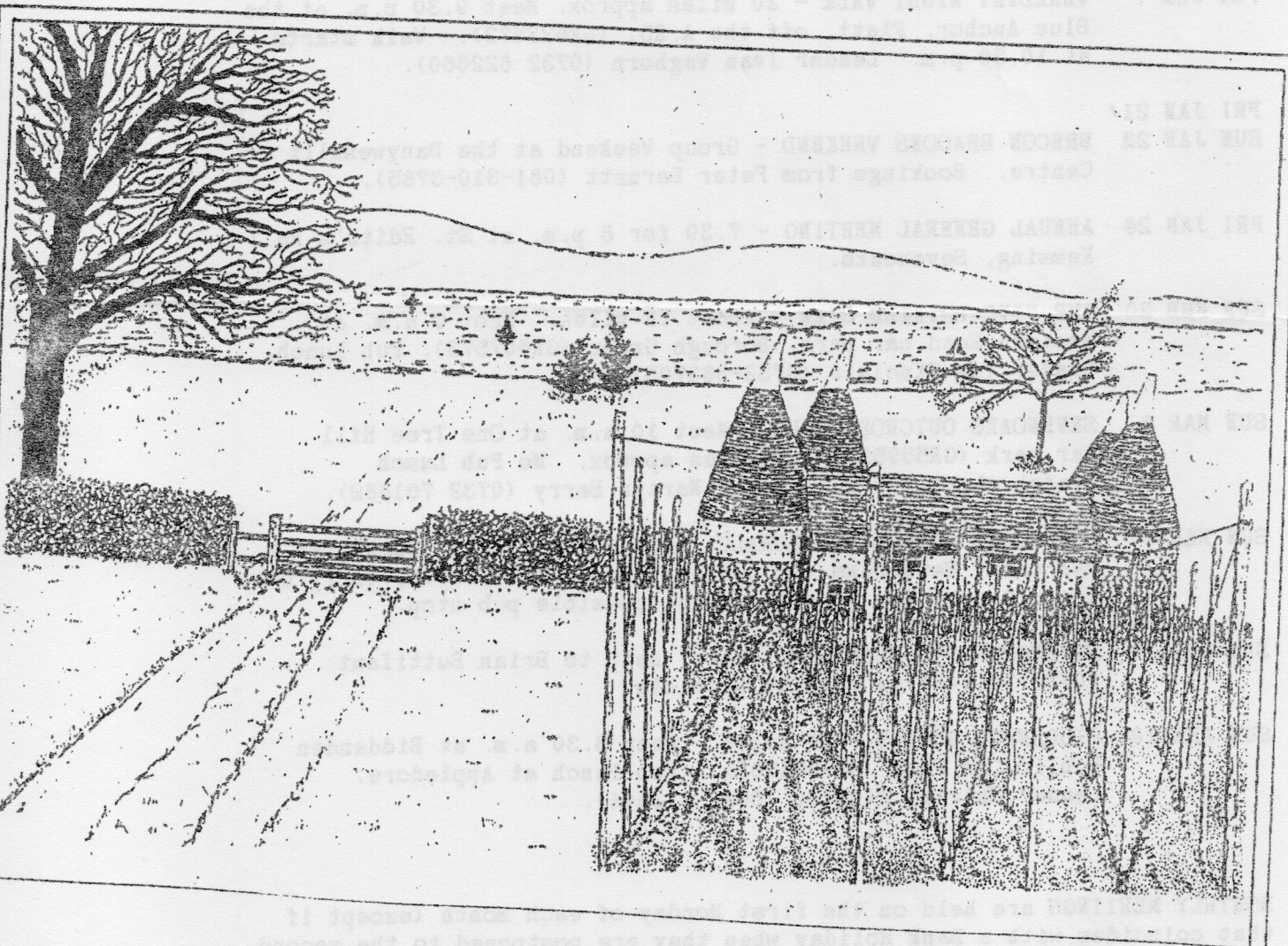


LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



NUMBER 32

DECEMBER 1993

COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN.....RON ROWETH [REDACTED]
TREASURER.....ALAN BALL [REDACTED]
SECRETARY.....DAVID SHELDRAKE [REDACTED]
MEMBERS:- ANN BEECHING [REDACTED], TREVOR BLAKE [REDACTED]
ANDREW BOULDEN [REDACTED], BRIAN BUTTIFANT [REDACTED]
BRYAN CLARKE [REDACTED], PAUL HATCHER [REDACTED]
TOM SINCLAIR [REDACTED] (Newsletter Editor).

KENT GROUP PROGRAMME JANUARY TO APRIL 1994

- FRI JAN 7 WEALDWAY NIGHT WALK - 20 miles approx. Meet 9.30 p.m. at the Blue Anchor, Platt, off the A.25, (GR623572). Walk starts at 10.30 p.m. Leader Ivan Vaghorn [REDACTED].
- FRI JAN 21/
SUN JAN 23 BRECON BEACONS WEEKEND - Group Weekend at the Danywenallt Centre. Bookings from Peter Barnett [REDACTED].
- FRI JAN 28 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 7.30 for 8 p.m. at St. Edith's Hall Kemsing, Sevenoaks.
- SUN FEB 20 THE FIVE POINTED STAR - About 18 miles. Meet 9 a.m. at Western Road car park, Borough Green (GR607573). Pub Lunch. Leader Tom Sinclair [REDACTED].
- SUN MAR 6 SEVENOAKS OUTCROPS WALK - Meet 10 a.m. at One Tree Hill car park (GR559532). 9 miles approx. No Pub Lunch. Finish about 4 p.m. Leader Martyn Berry [REDACTED].
- SUN MAR 6 SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR MARSHALS' WALK - Meet 8 a.m. Buckhurst 2 car park, Sevenoaks (GR 534547) for 30 mile route, carry own food; 9 a.m. for 20 mile route, possible pub stop.
- SUN MAR 20 SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR - offers of help to Brian Buttifant [REDACTED] as soon as possible.
- SUN APR 10 BIDDENDEN BUSTLE - 23 miles. Meet 8.30 a.m. at Biddenden Public Car Park (GR 851383). Pub lunch at Appledore. Leader Shirley Higgins [REDACTED].

MONTHLY MEETINGS are held on the first Monday of each month (except if that coincides with a Bank Holiday when they are postponed to the second Monday) at The White Hart, Brasted, near Westerham, where people foregather from 8 o'clock onwards to talk about walks and....walks.

completed the Wealden
or the larger event,
s, and commiserations to
them after 20/40 miles
of valour. Thanks to all
but particular thanks
ing her new design for the
in part, on this issue's
ing me have a copy of the

n Buttifant is on the checkpoints, etc. on the March, 1994. As mentioned route, with a 20-mile , so there are a number of so that you can do your , cake-cutting, card- e that suits you best.

e volunteers to staff our
artmoor Hundred on 28th to
m if you can help. The
khampton at 8.00 a.m. on
want to do that walk and,
n walk, you should let Ron
t and then contact Terry

rider' the new entry
 and which have been
 Cleveland Hundred being
 of the opening date for
 dered the new conditions
 ave completed a walk of at
 sible and should lessen
 the '100'. It was also
 es was reasonable because
 arious reasons, about 30
 he Committee felt that the
 ve been left until it
 her measures had been in
 David Sheldrake has
 man expressing those views
 n received so far. There
 al General Meeting on
 ith's Hall, Kemsing.

Thank you for your card. Christmas greetings reciprocated.

Tom S.

THE HERTFORDSHIRE HOBBLE 1993
(or HOW HOT CAN YOU GET?)

On Sunday 4th July, while many were miserably watching tennis or lounging around sipping cool drinks (or both), over 180 walkers were enjoying themselves out in the blistering heat of the Hertfordshire countryside.

Ninety plus started out at 9 o'clock (except for the runners at 10 o'clock) from Wheathampstead Women's Institute Hall on each of the two distances (25 or 12 miles) offered by the Essex & Herts Group. As some people thought there were no toilet facilities at the hall and the nearby public toilets were closed a fast start had to be made by them to get to the first patch of woodland!

We were fortunate that the route did not have any really steep hills to negotiate; though passing through some large cornfields in the broiling sunshine felt something like, I suppose, walking across the Sahara. Passing through a farmyard we spotted on a shaded wall a large thermometer which was registering twenty-seven degrees C.

The route took us through excellent countryside with reasonably easy walking, but the heat of the day gradually took its toll and towards the end it had become quite an effort to keep up a reasonable pace. However, it was a great day out with friendly marshals at the checkpoints and strawberries and cream at the finish!

I saw two other Kent Group members there: were the others all at home or at the Tanners Marathon?

Bryan C.

There seems to be space at the bottom of this page (Bryan's word-processor is more modern than mine) so I will tell you about "Poets' Paths" which are to be found around the N.W. Gloucestershire village of Dymock, and which were walked by Rupert Brooke, Edward Thomas, W.H. Davies, Robert Frost (an American) and Lascelles Abercrombie, all poets, in the summer of 1914. The article from which I have culled this information talks of "...unspectacular fields, orchards and oak woods full of wild daffodils" so I shall probably 'phone 0531 890416 and ask the Friends of the Dymock Poets to send me their leaflets on "Poets' Paths" with a view to exploring the area some time in Spring, or perhaps later in the year when the apples in the orchards and the wild pears and elderberries in the hedgerows will be ripe.

Tom S.

BRECON BEACONS GROUP WEEKEND, JANUARY 21-23 1994

Danywenallt Study Centre, Talybont-on-Usk, Wales

NUMBERS RESTRICTED TO 25

Rough Schedule:

Friday 21st January,

Morning: Walk in Forest of Dean with Pub Stop.

Evening: Assemble at Danywenallt, approx. 6.30 p.m.

Buffet Dinner at approximately 8 p.m.

Saturday 22nd January,

Morning: 8 a.m. Breakfast followed by hard or easier walk, packed lunch provided.

Evening: 6.30 p.m. Dinner

Sunday 23rd January,

Morning: 8.30 a.m. Breakfast then short social walk with Pub Stop, packed lunch provided.

Afternoon: Tea and Coffee available before going home.

COST: £47

For members who wish to stay over Sunday night and return home on Monday accommodation and breakfast (not dinner) are available at an extra charge of £10.

NAMES, PLEASE, TO PETER BARNETT

Those group members who have enjoyed previous weekends in the Brecon Beacons may be interested to know that various bodies, including the National Trust, 666 Squadron of the Army Air Corps and the Clwyd/Powys Archaeological Trust, have been involved in a project to recover prehistoric deposits from the summits of Pen Y Fan and Corn Du. Both summit cairns are Bronze Age in origin. The Corn Du one has been re-constructed and Pen Y Fan's will be. Editor.

SOUTHERN TRIPLE CHALLENGE - STATISTICS DEPARTMENT

In the article in the August Newsletter a typing error resulted in Nicolas Kaye's fastest aggregate time being quoted as 45 hours 53 minutes. The correct time is 45 hours 10 minutes. Laurie Lowe.

The latest Southern Triple Challenge sequence was: Three Forests 1992, Surrey Summits 1993, Wealden Waters 1993. Claims, with £2 for Badge and Certificate should be sent to: Laurie Lowe, [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]. The next sequence is SS 1994, WWW 1994, TF 1994.

WEALDEN WATERS WALK

A record rainfall in September and a very wet start to October set the scene for a return to the conditions of the early Wealden Waters Walks. One hour before the start, just as the first walkers were checking in, the heavens opened. There were 128 entrants and 104 of them arrived and started out in heavy rain.

All the walkers (102 by then) were through Checkpoint One before being able to shed waterproofs. After a bright period in the afternoon, followed by a heavy shower, the skies began to clear to give a fine sunset. Apart from one small shower in the night, it remained dry until the 87th walker had completed the route and the Finish had closed.

From the thanks and comments made at the finish, and letters and telephone calls since, the new route was well received and there was nothing but praise for the checkpoints.

Letters of thanks, combined with a request for the 1994 event (8th/9th October, Marshals' Walk 3rd/4th September) have been sent to Tunbridge Wells Tennis Club and to the owners of all the checkpoint premises. Paul's report, of which this is a precis, extends thanks to members and friends who helped on checkpoints, drove people back to the Finish and cooked food at the Finish. Hearty thanks to Paul for being Entries Secretary and Lord High Everything Else!

In complete contrast to the main event the Marshals' Walk on 21st/22nd August was hot and dry until a shower in the early evening cooled things down. A storm with heavy rain came in the wee small hours and continued until the finish. Congratulations to the 15 finishers, especially Brian Buttifant - his first 100km walk completed since his injury.

SALISBURY PLAIN 100km

Keith Warman

Saturday 10th July and a bright early start saw me heading to Amesbury for the second running of this event. The glowing report in 'Strider' last year was remembered amongst the 120 starters gathered for our final briefing. It was drummed into us firstly, that it would eventually rain and secondly, that the Army would entertain us with live firing exercises.

9 a.m. and off we went, with the promise of a warm day ahead, soon along Beacon Hill ridge looking for a large chalk Kiwi cut into the hillside. I was accompanied by Neil Higham and whilst admiring said flightless antipodean vertebrate, we were asked by a fellow walker if it was natural or man-made.

(Salisbury Plain 100km by Keith Warman continued)

Fieldpaths and back lanes meandered up the delightful Avon valley and through quaint sleepy hamlets with many thatched cottages. Checkpoint 2 was at Enford village hall, an attractive wooden building where there was a variety of refreshments.

Soon our route climbed to the "Ridgeway" route (not to be confused with the National Trail), a right-of-way along the northern edge of Larkhill artillery range. Firing was heard in the distance, perhaps they were taking pot-shots at the faster ones ahead. Wide vistas, a healthy breeze and the continual songs of larks and pipits were savoured for 8 good miles until, in the first heavy shower, we slithered down to Market Lavington and Checkpoint 4.

A long climb through grassy downland took us back on to higher ground to New Zealand Farm Camp, set in a cluster of trees more akin to the outback. Camouflaged Land Rovers careered towards us along the stony track we shared, leaving a cloud of dust for our gasping lungs. The occasional path made a welcome change but the overgrown grass meant difficult going.

A long tarmac descent with round green knolls on either side led us to Bratton, where a superb meal, waitress service and laid out tables with napkins and flowers awaited us. This was also our only chance of catching up with, albeit momentarily, Rocket Puttock.

The rain came again; between showers we slipped out and cantered up to Westbury White Horse, along the way passing several drenched walkers who perhaps stayed on the ridge too long and missed the village completely.

From the White Horse a dramatic view of the town and Vale of Pewsey was enjoyed, but ominous ink-black clouds were hastening in from the West. Hoping to avoid them, we turned South, but still got wet; sodden and somewhat below par, we skirted a golf course to stumble upon Checkpoint 6 near Warminster. In failing light, a tricky section then climbed Battlebury, Middle, Scratchbury and Catley Hills, the first three boasting large Iron Age forts and cultivation terraces. This was now the Imber Range Path, as the regular signposts and danger signs reminded us. Apart from the military operations this seemed a peaceful area and at times surprisingly remote for Southern England.

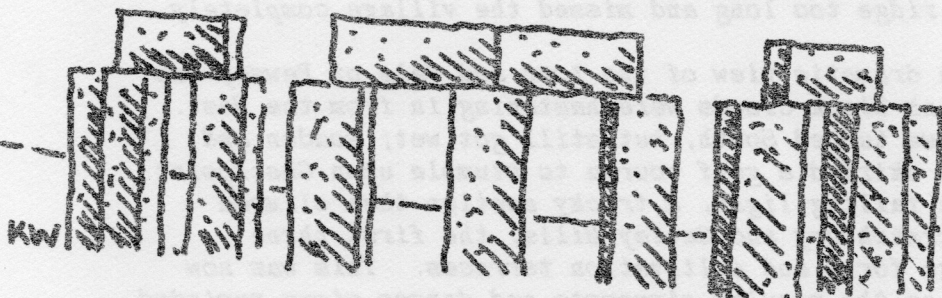
Having torched up at Checkpoint 7, another long, lonely ridge track led us to the village hall at Chitterne, where toasted cheese sandwiches were the order of the day (and the night). These long stretches meant concentration lapses and just after Yarnbury Castle, we both needed 40 winks (actually, Neil needed 46), so, knowing the group behind us were 15 minutes away, he set his watch alarm for 12 of them. As a certain cream tea organiser might testify, I was out like a shot. The tanks tankfully missed us and, suitably refreshed, we plodded down to Berwick St. James. It was a very peaceful 2.30 a.m. and the Reading Room (Checkpoint 9) provided ample refreshments and the chance for your correspondent to steal a further 20 minutes nap.

(More of Keith's Salisbury Plain 100km)

More grassy and stony tracks (some coinciding with the Stonehenge Stamp route) took us to within 300 yards of the Neolithic monument, dwarfed by the surrounding pastures. This was a dramatic, nerve-tingling sight for me in the haunting light of 4.45 a.m. The mist nestled in the hollows of the silent, still morning; the dawn chorus was just starting. A light dew would soon evaporate with the forecast of another warm day. Several, mostly foreign, cars and vans were parked along our track and I nearly felt sorry for the occupants of one tent, being disturbed by crunching trainers throughout the night. Stonehenge is a magnetic attraction no doubt, but why they had to build it so close to the A 303 is beyond me.....

The final checkpoint, on National Trust land, was easily found and the remaining few miles were safely negotiated back to Amesbury Sports Centre alone, for he of the watch alarm had got bored and had sprinted off ahead. A warm welcome and another tasty meal awaited us.

Wet feet and a heel blister apart, I thoroughly enjoyed all of my 21 hours on this event; it is an anti-clockwise circumnavigation of the Plain with ten checkpoints, a variety of sustaining refreshments and two ample meals. Some of the long tracks were a bit tedious but they wouldn't deter me from considering entering again.



[Handwritten signature]

KENT TRUST FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

As you probably know the Kent Group is affiliated to the KTNC and pays an annual subscription of £25. A recent letter from the Trust's Director gives these four examples of its regular activities:-

- * Screening thousands of planning applications each year, commenting on or objecting to those which damage wildlife habitats; in extreme cases this means expensive research and presentation of evidence in person at Public Inquiries;
- * Maintaining and updating our system of Sites of Nature Conversation Interest (SNCIs), comprising over 450 sites of wildlife value covering 9% of Kent;
- * Lobbying and pressing for strict protective policies in the local plans produced for District Councils and the Structure Plan produced by the County Council;
- * Advising national bodies and companies on how to minimise wildlife damage, whether it is caused by roads, housing, railways or building development.

The LDWA does not, as a matter of policy, get involved with 'special interest' or pressure groups but we would all, I believe, wish to preserve a pleasant countryside in which we can walk and observe the flora and fauna. To find out more about the work of the KTNC you may, if you wish, write to:- Pete Raine, Director, Kent Trust for Nature Conservation,

[redacted] but, be warned, they are after your money!

Still on the subject of nature conservation I have acquired a handsome folder of leaflets about how pesticides used on farms and in gardens can poison animals and birds. The folder will be available at our monthly meetings and if you want to find out more you can contact Mary Hunter, [redacted]

CHANNEL TUNNEL WALK

When writing in April about the 1993 AGM I reported that, largely due to financial reasons, the Channel Tunnel Walk, planned at the time of the 1992 AGM, would not take place. I should have said: "as an LDWA event", because I have now discovered, thanks to Bryan C's vigilance, that the walk, on 12th February 1994, has re-emerged as "The Daily Mail Le Walk", organised by the Children's society as a major fund-raising event. On reading the great wodge of papers I find that the closing date for entries was 15th October!

THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY by SHIRLEY HIGGINS

In September I walked the West Highland way with my twin brother, Hugh. This is a 95 mile trail from Milngavie (pronounced Mullguy), on the outskirts of Glasgow, to Fort William. It is advisable to walk the trail from South to North for various reasons: the wind should be mainly behind you, the sun won't get in your eyes if you are blessed with fine weather and the scenery improves as you go North. We took six days for the walk, which was very comfortable and allowed plenty of time for enjoying the views. Our longest day was 19 and the shortest 13 miles.

The first day's walking was pleasant rather than dramatic. The highlight for me was the descent from Conic Hill to Balmaha at the end of the day. Loch Lomond, with its tree-clad islands, looked tranquil and silver in the late afternoon sunshine.

I found the second day, along the East side of Loch Lomond, very tedious. The path was enclosed in trees almost all the time and in some places the surface was very rough. I spent a lot of time looking at my boots, trying to avoid the tree roots and slippery rocks. There were clouds of midges and I got bitten by a horse fly. The miles seemed very long. In the afternoon we saw a large group of dark shaggy wild goats.

We stayed in dormitory accommodation for walkers at the large Victorian Inversnaid Hotel, which was full of coachloads of German tourists. At 9.30 p.m. two very weary and bedraggled walkers arrived, begging for a bed. They were walking the Way from North to South and had covered 30 miles that day. They had intended camping but it had started to rain. Luckily the Hotel found them somewhere to stay.

It was still raining the following morning when we set out. There were a few more tiresome miles by the loch, then we climbed gently away from the water into Glen Falloch. The sun came out and we found a delightful grassy clearing for our picnic lunch. We spread our wet clothes out to dry, making the place look like a gypsy encampment. The afternoon walk took us beside the River Falloch and later along the Old Military Road, built in the 18th Century, to Crianlarich. Much of today's walk ran parallel to the busy A 82; we were aware of the noise most of the time.

At Kirkton, a few miles after leaving Crianlarich, we looked at the ruins of St. Fillan's Chapel. St. Fillan was an Irish monk. There are two graveyards at Kirkton, an old one near the ruins and a new one on the hillside. I was pleased to note from the headstones that in every case the wife had outlived her husband. We were amused at the following inscription:-

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOHN PATERSON OF KIRKTON

DIED 10th MAY 1930 IN HIS 89th YEAR

AND OF HIS WIFE, MARGARET, DIED 17th JANUARY 1970

From Tyndrum to Bridge of Orchy the Way is dominated by the impressive sight of Beinn Dorain rising steeply out of the valley. After Bridge of Orchy we were relieved to get away from the noisy A82 at last. We climbed over the slopes of Mam Carraigh and down to the small Inveroran Hotel in an idyllic setting near Loch Tulla.

It was exhilarating fighting our way across Rannoch Moor in wind and rain. There is no shelter at all on this stretch, so the only thing to do was to keep going and the miles disappeared fast. Later we climbed The Devil's Staircase to the highest point on the route at 1850 ft. above sea level. As we descended towards Kinlochleven the rain stopped and the colours were magnificent. There were yellow tufts of grass, bright green bracken, purple heather, red leaves and berries, blue patches of sky and black, forbidding mountains in the distance. Kinlochleven is an ugly place in a beautiful situation. The town consists of an aluminium-smelting factory, very plain housing estates and an ultra-modern hotel. Our landlady told us that her late husband had been the foreman at the factory for fifty years!

A steep climb out of the town gave us lovely views back across Loch Leven valley. A fast stretch along the Old Military Road brought us to our lunch stop on a sunny hillside before entering Nevis Forest. As we walked through the forest we had tempting glimpses of Ben Nevis ahead. It is a pity that the Way has to finish with a boring stretch of over a mile along a road to the Nevis Bridge at Fort William.

As a Finale we climbed Ben Nevis, along with many other people, on the easy gradient of the tourist path. I imagine that on a fine weekend you have to queue up to get to the top. We were lucky to have a dry day with sunny intervals; there were super views but the summit was in mist.

The West Highland Way is well waymarked and maintained. For me it was an enjoyable walking holiday but it lacked a sense of adventure as navigation was so easy. Some of the delights were the sudden and unexpected changes in the weather, the ever shifting pattern of light on the hills and the dramatic cloud formations building over the mountains.

Shirley H

* * * * *

While Brian B and I were walking out part of the new route for the Sevenoaks Circular we met a walker-friendly lady at a place I call, incorrectly I now know, "Pigeon's Green". The lady, Mrs. Hickey, does Bed & Breakfast at: Holmes, Boneashe Lane, St. Mary Platt, TN15 8NW. It is on the Wealdway and not too far from the Greensand Way so her 'phone number: 0732 882502, might be useful to members of other LDWA groups walking in Kent. She was willing to let Trevor park his caravan on her drive so I thought her B & B must be worth a 'plug' in this widely read periodical!

Tom S.

THE LONGEST RACE WALK IN THE WORLD Paris to Colmar 518/334 kilometres

Jill Green completed the women's race walk of 334 k from Paris to Colmar earlier this year and is justly thrilled and proud of her achievement. As Jill is a Kent member I thought you might like a brief account.

Only those who qualify by completing long race walks within certain time limits are invited to take part and many good race walkers have yet to fulfil the conditions even though they have tried to do so; therefore Jill did well to qualify. The race is run under race walking rules and there are judges along the route to enforce the rule of 'no lifting'.

Since she took up race walking Jill has dreamed of taking part and last year she decided to 'go for it' and try to qualify. She completed the 28 hours race at Roubaix in September 1992 and in the Spring of this year she made the qualifying distance in a 24 hour race in Bar le Luc.

The race has a long history since it began in 1926: it goes through many villages en route to Colmar and the villagers turn out to encourage the walkers (like the Tour de France?). Often they shout the walkers' names like "Allez, Jill" or a more general "Courage, Madame".

The race starts with a prologue. This is a short race round Paris which all take part in. Jill says that she really enjoyed this but felt that she could hardly believe she was actually taking part in the race.

The men's race then starts in Paris; they have to walk the 518k (324 miles) to Colmar at an average speed of 7k an hour otherwise they are automatically retired. 30 men started at 8.00 a.m. from Paris whilst the 10 women were driven to Chalon where their race began when the first man arrived there at 4.45 p.m. The women have to walk at an average speed of 6k per hour for the 334k (210 miles).

Jill set off feeling good. All the women set off fast leaving her far behind but she had a schedule drawn up by Bob Watts and she kept to it. There is a compulsory stop of two hours after 55 miles and another hour's stop at 155 miles when there are medical examinations to make sure the walkers are fit to continue. Jill completed the first 100 miles in 23.02, 150 miles in 36.57 and 200 miles in 52.04. She completed the full distance in 54.15 and is only the second British woman to do this - and at her first attempt. (Sandra Brown is the other, of course, at her second attempt).

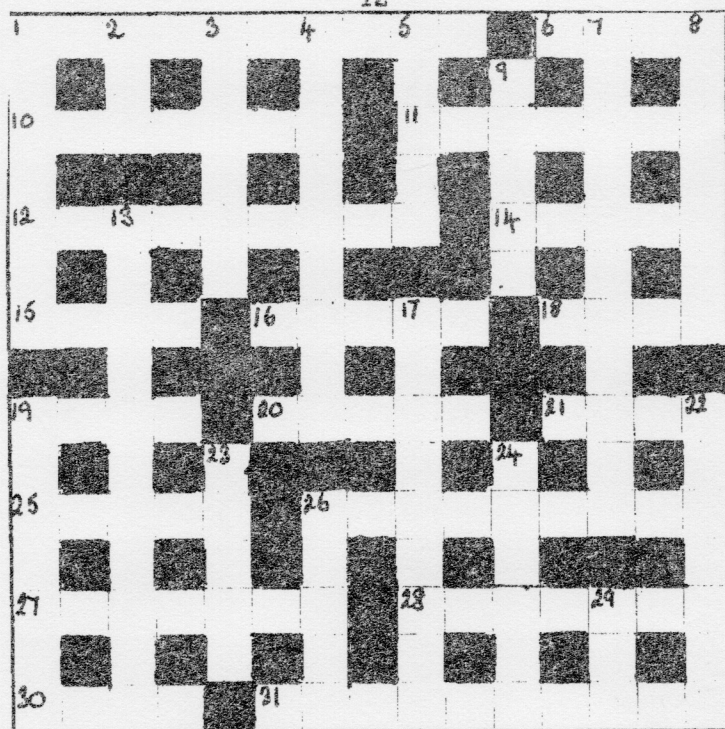
Jill gives great credit to her support team and she says she can never thank them enough. To complete the race is a team effort since it is not possible to do this race without good support. A vehicle has to follow at all times. Two vans with a crew of 3 or 4 are needed. She had supported both Richard and Sandra Brown on this event and knew how much planning was required. Jill suffered with blisters, sickness and sore knees but managed to finish in the time allowed. I think it does her great credit.

Ann Beeching.

CRYPTIC

- 12 -

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1, 6 + 11. Run away fast to prove you have no mud on your boots (4,1,5,4,2,5)
10. Genuine mapmakers change course (7)
12. Shed a piece. Brian Russell's trainers might do this! (4,5)
14. Wild uncontrollable fear before start of Limestone Limp (5)
15. Judge speed (4)
16. Messy dust and sulphur on soles of Trailbusters (5)
18. Inflammation, initially swelling to your eye (4)
19. Bird gives Ramblers' organisation endless trouble (4)
20. Persistence needed for tarmac approach road (5)
21. Many have got in a muddle and are off course (4)
25. Broken crate is used to provide food for checkpoint (5)
26. Less speed it's said (4,5)
27. Turn to party line (7)
28. Those who travel abroad should be used to going round the bend! (7)
30. Garden waterway (4)
31. Several enter enclosure and road trail (7,3)
1. Walker stirred into action (7)
2. Seeds of love at the beginning of Vanguard Way (3)
3. Article sufficed as brand name for sports equipment (6)
4. Players in road, right, on the Waterwitch 100 (9)
5. George, maybe, on the move (5)
7. Wild bear seen by provisions? Hallucinations! (11)
8. Make your mind up to do this puzzle again (7)
9. Team of checkpoint workers take up new position (5)
13. Leave behind, possibly due to antics (11)
17. Detour causes amusement (9)
19. Do a conversion job concerning bike (7)
22. December 21st for instance (7)
23. Sweeper has been seen on hillside (5)
24. Extra large points on church are selected (6)
26. Reg works to make ends meet (5)
29. Go slowly endlessly. Cold (3)

DOVE

Answers to Shirley Higgins by February 28th, 1994. First correct solution drawn from the woolly hat wins a small prize.

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