



LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



NUMBER 38

APRIL 1996

COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN.....PAUL HATCHER
SECRETARY.....DAVID SHELDRAKE
TREASURER.....ALAN BALL

MEMBERS

TREVOR BLAKE
BRIAN BUTTIFANT
JIM JAMES
KEITH WARMAN
ANDREW BOULDEN
DIANE JAMES
NEAL O'ROURKE

KENT GROUP PROGRAMME APRIL TO AUGUST 1996

SUN APR 14 LINTON LURCH
18 miles from Linton. Meet in Public Car Park by Church
(GR755503). 9 a.m. start. Pub stop Peckham Bush, food available.
Leader: Shirley Higgins

SUN MAY 5 STOUR VALLEY WALK
50 miles from Pegwell Bay to Lenham. 'Phone Paul Hatcher
by 15th April AT THE LATEST if interested. See page 7.

THURS MAY 16 EYNSFORD EVENING EXCURSION
7 p.m. start from "The Plough" Car Park, Eynsford, GR 539656.
Leader: Bryan Clarke

SAT MAY 25 PREAMBLE TO THE FINALE
Last 12 miles of the "Yorkshire Dales 100" route. Meet outside
Arncliffe Village Hall (GR 933718, OS Map 98) at 11 a.m. Bring
Packed Lunch. Linear Walk: Cars needed. Leader: Paul Hatcher.
Ring him on by Friday 24th May AT THE LATEST.

MON JUNE 3 EVENING WALK
Meet 6.45 for 7 p.m. at the Horse and Groom, Wrotham Hill, on the
A.20, GR596606. About 6 miles, followed by pub meeting. 'Phone
Trevor Blake or Jim Oddy

SUN JUNE 16 TOLSFORD TODDLE
Meet 9.30 a.m. at Lympne Church Car Park, GR120347; exit 11 off
M.20, follow signs for Hythe and Lympne. 18 miles, hilly,
largely on North Downs and Saxon Shore Ways. Pub stop at
Stowting, food available. Leader: Mike Pursey

SAT JUNE 29 WOODLAND LINE
Meet at Faversham Station, GR 015609, for train to Herne Bay.
Approx 21 mile linear walk back to Faversham. Bring picnic - no
pub stop. OS maps 178 & 179. 'Phone for final details, train
times etc. Leader: Keith Warman

THURS JULY 11 EVENING WALK - IDE HILL
Meet at Ide Hill Village Car Park on B. 2042, GR 488517.
6.45 for 7 p.m. start. Leader: Dave Sheldrake

SUN JULY 21 CREAM TEAS WALK
Meet 8.30 a.m. in Pluckley Village, near Church, GR 926454.
20 miles approx. Leader: Paul Hatcher

SUN JULY 28 HIGH WEALD MARSHALS' WALK
Meet at Memorial Hall next to 'The White Hart' in Wadhurst,
GR 641318. 8.30 a.m. start. 25 miles. OS maps 188 and 189.
Entry forms at monthly pub meetings or from Ernie Bishop.

SUN AUGUST 11 HIGH WEALD WALK
Details as above plus runners start at 10 a.m. with all to finish
by 5.30 p.m. Offers of help to Ernie Bishop

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 Provender', Pye Corner, Ulcombe, in odd-numbered months and at the 'Horse and Groom', Wrotham Hill, A.20, in even-numbered months, from 8 p.m. onwards.

Dear Fellow Kent Group Members,

Last August's Marshals' Walk for the Yorkshire Dales Hundred seems a long time ago but those who have entered the event (I have not heard of any of our members whose application has been turned down) or are otherwise involved will, I am sure, find Kevin's account interesting. I gather that the Yorkshire Group people running the event give the impression of being well-organised so one hopes that the problems which Paul, Kevin and their Surrey Group companions encountered will have been ironed out by the end of May. Perhaps teams of 'shepherds' from Arncliffe Church (St. Oswald's I seem to remember) to Malham Tarn during the second night, such as we had between St. Andrew's, Limpsfield Chart and Ide Hill Village Hall on the Invicta, might be an idea but I am NOT volunteering for the job.

The December Newsletter had been put to bed before the Gatliff on which there is a report later, followed by two reports, from different angles, on the Brecon Beacon weekends. The next event was the A.G.M. preceded, for the first time, by a walk. Again a report appears later and you will have seen from the list on page 1 that Alan Ball and Dave Sheldrake were re-elected as Treasurer and Secretary respectively and that Diane James, Jim James and Keith Warman were elected to the Committee in place of Ann Beeching and Kevin Puttock (who retired after 3 years and did not offer themselves for re-election) and Paul Hatcher.

Nobody seems to have sent in a report on the Annual Lunch or the walk which preceded it which is surprising as the whole thing was splendidly organised by Andrew Boulden, his parents and his sisters all of whom were involved in the A.G.M. walk and lunch. No reports either on group social walks but I hear that they have been well-attended and enjoyable. Thanks to all, but particularly the new members, who have planned walks and led them. Could other people think, as some already do, about sending me a couple of paragraphs about social walks - and then do it!

I am hoping that the report and results on the Sevenoaks Circular will reach me in time to be sent out with this issue but the time schedule is tight so it may not happen. Meanwhile I can report that there were 342 entries, including about 80 on the day, 46 non-starters and 296 starters - 176 on the 30 mile route and 120 on the 20 mile route. Three people transferred from the 30 to the 20 mile route at checkpoint 2 but two of them thoughtlessly did not tell anyone they were doing so. There were 2 retirements and 121 finishers on the 20 mile route and 8 retirements and 165 finishers on the 30 mile route (286 finishers in all).

Please let me have your contributions for the August issue by Monday 3rd June - illustrations especially welcome, this month's cover is one of Laurie's 'left-overs'.

Tom Sinclair,

THE YORKSHIRE DALES 100 - MARSHAL'S WALK

Paul and I arrived at the Settle Field Centre at about 9.30am, and after booking in we went outside as the small Field Centre was over-filled with people. Soon after 10.00am we were off. Most of the walkers shot off like racehorses, but Paul and I stuck to our usual plan of starting slow, which works for us. The route description to checkpoint 1 is easy to follow, but we had only covered about 1 mile when it started to rain so on came the waterproofs (which stayed on for the rest of that day). Leaving Clapham (Checkpoint 1) we came to the first climb up over Ingleborough and then down to Horton which seemed quite easy on the route description, but once we had started heading north to Little Ingleborough (no compass bearing given) we continued to follow the compass north until we eventually came to where the path forked. I thought that the left path seemed more to the north, but Paul thought we should continue straight on which was only slightly off north on the compass. I admit I had taken my eye off the compass for a short time, and the next time I looked the needle had moved totally from north and we found ourselves below Little Ingleborough on the Gaping Gill path, so we headed up this path to Little Ingleborough and then along the ridge towards the main summit of Ingleborough. From the summit we were instructed to take a bearing of 72° to pick up a path down through rocks, but we were not told to fork right some way down this path so we didn't. (I did notice someone on that path on our way down). So we ended up on the wrong side of the ridge. I soon had the feeling that we were off route and voiced my concern to Paul. We stopped and looked at the map and discovered we were not on the correct path. I suggested that we head over to our right and join the path that I had seen the other walker on. Having reached that path we again checked the map and compass, and as I looked at the map I noticed that Gaping Gill should be on our right and it was, so we headed down this raised path looking for a sign pointing to Horton, (which on reading the route description, would appear to be not far). After about half a mile we finally found this sign, forked left and continued down towards Horton and checkpoint 2.

We did not stay too long as we could see Janet Chapman and Elaine Edwards just ahead, and as we headed off the two Chris's from Shropshire arrived, from a completely different direction than we had. They had taken the same wrong path off Ingleborough as we did and had not noticed until they reached a road, and not wanting to climb back up the hill, they followed the road around.

The route became easier to follow and we soon caught up with Janet and Elaine. In the route description it says "bear right on path passing through two gates to path junction"; we passed through the gates after the junction. On reaching the checkpoint we were told that part of the paragraph was printed the wrong way around. At least the sandwiches were good. It was still raining, with low cloud when we left Dale Head checkpoint with 8 miles to Buckden and our next climb up over Old Core Moor. (Note: this climb goes on for a good mile up hill, well it felt like a mile). Once I had reached the top I waited for Elaine to catch up and we both then headed down towards Buckden, which was not easy in the mist, or was it low cloud. The checkpoint at Buckden was in a small schoolroom. Had refreshments and a change of

socks and then headed off to the next checkpoint at Stalling Busk. No problems with route. It had starting getting dark by now, and halfway along the Stake Moss track, we stopped to put on our head torches, which turned out to be a good idea as after forking left, the track changed from OK to very rough with some large rocks to navigate through on the way down to the road. After leaving this checkpoint we headed across to Hardraw. The route was a little bit more difficult to follow with various field crossings and a hard climb up hill to a broken wall. Over this wall and continue northwards, passing over a Roman road (Cam High Road) and continuing on a series of paths eventually joining the road at Burtersett. We turned left on this road and then first right before left again between buildings to follow a stone flagged path diagonally across a field where our quartet, with three people who said they knew where they were going, got lost.

After a bit of "no I think its this way", "no I thinks its that way" we finally found the road into Hawes and our next checkpoint where Janet's husband Reg had been awaiting our arrival. It was agreed after leaving this checkpoint that Reg would meet us by the roadside at Cotterdale, which he did and plied us with cups of black coffee before our climb up over the moor towards the next checkpoint. Once we had reached the top of a firebreak and crossed a stile, Paul proposed we formed a line to try and find a faint path across rough ground that he and Mary had used earlier that week, I thought "some hope" as it was almost pitch black by now, however we did as Paul suggested, with me and the compass on 290° with the two ladies, and Paul heading off more to the left. Just after this my torch batteries died and after struggling for some minutes to change them, I caught up with the ladies, who had gone some way and strayed off the bearing. Paul was still looking for the faint path. Finally, on his return he uttered those famous words "Are we still on the bearing?" and I replied "What bearing did he have in mind?". Now being lost we tried to decide on a plan of action to get us out of our predicament. It was decided to continue north in the direction of the checkpoint. This proved to be fruitless because the ground became boggier. We then decided to head more west to where we knew the road was in the distance, hoping to come across the path we were trying to find. Eventually Paul spotted what he thought was a wall down below. Luckily it turned out to be the path we should have been on. After some considerable time on this path we arrived at the checkpoint before our climb up on to Wild Boar Fell. The climb up on to Wild Boar Fell was made easier by the fact that it had now started to get light, but the gusting wind on the steeper part of the Fell made the going a bit tricky at times. Once Elaine and I had reached the top we could see the trig point in the distance and duly headed for it. From there we got a good view of the Lake District hills on the horizon.

Leaving the trig point and heading towards Grisedale the route is easier to follow than the previous Yorkshire Hundred - so I am informed.

Our route from Wild Boar Fell took us across Swarth Fell Pike, then we followed a fence down to a stile from where we were advised to traverse higher up the moor to miss a boggy areas before heading down

to a track near Flust where we had a short stop for refreshments, after which we continued along the track to join road. Here we turned left for approximately half a mile, then right to pass Garsdale Station and climb slowly up hill for almost 3 miles to our next checkpoint at a road and path junction. We stopped here for about 20 minutes and before we left Peter Groundsell asked if we wanted to off-load some kit which we could pick up later. We did, and left all our night kit, plus I left my camera, which I later regretted because after leaving this checkpoint we traversed along the Dent Valley with some lovely views towards Whernside, a photo opportunity I missed. Once we met the road at Stonehouse we turned left, now heading for Blea Moor and our next climb to the top of this moor before descending to the breakfast point at Ribbleshead.

Paul and I stayed here for 45 minutes, eating, more sock changing and greasing of bits before setting off to catch up with Janet and Elaine who left some minutes before us. This did not take long and soon we were ahead again and on our way to Oughtershaw. Without realising it, I started falling asleep as I walked along, one moment I was ahead of Paul and the next I was 20 yards behind. I thought "why am I back here and not in front, I must start concentrating on the route" and within a short time I was fully functional again and back in front. We slowly made our way to the Oughtershaw checkpoint. The school house at Oughtershaw made a good checkpoint, and after two cups of sweet coffee and something to eat, we were off again with only 24 miles to go.

The route to Buckden was very easy to follow along the road, then the river bank to the church at Lubberholme, then more road before crossing a couple of fields to reach the Buckden checkpoint for a second time. We didn't stay here long as it was beginning to get dark again with a second night's walking ahead of us. The route followed the river again, and the two ladies said they had walked this out before, but it soon became apparent that they weren't sure where the path went and we lost some time before checking on the map where the path did go. We were soon back on track heading towards Starbottom footbridge where we turned west and climbed up a steep and narrow path to the edge of Old Cote Moor where again route finding was not easy due to lack of information on the route description. By pure chance we happened upon a marshal who was out searching for lost walkers who pointed us in the right direction and soon we arrived at the Arncliffe checkpoint. At the checkpoint another marshal told us that two walkers who had left five hours ago had not yet arrived at Malham. She said if we wanted to wait for the sweeper he would lead us across Malham Moor, but we agreed to leave straight away and make our own way across the moor. However, soon after we crossed the walled stile we were unsure if we should continue across due to the fact that we soon lost the path across Yew Cogar Scar, and also did not find the second stile. We decided to return to the Arncliffe checkpoint and wait for the sweeper. Even with the sweeper leading us (now 10 people) we still got lost. I was just behind him and did not notice that we had left the path, but I had realised that we were climbing again. We suddenly came to a stop and the sweeper said he thought we were off route and to wait where we were while he

After Middle House we turned right and slowly reached Malham Tarn and the last checkpoint at the Malham Field Centre.

From Malham we headed west crossing Ewe Moor and Grizedales before reaching the road just before Stockdale Farm which we followed for about 2km before again heading across the last small section of moorland between Sugar Loaf Hill and Attermine Scar. Then down towards Settle and the finish at Settle Field Centre where we were well looked after by the folk still awaiting our arrival. We had a good plate of stew and for me two bowls of apple pie and ice cream before heading back to the B&B for a bath, bed and ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

Kevin Puttock

6 March 1996

YORKSHIRE DALES "100" - 25TH, 26TH AND 27TH MAY 1966

We will be serving food and drinks at the finish in Settle from 9 a.m. on Sunday 26th to 11 a.m. on Monday 27th. If you are planning to be there and would like to help, please let me know so that I can add your name to the rota. You are welcome to join us, to walk the last 12 miles of the route, after the walkers have left the start on the Saturday - see programme for Grid Reference etc. We plan to be back in time for people to reach (by car, I assume!, Editor) the checkpoint in Buckden (27 miles) before the walkers have arrived there.

Good luck to all taking part in the event; enjoy the superb scenery. The checkpoints will be more than adequate and your own group will pamper to your needs back at Settle School.

Paul Hatcher.

"JOIN OUR WALK TO HELP THE ATHLETES"

Thus runs the headline in the "KM Extra" about a 13 mile walk, sponsored by the Kent Messenger and Shepherd Neame, on Monday 6th May (Bank Holiday). The walk starts in Lenham and finishes at a pub in Wye so if are planning to join Paul's 50-mile Stour Valley Walk on 5th May you could see what the end of that walk looks like in reverse the following day! The event is in aid of the British Olympic Appeal and the entry fees are:- £8.50 for adults, £5 for under 16s and £20 for families (6). Entry forms and sponsor forms will be published in Kent Messenger Group Newspapers and will be available from Shepherd Neame pubs, Midland Bank branches and KM Group offices. The article does not mention a start time so perhaps I should offer the writer a course in journalism at a hefty fee.

Thanks to Bryan Clarke for sending me the relevant page of the KM Extra. If you are interested contact: The Organiser, 1996 Sponsored Walk, Shepherd Neame, 17 Court Street, Faversham, ME13 7AX, for details. The aforesaid organiser is "looking for 2,000 patriotic people to stride or stroll along a 13-mile stretch of Kent countryside". As we limit the number of entries on our events to 500, in the interests of preserving the countryside, I am not at all sure that this Newsletter should be giving publicity to this event but having typed thus far I can't bear to delete it all so there it is for those who want it.

Tom Sinclair.

THE TWELFTH GATLIFF MARATHON

Another wet, muddy, Gatliff for us. I was hoping to complete my "Tenth" so was apprehensive that something would go wrong. However the route description was pretty clear and Maurice Hassell, Brian Buttifant and I made good progress over the first half of the route despite the large number of stiles. Maurice dropped behind after this stage and Brian and I battled on through the slippery conditions.

The going was easier in the second half as regards stiles and there were more long tracks where a steady pace could be kept up. Unfortunately both Brian and I came a cropper at the same stile with a slippery landing area. Brian sat down hard on the step and I did a spectacular split and twisted my knee.

We hobbled along but by the last checkpoint concluded we had to speed up in order to finish in time. Brian set to geeing me up and 'dragging' me along and we finished fifteen minutes inside the time limit. Maurice, who had kept to a more reasonable pace arrived out of time.

Thanks to Brian I collected the special Certificate for completing ten Gatliffs within the time limit. (The ten hour time limit for 31+ miles has always seemed to me to be tight for this winter event!). Four others completed their "Tenth": Peter Barnett, Laurie Lowe and Ivan Waghown of the large Kent Group presence; the other being Brian Russell a good friend of the Kent Group.

Bryan C.

(It should also be recorded that Brian Buttifant, Don Newman, Neal O'Rourke, John Probert and Derek Wisdom completed their 11th "Gatliff" and Jill Green, Ron Roweth and Richard Tombs their 12th, which is the present maximum. Editor).

SUNDAY 5TH MAY - STOUR VALLEY WALK - 50 MILES APPROX.

If enough people are interested we will have a coach to pick us up from Lenham and take us to Pegwell Bay for an early start. If not we will have to use cars (or the train and have a later start). We may be able to provide some back-up but this cannot be guaranteed. The route passes through Canterbury (17 miles) and Ashford (34 Miles). There are a number of pubs along the route where we should be able to get food, drinks, etc. (I wonder what Paul has in mind for the "et cetera", Tom) but bring own food in case. If anyone would like to do part of the route only there are a number of places at which one could leave to catch a train back to Lenham.

Please 'phone me BEFORE 15TH APRIL if you are interested.

Paul Hatcher

VIBRAM SOLES

It was sad to hear that the man with a small shop near Tonbridge station who used to resole boots with Vibram soles had died suddenly just before Christmas. However I know a man who can, as the saying goes, Roger Moye of 28B Western Road, Borough Green, whose little repair shop is almost opposite the Car Park which we have used on social walks. He does not stock vibram soles but can obtain them in a few days. Why not give him a ring, mentioning my name if you like, on

Tom S.

THE WINTER TANNERS - 14th January 1996

One of the more low-key events in the calendar, once again was well supported on a glorious winter's day. Despite using familiar ways both out of and, at the finish, back into Leatherhead, John Westcott sought out many unknown paths to provide a superb route.

The darkness of the car park saw keen young things flying away, seeking out the hills. The route crossed Fetcham Downs, where I had to extricate my well-worn copy of the Oxford English Dictionary from the bowels of the rucksack to learn what a "bifurcating" track looks like. I'd seen many tracks over the years, but I think this was a first

Denbies vineyard, an amusing little number, was soon crossed and from the outskirts of Dorking a good track (new to me) climbed steadily back up the Downs towards Ranmore Common. Ground conditions were fairly good, with just the occasional wallow of mud, and in no time, checkpoint 1 was safely reached at Milton Heath. From here, the route meandered southwards to join the Greensand Way, passing a secret waterfall in the Tillingbourne valley feeding the infant river of that name.

A glorious track wound up through the National Trust's Dukes Warren estate to chance upon the cricket ground at Coldharbour. With most of the field having set off ahead of us, Shirly and I were resigned to bringing up the rear, so we decided to tarry awhile on a bench and watch a few silent overs from the pavilion end whilst devouring half of our home-made comestibles.

From Coldharbour village, the highest in Surrey, we took a long scenic loop under clear blue skies to arrive at checkpoint 2 below the southern slopes of Leith Hill. Sweltering, but suitably refreshed, we ascended the steps to reach the tower amidst folk enjoying the day like us. Lovely woodland paths then linked together through Abinger Bottom, with its chocolate box cottages melting in the early afternoon sunshine, to Abinger Common and we eventually risked our lives darting across the A25 near Abinger Hammer. From here, parkland and woods were our companions as we passed the Wilberforce memorial, keeping parallel with the sun-speckled Downs almost to Westcott. Fancy naming a village after the routefinder

Turning northwards, we shunted across the railway and took a beautiful gently-sloping path diagonally up the scarp, from where extensive views of Dorking were available. The final checkpoint was at Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel, from where the usual route via Norbury Park and the River Mole was followed back to the car park in Leatherhead.

A most enjoyable day in superb conditions.

Keith Warman

Walking with the B+ Team

Shirley Higgins

As some of the A Team were absent on the Brecon Beacons weekend this year I was allowed to do Peter's walk in the Black Mountains with the B+ Team.

I was unprepared for the standard of sartorial elegance. At one end of the body we were entertained by Martin's new Titleist bobble hat resplendent with black and white pom-pom. At the other extremity, we were treated to a rare sighting of Don's Gore-tex boots, and very pretty they were too, complete with turquoise trimmings and two-tone laces. In the middle ground Peter's sky-blue Pertex top brightened our day.

We left Crickhowell in calm bright conditions and were soon striding over Table Mountain. We continued ascending in a Northerly direction and by the time we reached the trig point at Pen Cerrig-calch we were being buffeted by a chill South Easterly wind and were surrounded by swirling mist. There was more climbing as we went over Pen Allt-mawr and then Pen Twyn Glas. It was quite cold by now so we kept going at a brisk pace. After the summits there was a super ridge walk with the mist clearing and the views opening up in all directions. Those with long legs were able to step over the boggy areas, but Jill and I practised our long jump skills with some graceful leaps and bounds.

Then we made a sharp right turn and began to descend gently on a delightful wide grassy track above the valley. The more experienced members of the group were busy reminiscing about the Brecons Hundred as we were now on the route. We deviated slightly from our intended itinerary to find a sheltered spot for lunch. We chose a clearing not far from Tal-y-maes Bridge which was liberally sprinkled with sheep droppings. What a pity I had left my rambler's foam mat behind!

After our picnic we returned to the path junction and continued our descent on a stony track, eventually passing through Park Wood. It was on this stretch that I overheard an interesting conversation between Jill and Martin on the subject of bird watching. Jill was explaining that the desert warbler is known as the LBJ (Little Brown Job) but Martin was unimpressed and said he preferred the NBJ (No Bra Job).

There was a slight sting in the tail as we had a steady gradual climb to gain the brow of the hill to skirt round Table Mountain on our return to Crickhowell.

We were back in time to visit the tea rooms, the outdoor shop and the wine merchant before returning to Danywenallt.

It was an excellent walk and a most enjoyable day. I expect when the rest of the A Team are back next year, wrinkly grandmothers will not be allowed.

I discovered afterwards that Ron's group had walked 18 miles whereas we had only done 15, so I guess I was walking with the B- team! Anyway, any illusions that the A Team are a bunch of tough guys evaporated completely when I saw Andrew cleaning his boots in the car park.

A P.S. TO THE BRECON BEACONS WEEKEND

I found in my pocket the other day a piece of paper on which was penned:- 7 spotty heads, 8 spotty bottoms, 8 black heads, 9 black bottoms, 8 white heads, 8 white bottoms, 9 grey heads, 7 grey bottoms.

These cryptic clues, written by Shirley Higgins, brought back to mind the recent group weekend and No! dear reader, Shirley has not been peeking in the showers again!! It really wasn't that sort of weekend (do I hear cries of 'shame'?). They refer to a particularly irritating puzzle brought along by Sue Verrall for the last two years.

I have to report that the not inconsiderable combined intellect of the Kent Group has been unable to solve the great sheep puzzle. The irritation felt was not helped by Sue reporting that her 11 year-old niece had cracked it. Maybe we were handicapped by the large dinner and copious draughts of wine that had just been imbibed.

We do have a lot of fun on this now established weekend in Wales so, if any of you would like to join us, please make a note in your diary for 17th - 19th January 1997.

You won't regret it (I think!) Pauline Barnett.

A RARE SIGHTING

When we walked from Sandwich to Deal on a bleak January day I bore the wintry conditions as we all did, save two tough souls who went hatless and gloveless. I hardly expected anything would happen to lighten the leaden sky or reduce the windchill factor. At Deal, having failed to take in the information given and missed the official pub stop, two of us landed in the 'Star and Garter'. Our welcome soup having gone down, I noticed a list of Betteshanger rugby fixtures and, wondering who they played, went to get my 'specs from my anorak.

Then I saw on the other wall some pictures of sailing ships in a familiar style; among them were the "Swiftsure" and "The Ethiopian" and my grandfather had sailed on both of them. He was an A.B. on the "Swiftsure" in 1872; by 1882 he had risen to being Mate on the "England's Glory".

She was wrecked at Bluff on the New Zealand coast with no loss of life and, after the matter had been investigated, the colony had two dozen or so surplus citizens on its hands. Some may have taken voluntary emigration but for young Ben, with a wife and young family at home, there was nothing for it but to sign on as an A.B. on the 'Ethiopian', at one third of his former rate of pay. Hard times for the East Enders as they were, but the record shows that, after returning, he was in no hurry to get back to sea. Well, it was a good walk, in bracing weather and good company, but you can easily see what made the day for me.

Harold Mann.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND WALKS

This year our AGM was held under a new format. We met at Wye Village Hall in the morning and dividing into two groups set off for a walk of about nine miles or of about six miles. We six-milers, watching the pace set by the nine milers as they set off, felt relieved that we would be slightly more leisurely, although the bitter cold meant that it was not expedient to linger.

Most walkers were looking uncharacteristically well-padded and admitted to the addition of thermal long johns, long-unused vests, etc., etc. Although much of the snow had melted in the village, once we were out in the countryside there was still several inches, particularly as we climbed up onto the Wye Downs. The view was somewhat restricted by distant mist but nevertheless the snow-covered fields and hills were like something from a Christmas card while the bitter wind blowing at the summit of the hills was reminiscent of that experienced in the Scottish mountains much higher up! Regrettably we didn't spot the white squirrel which Paul and Mary declared they'd seen the previous week; either it blended in too well with the snow or they had stopped for lunch-time liquid refreshment!!

We returned to the Hall with time to go to the local tea shop for a welcome hot drink. While there we watched the 'A' team staggering back into Wye from their brisk walk and looking enviously at us in the warm. Thank you Mary and Paul for organising such a pleasant walk.

At the hall we sat down to a good meal of hot soup and quiche salad with hot jacket potato, followed by various fruit breads and coffee, excellently prepared by Andrew Boulden's relatives with help by Pauline Barnett.

The AGM which followed went off well with the business concluded in about one and a half hours. It was heartening to see such a good attendance, which was higher than last year, despite the weather.

After a ballot, Paul Hatcher was elected as our new chairman. We wished ex-Chairman Ron Roweth all the very best in his move to Derbyshire and offered our thanks for all he has done over the past years. Thanks are also due to Andrew and his team for organising this successful new format for our AGM.

Pat and Bryan

WEALDEN WATER MARSHALS' WALK

September 7th/8th - Saturday/Sunday - this is your chance to do the walk and, in the process, commit yourself to help on the main event. Entries, on the official form which will soon be available, to Paul Hatcher, please. Even though you will see the name of Pam Prince as Entries Secretary Paul is looking after the running of the Marshals' Walk complete with staggered start.

WEALDEN WATERS WALK

October 12th/13th - Saturday/Sunday - offers of help to Neal O'Rourke on [REDACTED] Ring Neal NOW. We need your help to make this year's walk another success.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 3rd April at Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School at 8 p.m. - a talk by Rebecca Stephens on 'The Seven Continental Summits'. Entry: £2 adults, £1 OAPs, UB40s and schoolchildren. Contact Martyn Berry on [redacted] (home) or [redacted] to ask for directions to the School. Unfortunately details of this talk and of the other two "Chis and Sid" Mountain Lectures on 29th February and 20th March only reached me at the A.G.M. - too late for the last issue.

Saturday 11th May - we heard at the A.G.M. that this is the new date for the Oxon 40 and Oxon 20. What a pity that it clashes with the 40-mile Ridgeway Walk. Phone Peter Clark [redacted] or Brigitte Lanskoy [redacted] for an entry form. Actually "Strider" gives Peter Clark as the contact for the Marshals' Walk on April 14th but I've written Brigitte's name on my AGM papers.

Sunday 29th September - Group Social Walk led by Ernie Bishop. Details in the next Newsletter along with details of the many other group walks YOU are now planning!

17th to 19th January 1997 - Brecon Beacons Group Weekend. Contact Pete Barnett on [redacted] to find out about it.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Tom,

I have in my possession a copy of the 1996 Access Register for Kent, published by the Countryside Commission and M.A.F.F. This gives details of 40 sites throughout Kent to which the public have free access under agreements between the Government and landowners/farmers to protect and improve English landscapes.

Each site has a location map, together with grid reference, details of wildlife, historical or plant interest and parking facilities and lists the "access end date" for each.

If any member would like to borrow the Register (for the cost of return postage) would they please let me know and I will happily lend it to them.

Regards,

Keith ([redacted])

CONGRATULATIONS

To Kevin Puttock and Jackie Davis who, by the time you read this, will have been married in Maidstone on Saturday 30th March.

P.T.O. for Shirley's Cryptic Crossword; closing date for solutions 31st May so that she can draw the winner's name out of the woolly hat and give it to me before my closing date for contributions on 3rd June.

Dave Sheldrake will need details of social walks by 16th May (when there is an evening walk) so that they can be included in our programme in the next issue of "Strider".

Em.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

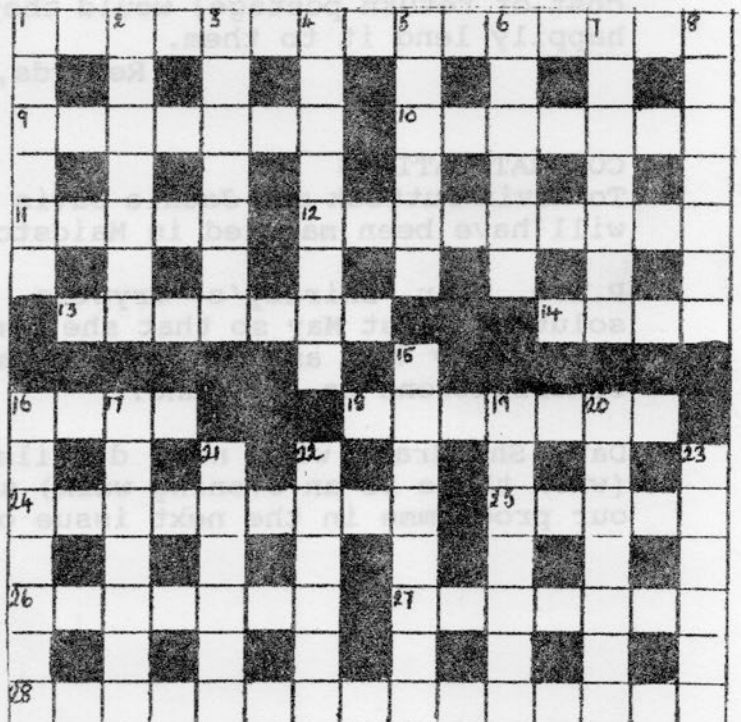
compiled by Shirley Higgins

ACROSS

1. Having moved, slow bunch lived around park in Surrey hollow (6,5,4)
9. Belligerent person helping on event we hear (7)
10. Special award for bird losing tail (3,4)
11. Wow! Such excitement begins for these birds (5)
12. Inexperienced ill-tempered woman discards shirt, at zero degrees! (9)
13. Second rate doctor causes foot problem (7)
14. Topsy turvy rush seen in Knole Park (4)
16. Covers headgear (4)
18. Initially careful on rocks, newly frozen water and projecting snow (7)
24. Eat rice stirred with ends of meat to lose pounds? (9)
25. Wiggle around end of stile and wend your way (5)
26. Turns toaster off (7)
27. Medium component (7)
28. Random poles in a pasture indicating mountain trail (6,4,5)

DOWN

1. Obstruct a good starting point for corruption (6)
2. Country member makes five go astray over short distance (7)
3. Tarries, causing delays (7)
4. Sickly and old, the colour of Silver Shadow trainers (4,4)
5. Veer erratically between points to get the jitters (6)
6. Punishment for suppression (6)
7. Beyond the limit (7)
8. Dog walker from 21 down (7)
15. Impossible objective on the French ship (8)
16. The way from Carlisle to Ulverston (7)
17. Pause for refuelling or watering (3,4)
19. Items just purchased from Field and Trek maybe, manufactured by W.A.Green (3,4)
20. Un sur trois peut-être (7)
21. Apply dressing here (6)
22. Reimburses 23 down with shilling (4,2)
23. Populate a town in Yorkshire (6)



Solutions to compiler by
May 31st