

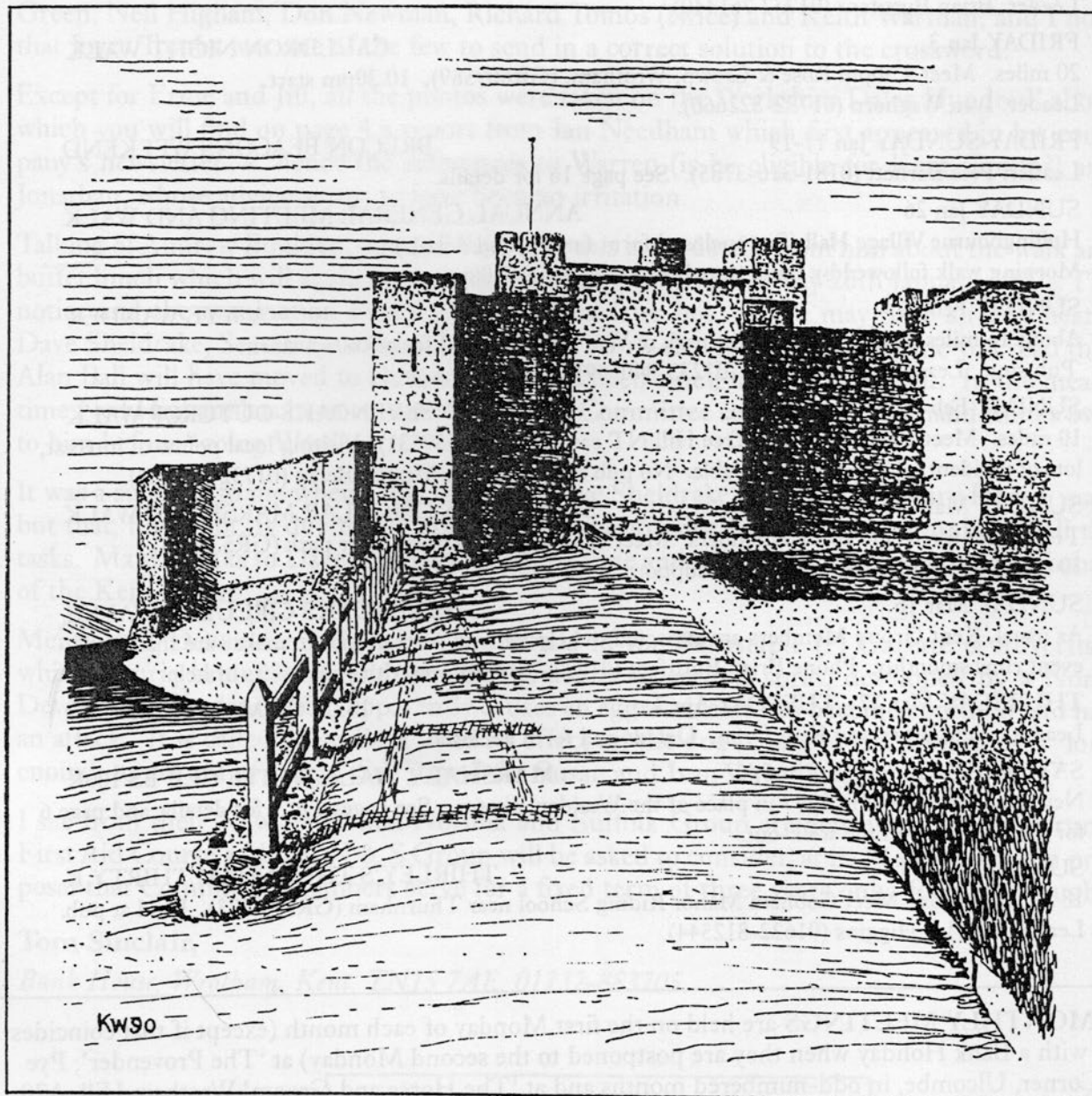


LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



Dover Castle

Number 41

December 1996

COMMITTEE

Chairman.....Paul Hatcher [REDACTED]
Secretary.....David Sheldrake [REDACTED]
Treasurer.....Neil Higham - co-opted - [REDACTED]

MEMBERS

Trevor Blake [REDACTED] Andrew Boulden [REDACTED]
Brian Buttifant ([REDACTED]) Diane James ([REDACTED])
Jim James ([REDACTED]) Neal O'Rourke ([REDACTED])
Keith Warman [REDACTED]

Kent Group Programme December 1996 to April 1997

SUNDAY Dec 29

MYSTERY 20 MILE SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR

Meet 8.00am Buckhurst 2 car park. GR 533546. Carry own food. Possible pub stop.

Leader: Brian Buttifant ([REDACTED])

FRIDAY Jan 3

CAULDRON NIGHT WALK

20 miles. Meet 9.30pm Rose & Crown, Wrotham. (GR609589). 10.30pm start.

Leader: Ivan Waghorn ([REDACTED])

FRIDAY-SUNDAY Jan 17-19

BRECON BEACONS WEEKEND

Leader: Pete Barnett ([REDACTED]) See page 16 for details.

SUNDAY Jan 26

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND WALK

Hollingbourne Village Hall (See enclosed form for GR and details).

Morning walk followed by buffet lunch and meeting at 2.00pm.

SUNDAY Feb 16

A WYE WANDER

About 16 miles. Meet in public car park in Wye (GR 053469) for a 9.00am start.

Pub stop. Leader: Paul Hatcher ([REDACTED])

SUNDAY Feb 23

SEVENOAKS OUTCROP WALK

10 miles. Meet 10.00am at One Tree Hill NT car park (GR 559531). Visiting local points of interest, lots of incident, old clothes preferable. No pub stop. Leader: Martyn Berry ([REDACTED])

SUNDAY Mar 2

SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR MARSHALS' WALK

THE event for Kent Group Members. Meet 8.00am at Buckhurst 2 car park (GR533546). 30 or 20 mile routes, *both new*, good support.

SUNDAY Mar 16

SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR WALKS

As usual, Kent Group Members are expected to help with all sorts of jobs to make sure that OUR event runs smoothly. Phone Brian Buttifant ([REDACTED]) *now* with your offers of help.

THURSDAY Mar 27 - TUESDAY Apr 1

ISLE OF MAN WEEKEND

Leaders: Pete Berry and Kim Dron. Details and form enclosed.

SATURDAY/SUNDAY Apr 5/6

MARSHALS' WALK WHITE CLIFFS 100K

New event to be held in 1997 in place of the Wealden Waters. See pages 7 & 9 for details, and page 6 for Paul's report on the walk-out.

SUNDAY Apr 13

THIRLEY'S THURNHAM THIRTY K

18 Miles approx. Meet Cobham Manor Riding School near Thurnham (GR 815573). Food at pub. 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 Provender', Pye Corner, Ulcombe, in odd-numbered months and at 'The Horse and Groom' Wrotham Hill, A20, in even-numbered months, from 8.00pm onwards.

From the Editor

Dear Fellow Kent Group Members,

Although the AUGUST issue of 'Strider' only reached me ten days ago, material for the December issue of our Newsletter had already reached me, other reports have been promised, the 'Wealden Waters' is less than a week away and other things seem to be happening, so it is time to 'put pen to paper'.

Kent Group Members figure prominently, mostly in photos, in the aforementioned 'Strider'. I have spotted Pete Barnett, Ernie Bishop, Andrew Boulden (twice), Brian Buttifant, Jill Green, Neil Higham, Don Newman, Richard Tombs (twice) and Keith Warman, and I note that Joyce Tombs was one of the few to send in a correct solution to the crossword.

Except for Ernie and Jill, all the photos were taken on the 'Yorkshire Dales Hundred' about which you will find on page 4 a report from Ian Needham which first appeared in his company's newsletter - hence the references to Warren (is he eligible for Kent Group?) and Jonathan, whose advice seems to have been an irritation.

Talking of Andrew Boulden, you will find with this issue details from him about the walk and buffet lunch which will again precede the Group A.G.M on Sunday 26th January 1997. The notice and the nomination forms will be posted later but, as you may have already heard, Dave Sheldrake, Secretary, will not be standing for re-election and by the time you read this, Alan Ball will have moved to Devon, so we will need a new Treasurer as well. In the meantime Neil Higham has been co-opted on to the Committee so that Alan can hand things over to him before "going West".

It was a surprise to me when I was told that Dave Sheldrake has been Secretary for ten years but that, no doubt, is due to the efficient but unobtrusive way he has accomplished all the tasks. Many thanks to Dave and Alan for all the time and effort they have expended on behalf of the Kent Group.

Mention of Devon reminds me of the article in the Barnstaple (?) Gazette & Advertiser which Laurie brought me and which tells about an aerosol spray, developed by a North Devon Dog Warden, which apparently causes an aggressive dog to become confused and halt an attack. It is called "Bite Back" and its effect on the dog is said to last 5 minutes - long enough to get out of range. See page 7 for Susan and Ivan Verrall's report.

I see from their Newsletter that Norfolk and Suffolk Group are getting St John's to run a First Aid Course and that N & S Group will be asked to consider, at its AGM in April, a proposal that Committee Members serve for a fixed term of three years only: food for thought?

Tom Sinclair,



DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE!
1st Monday in March 1997.

The Yorkshire Dales 100

FOLLOWING WARREN'S OLYMPIAN SUCCESS in the Pudsey Challenge, he asked Judy and me if he could join us in the Yorkshire Dales 100 mile challenge walk in May. This was the Long Distance Walkers Association's annual 100-mile walk, this year organised by the Yorkshire group.

The object of the exercise was to walk a pre-determined 100-mile route in the Dales on footpaths, tracks etc following a route description and Ordnance Survey map, passing through 17 check points within 48 hours, starting and finishing in Settle – easy so far!

On Saturday the 25th at ten o'clock, after the kit checks to ensure we were carrying sufficient equipment, clothing, emergency rations etc, Warren, Judy and I set off from Settle High School in a mass start with 500 other hopefuls. It was a beautiful sunny day with a cool breeze – perfect.

The first check point (CP) at Clapham after 7 miles was soon reached and we were off again climbing to the top of Ingleborough Hill at 2,400 ft where it was blowing in a gale and considerably colder.

2.00pm Saturday and 11 miles completed we left CP2 and descended like mountain goats to the next check point at Horton-in-Ribblesdale. 3.30 in the afternoon and 15 miles done. We continued in an easterly direction on and off the Pennine Way passing Pen-y-Ghent to reach CP4 Litton Village at 22 miles. Then a hard climb up Ackerley Moor to the summit of Old Cote Moor Top, 2,000ft. Across and down the other side over the River Wharfe to CP5 Buckden.

8.00pm Saturday, 27 miles. It was now getting dark and on went our head torches to tackle the next stage, reaching, after endless climbing, the hamlet of Stalling Busk.

10.45pm Saturday, 34 miles done. Setting off again and progress becoming slower in the dark, we followed the Pennine Way through Marsett, Burtsett and Hawes, crossing the River Ure to CP7 at the Outdoor Centre at Hardraw.

1.00am Sunday morning with 40 miles behind us. On into the night passing CP8, wending up through steep pine forest paths and thick glutinous mud, over the top of Tarn Hill towards High Dyke where we fell foul of a disguised bog and sank in up to our knees. It was then that I remembered Jonathan Heap's advice that it would definitely not be wet underfoot in the Dales!!

The dawn revived our spirits and we reached CP9, 49 miles, at 6.00am Sunday. Now we had a treat in store – straight up the 2,325ft Wild Boar Fell, and at 52 miles we were over half way. It was a beautiful sunny dawning and we looked over the cloud base to the valleys and villages hidden below – quite the best part of the walk. Down again over Swarth Fell and Swarth Fell Pike to Moor Rigg, CP11.

9.00am Sunday, 56 miles. Onwards through Garsdale and round the far reaches of Dent Fell to descend

steeply for 1.5 tortuous miles of the boulder-strewn Artengill Beck gully to the viaduct and on to Dentdale Youth Hostel.

1.00pm Sunday, 65 miles. Here we had a change of clothes, ate a full Yorkshire breakfast, Warren ate some honey, and away again within the hour. We were soon to be reminded of Jonathan's words again as torrential, near-horizontal rain struck. Within minutes we were soaked to the skin, even Warren's trousers under his underpants. A gruelling climb followed to the top of Blea Moor, 1,750ft, to reach the cold comfort of the next checkpoint in a damp and uninviting tent. The spectacular view of the Ribbleshead Viaduct was the only saving grace of what was the most miserable and uncomfortable time on the walk.

4.00pm Sunday, 70 miles, and out we went again soaked and cold into the freezing rain. We had to force the pace to keep warm, and followed the Dales Way, crossing the River Ribble, round Cam Fell to CP14 at Oughtershaw.

7.00pm Sunday and 78 miles. A log fire, hot soup and drinks were all gratefully received. We wrung out our wet clothes and were off again before getting too comfortable. A welcomed flat stretch for a change along the River Wharfe back into Buckden CP15.

9.00pm Sunday, 84 miles, and off again into the driving rain, torches on, and along the river to turn steeply up at Starbotton, climbing the 2,000ft Old Cote Moor Top again from a different approach. Here we had serious problems which nearly cost us our challenge. Half way up in the darkness we were engulfed in a thick fog as if a blanket had been thrown over us. We managed to get to the top and over by using our compasses and tracking the footprints of those who had gone before, but most of these prints had been washed away in the flowing rivers that had once been our paths (Jonathan). We lost hours here and feared we would run out of time, but arrived at CP16 at Arncliffe with an hour to spare before it was due to close.

3.00am Monday morning, 89 miles completed. The fear of failing now spurred us along the rocky steep terrain of Yew Coggar Scar, and as the next dawn broke through the drizzle we reached Malham Tarn, CP17.

5.00am Monday, 92 miles. Still raining, Jonathan, we completed the last 8 miles over harsh rocky ground and down the painfully steep hill into Settle by 9.00am on Monday – 100 miles of wonderful countryside, with 15,000ft of ascent, and all under 48 hours.

Warren, although confessing to be a "bear manly alive" at the finish, was a great source of encouragement, good company and an inspiration throughout.

Approximately three hundred and sixty of the five hundred completed the challenge, and Warren, Judy and I were in that elite group!!

Ian Needham

La Grande Traversée des Alpes - Stage 1

IN JULY RON ORGANISED A WALK across the French Alps on the GR5. We started from Saint-Gingolph on the southern shores of Lac Léman (Lake Geneva). After 14 days memorable walking we finished at Modane, south of the Vanoise National Park, having crossed Haute Savoie, Beaufortain and Tarantaise.

We stayed mainly at mountain refuges where facilities were basic and space limited. I got used to rinsing my smelly socks in the water trough and drying them on the back of my sack the following day. The guardians and assistants at the refuges were unfailingly cheerful and helpful, and always produced a good nourishing meal with unlimited helpings of soup. Bottles of reasonably priced pleasant wine were readily available and we were able to sample some tasty local cheeses.

Occasionally we stayed at gîtes or hotels and were able to have showers and wash our smalls. We showed great ingenuity in rigging up washing lines and using every available corner for drying our shirts and socks. At one hotel Ann, Pam and I made our room look such a complete tip that the others were absolutely fascinated and kept coming to view the dripping clothes festooned everywhere.

We had a moment of drama while staying at a refuge on our descent to the Isère Valley. A helicopter arrived to take a lady with an injured ankle to hospital. It landed on a small patch of grass near the hut and we all rushed out to take photographs. We got beaten back by swirling clouds of dust but managed to get a few pictures. Several helicopters were seen during our walk, most taking provisions to refuges. We had a noisy morning after leaving the village of Les Houches to climb to the Col de Voza. A helicopter was flying to and fro taking buckets of ready mix to a building site at a new ski terminal.

Some rain fell during the first few days but after that the sun came out and we had wonderful weather for the rest of the holiday. The clear blue sky was a fitting backdrop for the magnificent mountain scenery. Sometimes cumulus clouds would build up over the summits in the middle of the day, then disappear again in the afternoon. I observed glittering displays of stars in the night sky during my nocturnal perambulations when there was no indoor toilet at the refuge.

There were many changes to the landscape as we progressed along our route. It was always an exciting moment to climb over a col and find different rock formations the other side and fresh summits appearing in the distance. In a short space of time we would walk from a forbidding barren col to a wooded path with the scent of pine trees, and crickets chirping in the meadows. Each day brought surprises; multi-coloured lakes, tumbling cascades, ruined buildings, dramatic rock faces and many other things to please the senses.

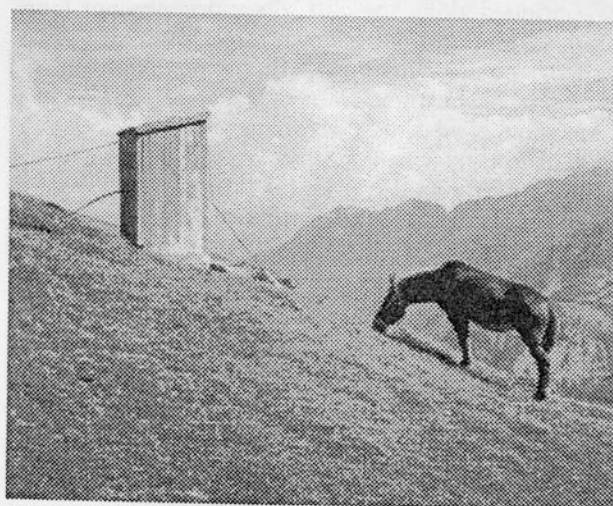
The profusion of alpine flowers was a constant source of delight. There were hillsides covered with alpen-rose, meadows bright with cranesbills, marguerites, vetches, scabious and orange hawksbeard. Even the most unpromising environment of scree and rocks had tiny patches of saxifrage, sedum and saponaria. In contrast to these dainty flowers the deep valleys were filled with lush vegetation and tall flowers such as fox-gloves and meadow-rue. My favourites were the small blue gentians and the vivid mauve pansies (pensees) often found growing together. When we reached Modane I bought a book of *Fleurs des Montagnes* and have counted over 100 varieties that we saw.

We were able to watch marmots at close range, sunning themselves on rocks, playing on the hillside or disappearing down their holes. There were a few sightings of lone chamois. We were enjoying a rest on our ascent to the Col de la Vanoise when a chamois bounded across the path that we had just climbed. It moved with such speed and grace as it leapt from rock to rock that we were filled with envy and wished we had the same energy.

Towards the end of our walk we deviated from the GR5 to the GR55 for a while. This enabled us to climb over the Col de Chavière which is the highest point on any GR trail and was the highest point on our route at 2,796 metres (9,173 feet). The col was approached across snowfields and culminated in a very steep climb to the pass. As we ate our picnic lunch at the top we were rewarded with wonderful views of summits, glaciers and ridges in all directions.

For me it was a most enjoyable and satisfying walk. I hope to have the opportunity to walk the second stage of La Grande Traversée des Alpes from Modane to Nice next year.

Shirley Higgins.



'..when there was no indoor toilet at the refuge..'

A White Cliffs Challenge Walk-Out

HAVING SPENT THE PREVIOUS SUNDAY doing a 'recce' of the only 17 miles of the route with which we were not already familiar, the time had come to try out the whole distance of 62 miles. The rucksack had been packed on Saturday night with food for the whole day and enough drink for the first 20 miles. The forecast was for sunny periods with heavy showers, some thundery.

After the alarm went off at 3.30am there was time for a weetabix and a cup of coffee before Kevin, prompt as usual, tapped on the door at 3.55. We drove the few miles to Wye and were on our way by 4.20. Once away from the street lights, torches were needed under the clear, starlit sky. The hint of dawn that was in the sky grew and by the time we made our first climb alongside the Devil's Kneading Trough it was light enough to put our torches away.

Now on the North Downs Way (NDW) we made steady progress, passing the Tiger at Stowting after 6 miles — not a car to be seen, strangely different from the previous Monday's pub meet when the road was completely blocked (only 7 group members made it this far south). After our second steep climb we saw our first person of the day, walking his dog in the car park at Farthing Common. We made a mental note: after 8 miles this would make a good place for the first check-point.

Still following the NDW but before crossing the road at Postling, we stopped for a bit to eat and a drink. The sun was up, dark clouds threatened out to the West and by now we were slowly swinging round to walk East. The sea and the Channel Tunnel Terminal came into view. After terracing round Camp Hill it was time for another drink and to take off a layer. Now with the benefit of a breeze, it was easy going along the cliff top — or was it the thought of a cup of tea at the Eagle's Nest Café? This was a mistake; we were too early; it was still boarded and locked so we had to make do with a drink from our water bottles and a sandwich.

It was 10.00am, we had covered 18 miles and as we got up to leave they arrived to unlock! Back into our stride we continued along the cliff top and it was not long before we were dropping down into Dover. Here we could not avoid having to walk on the pavement alongside the traffic bustling by on its way to ferries. We left this as soon as we could by crossing the swingbridge to the seafront: this was a good move. Kevin was able to use the toilets to change into his shorts while I used a seat in the gardens to change my socks and freshen up my tiring feet.

A few yards later a haven! — an open café with hot cups of tea. The owner, being of the walking class, was interested in what we were doing, so after a chat and filling our water bottles we dragged ourselves away. Soon we went under the Jubilee Way and were climbing up the white cliffs. Even the queue at the National Trust Shop at Fox Hill Down could not stop us pausing to get an ice cream.

The next 3½ miles along the clifftop were in bright sunshine but, out to sea, rain squalls could be seen moving up the channel. Down again, this time into St Margaret's Bay, for more cups of tea. Here we must stock up; it is 20 miles to Canterbury and we cannot think of anywhere for supplies before then. After a rest Kevin announces, "Let's take those steps to heaven", so we are on our way climbing those steps out of the bay and both being surprised at how easy they seem even after 27 miles.

Soon out in the open country we have to stop to put on waterproofs — in half a mile they are off again. A few more fields and we are in Ringwold; here it starts to rain again and this time it means it, so we make a dash for the church lych gate. Well zipped-up we decide we must leave our shelter and for the next two miles we paddle across fields, the rain coming down in stair-rods accompanied by lightning and claps of thunder. We reach Ripple and the roads are now streams, but it is easing up and we paddle on.

As we pass the village hall a band is practising; Kevin mumbles that the singer should not give up the day job while I just hope that he (the singer not Kevin, Paul? Ed.) works on his own. On we paddle, with the sun out now, over steaming fields, through paddocks where the horses have obviously been disturbed by the storm. Paths that were dry and dusty last week are wet, muddy and unpleasant to walk. Eventually we are back to the NDW where we meet and exchange greetings with another walker. A few miles further on, the ground is dry and as soon as our waterproofs are dry we remove them to cool off. Although we hear thunder in the distance we only have to put them on once again for a few minutes. As we make our way to Canterbury we pass through places that are awash and over one field that is so dry that my trainers fill up with dry dust!

We make the outskirts of Canterbury, 48 miles, at 8.00pm only to find that the toilets we had planned to use as changing rooms were closed. I ring Mary to report progress and to request that she does not lock the door as I have not got the spare key. She refuses!! Kevin rings Jackie to let her know our e.t.a. As we walk through the city we manage to purchase more drinks and, before leaving the street lights, we change socks, find torches and put on night gear. Now for the last 12 miles: somehow I miss the NDW and we follow the Stour Valley Walk (SVW) out of Canterbury, disturbing the dogs as we pass the gipsy encampment. Before crossing the A2 we link back to the NDW.

The miles pass by: Charthan Hatch 53, Old Wives Lees 55. I had considered crossing over to the SVW at Chilham but we have both had enough by now and decide that 2 miles of boring road are better than the hilly route of the SVW. In Chilham churchyard at approx. 11.00pm we encounter a lady with 3 very yaky small dogs. After they had woken all those nearby who had thought they would have an early night we explained to the lady what we were doing and were

soon on our way with her good wishes. The last 6 miles seem to go on for ever. With the lights of Wye in sight we leave the NDW at Soakham Farm and start to cross the fields.

Kevin is not too certain that my direct route is so direct, but I assure him that it is. After a few curses of the farmer who had cultivated the last large field and not reinstated the path, we reach the road that leads us the last half mile back to the car at 1.05am. Although this had not been a particularly hard walk, I think that, with a few adjustments and bearing in mind that not all one's requirements will need to be carried, it will make a very good challenge walk.

Paul Hatcher.

Make a note in your diary now:-

APRIL 5/6 1997 — THE WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE MARSHALS' WALK.

This is your chance to walk this new 100K event and possibly to warm up for the Downsman 100. It will be a route proving walk with full route description, and support will be provided. Taking part will be seen as a commitment to help with the main event on October 18 and 19, 1997. Please contact Paul on [redacted] if you wish to walk or if you are willing to provide support.

Thanks, Keith, for this issue's cover which is very apposite to the 'white cliffs' theme. If our bid to run the 'Hundred' in 2000AD is successful, I would prefer 'Canterbury Centenary Century' to 'White Cliffs 100' as a name, but if anyone has any ideas please pass them on to a member of the Committee.

Talking of Hundreds, Kent Group will (again!) be serving the meal at the finish of the 'Downsman' Hundred at Willingdon School, Eastbourne, on 25/26 May 1997. On the basis of each person doing one 8-hour shift, we will need over 30 people. To add your name to the list (20 people have already volunteered) 'phone Paul on [redacted]. Paul tells me that we have also been asked to help at the finish on the Marshals' 100 on 4/5 May — offers of help, please, to Trevor Blake ([redacted]).

On the Wealden Waters Marshals' Walk I had the pleasure of assisting (?) Ian and Judy in their culinary efforts, which seemed to be appreciated by the walkers, and with three crosswords which we managed to finish before darkness fell. The results of the Marshals' Walk and the report on the main event appear on page 12..

A fortnight later, 21 brave souls joined Maurice on the third version of his 'Trois Chateaux' and there were still 22 people when I met them at the pub in Hawkhurst. So far so good, but I am still not sure how Maurice managed to allow two of our elder statesmen to take a shorter route back to Cranbrook in the company of two young ladies who have recently joined the

Kent Group. The second part of the walk (16 of the 34 miles) was thoroughly enjoyable and I am grateful to Maurice for leading it and for ferrying me back to Hawkhurst where his son, Peter, had a 'Coke' in celebration of his first walk of over 30 miles. Congratulations to him and all those for whom it was a 'first'.

On the following Saturday, on Ernie's excellent '1066 and all that' walk, another elder of the group was less than statesmanlike: as we were leaving Pevensey, it being the 930th Anniversary of William the Conqueror's landing there, we encountered a young lady splendidly attired in mediaeval costume who, on being asked by the elder, "Are you a serving wench?" replied haughtily, "No, I am a Norman Lady".

TS.

'Bite-Back'

A Mr Mayhew will supply this device, which is about the size of a cigarette lighter, to any individual who writes to him, with name and address and a cheque for £6.30 (inc. postage), at:-

Tosh UK Ltd, 542 Kingsley Park,
Golf Links Road, Westward Hol,
North Devon EX39 1UG.
Tel: 01237-421150.

Together with a "Dazer" the "Bite-Back" should make a pretty good self-defence system against dogs.

Many thanks to Susan and Ivan Verrell for tracking down this information, and to Laurie for spotting the article in the first place. T.



*"Your feet can't possibly be sore yet!".
Ian Needham and Judy Rickwood at the WWW start.*

The Channel Cliffs Challenge

ON SATURDAY AUGUST 17 seven LDWA members from south and east Kent completed the Channel Cliffs Challenge 38.5 miles between Dover and Folkestone and Boulogne and Calais, transported by SeaCat and hovercraft.

The CCC is the idea of Kent members Joy Davies, Mike Pursey and Graham Smith, a project which originated when this trio walked from Boulogne to Calais last year, taking the hovercraft from Dover to Calais, a train to Boulogne and then walking back via the coast.

They decided to extend the walk by making it a round trip, utilising Hoverspeed's Dover-Calais hovercraft and Folkestone-Boulogne SeaCat services.

The first attempt at the CCC this year was made on July 13, when 11 LDWA members from south and east Kent met at Dover hoverport for the 6am hovercraft – Joy, Mike and Graham, plus Pat and Jacqui Clay, Peter Carter, Nicola Foad, Bob Field, Dave Cotton, John Donnelly and Liz MacNaughton.

The plan was to walk from Calais to Boulogne and then take the 5.15 SeaCat to Folkestone – around which the whole day was planned – to walk back to Dover. Sadly the attempt failed because (and it's embarrassing to admit this) the distance between the two French ports was a good 4-5 miles more than Graham and Mike – who had walked between Calais and Boulogne several times – thought it was. The distance is actually 30.8 miles, but on that day it was 32 because of a diversion to avoid walking on the beach.

French time is an hour ahead of British, so the CCC party were losing an hour and under pressure from the start. They cracked on but at Ambleteuse, eight miles from Boulogne, the party finally realised they would not make the 5.15pm SeaCat unless the pace was upped to an impossible five miles an hour. They admitted defeat and retired to a bar to revive flagging spirits. The next SeaCat was not until 9.15pm, and no one fancied walking the last 7.7 miles in the dark, so it was decided to put the failed CCC attempt down to experience – or, more accurately, inexperience! Tribute here must be paid to John Donnelly, who bravely battled against severe blisters, to hobble the remaining miles into Boulogne.

Some of the party were very anxious to have another crack at the CCC as soon as possible, so the next attempt was planned for August 17. This time the plan was to do the walk in the opposite way to the first attempt, making the second crossing via hovercraft back to Dover, rather than the SeaCat back to Folkestone. There are more hovercraft crossings than SeaCat ones, so if the connection was missed

the party would not have to wait four hours for the next one, as they had before. Also, as Pat Clay pointed out, it would be better psychologically to finish the CCC after the longer French stretch had been completed, rather than complete that stretch, have a long break on the SeaCat and then raise aching limbs to walk another 7.7 miles.

Due to other commitments Joy, Liz, John, Peter, David and Bob could not make it on August 17, but Mike, Graham, Pat, Jacqui and Nicola were there, plus Peter Watson and Cathy Mahon, who had both wanted to do the walk on July 13 but had been otherwise engaged. It was one of the hottest days of the summer, with temperatures in the 80s, but it couldn't have gone better.

The seven met at the Dover hoverport, having had about eight hours sleep between them, and started walking to Folkestone at 4.30am, to catch the 8am SeaCat. It was pitch dark to start with, and day didn't begin to break until 5am, by which time they had completed their first cliff climb – Shakespeare Cliff – and were making their second, steeper one – Great Farthingloe. It was good to get those climbs out of the way early on, when limbs were fresh and spirits very willing.

The walk over the white cliffs to Folkestone is always a fine one. The clifftop tracks are very good, as you would expect from a part of the North Downs Way, and the views can be excellent. In fine weather they are superb, as you can see out to the cliffs on the other side of the Channel, where the party was heading, as well as the variety of ferries and hovercraft just behind you.

Pat's pedometer made the walk from Dover to Folkestone 7.7 miles, and the seven trooped into the port's harbour just after 6.40am, with plenty of time for breakfast and coffee before the 8am SeaCat.

In fine weather a SeaCat crossing is delightfully smooth, and that's how it was on August 17, as the high temperatures made for some of the calmest conditions on the Channel all year. The crossing takes an hour, so there was time for more coffee. It was too early for beer, although more than one of the seven was tempted. With French time an hour ahead of ours, arrival in Boulogne was 10am local time, and the seven started walking right away. The return hovercraft crossing had been booked for 11pm which, everyone agreed, would give plenty of time.

The sun was then rising rapidly, and it wasn't long before it was taking its toll. The first drink stop (not beer, despite there being no shortage of bars) was at Wimereux, a few miles out of Boulogne, and the first beer stop was at Ambleteuse. With the sun

really blasting down now, that ice-cold lager was very welcome.

The first part of the CCC's French stretch, from Boulogne to Cap Griz-Nez, is not particularly brilliant. The scenery is a bit dull and the walking itself is a mixture of sand bashing, beach bashing (with the tide out it was firm sand so it wasn't too bad underfoot) and clifftop walking. The cliff path is reasonable here but badly eroded in parts and generally not as well maintained as on the Dover-Folkestone section. The fierce sun brought a haze with it, which prevented any fine views back to the white cliffs the party had just walked over.

Lunch was taken in a convenient clifftop cranny a mile from Cap Griz-Nez, and in that heat the seven were physically incapable of ignoring the bar at the Cap itself shortly afterwards. Cap Griz-Nez, with its lighthouse, is a real landmark. It is the closest part of France to England and hence – where the Channel swimmers head to. It's also where the CCC takes a decisive change of direction from almost due North to East and then North-East.

At Cap Griz-Nez the scenery improves. Suddenly you see rolling French countryside and you leave the scrubland, which makes up a large part of the scenery from Boulogne, behind. The beaches are golden, much better than anything on the English side of the CCC, and that's just as well, because the next few miles are entirely on the sand. Again, it's firm sand, so the going is pretty good although it gets a bit tedious after a while. But the beach bashing is infinitely preferable to the two alternatives – diverting from Cap Griz-Nez to the road (adding 1.2 miles to the walk, and harder underfoot) or negotiating the sand dunes (which Graham and Mike had done and it's a nightmare).

There was a two-beer stop at Wissant and then more beach bashing before, at long last, the seven left the sands and picked up a clifftop path again, leading eventually to Cap Blanc-Nez. Here the cliffs rise dramatically and there's a steep, 440ft, climb to the obelisk that's a memorial to the Dover Patrol – the men who died patrolling the Channel during the two world wars. Cap Blanc-Nez is a tourist honeypot, and the Channel Cliffs Challengers were rewarded for their toil to its summit (which offers the best views of the walk in clear weather) by ice cream vans and a large mobile selling fast food and cold drinks, including beer.

From here the party took a high inland route to Coquelles, the last village before Calais, rather than hugging the coast, which involves a lot of laborious trudging over soft sand. The tracks are good, and are part of a French long distance path (known as *grande randonnees*). The tracks also offer fine views in clear weather.

Coquelles provided another beer stop, before the last few miles into Calais. These took the party past a shopping complex which included a McDonald's (yes, they're big in France, too), then along a disused railway track which goes alongside some allotments, until the outskirts of Calais.

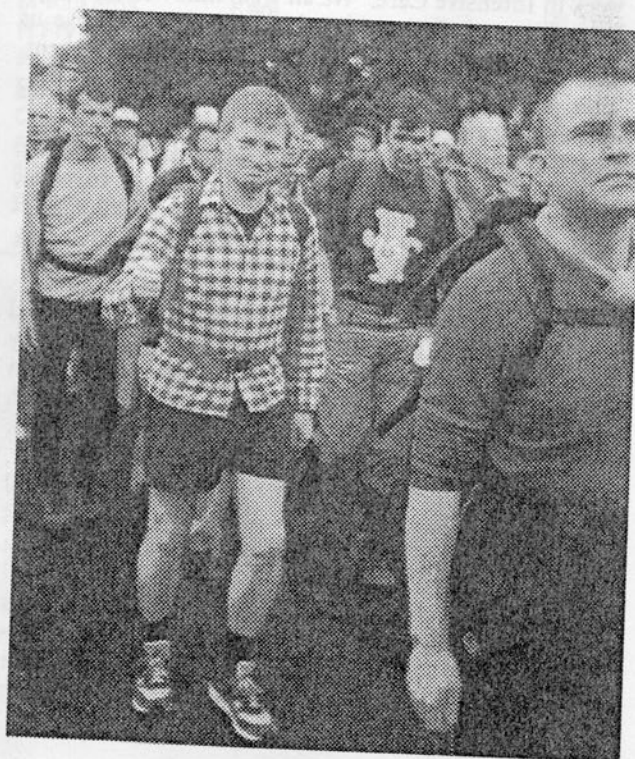
In Calais there was time for a dinner of *frites* (chips) and another beer, which the *frites* van sold, before the worst part of the CCC – a couple of miles trudging through the totally uninteresting port environs of Calais to the hoverport, situated more than a mile from the ferry terminal.

The seven checked in for the hovercraft just before 10pm, with plenty of time to visit the duty free shop. Graham bought a 24-pack of Foster's Lager. He had to lug it on to the hovercraft and from Dover hoverport to the car – but at £10, less than 50p for a big can, he wasn't complaining!

Graham Smith

Thank you, Graham, for that report.

The Channel Cliffs Challenge will go on Kent LDWA's programme of social walks next summer, to take place on **Saturday, July 19**. (Further details will appear in the newsletter). The cost of a Folkestone to Boulogne and Calais to Dover round trip this summer was £5. I dare say many Francophiles and others will be making a note of Saturday, July 19 in their 1997 diaries.



Neil Higham at the start of the 'Yorkshire Dales Hundred'.

LDWA Kent Group - The High Weald Walk (Heart of the Weald) 11th August 1996

WE TIDIED UP AFTER THE EVENT and finally closed the doors of the hall behind us soon after 6 o'clock. I thought, "Good. Now I can leave the report and results for a few days and get on with some jobs at home". In fact, nine days have elapsed, I've only completed half of the outstanding jobs and no report has been written, so it's now top of the list of priorities.

That's one of the problems with organising a Challenge Walk. All the work leading up to it generates enthusiasm: a new route has to be devised and walked, plans made and thought given to all the problems likely to arise. In some cases certificates and badges need to be designed. Of course the organiser doesn't deal with all of them personally, but there is always an involvement. Then comes the day and there are lots of old friends to meet, plenty to do and hopefully not too many problems to solve.

Suddenly it's all over. Everything is an anti-climax with just the tidying up to be done and no normal person enjoys that. What can I tell you in a report that you don't know already or is of interest? You may not know how many started - for the record, we had 102 entries, 89 starters and 84 finishers - but you are aware of what the route was like and the weather on the day.

Perhaps some of you know that we had an unfortunate incident soon after the start when Alan Hawtin, who comes from Chelmsford, collapsed and had to be rushed to hospital by ambulance, having suffered a heart attack. However, I understand from his friend Michael Rowe, that Alan has been allowed home after a week in Intensive Care. We all wish him well and hope he makes a good recovery. Nothing would please us more than to see Alan, fit and well, on next year's event.

This year's walk was the third in the High Weald series and thirty-two participants, including Marshals, qualified for a badge, having completed all three events. Next year's walk will be the Tunbridge Wells Circular. We are hoping to find a hall with good car parking, a little nearer the official route than the one at Five Oak Green that was used in 1994.

These events would not be possible without a good deal of help from willing group members and friends. My thanks go to: Bryan and Pat Clarke, Diane James, Tom Sinclair, Jim Oddy, Trevor Blake, Pam Prince, Ken Heath, Peter and Pauline Barnett, Andrew Boulden, Neil and Sarah Higham, Kevin and Jackie Puttock, Neil and Jan O'Rourke, Ivan and Ann Waghorn, Paul Hatcher, Alan and Sylvia Lawson and any other helpers whom I have inadvertently missed. We are fortunate in normally having plenty of offers of help, but may I remind new Kent members it is a Kent custom that they should first make sure that Kent Challenge Walks have plenty of helpers on the day before entering for the main walk. There is always a Marshal's walk for those who wish to do it.

We are also indebted to Father Nixon, who allowed us to use the Catholic Church car park at Burwash and to farmer Pat Read and his manager David Lloyd who provided facilities at Bardown Farm.

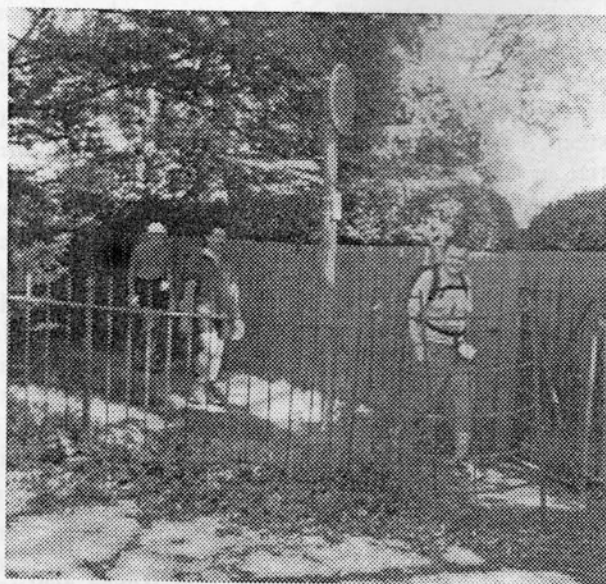
Finally, we want to increase our entry numbers a little to ensure the financial viability of the event, so if you enjoyed it tell your friends that it is a *must* in 1997. If you didn't enjoy it just keep quiet, but come along anyway next year and we'll try and prove you wrong!

Ernie Bishop

(Details of the 84 finishers appear opposite).

15 Marshals - all Kent Group

Name	Time
Tom Bowman	07.23
Andrew Boulden	07.25
Peter Barnett	07.45
Ernie Bishop	07.45
Trevor Blake	07.45
Ken Heath	07.45
Jan O'Rourke	07.45
Jim Oddy	07.45
Pam Prince	07.45
Ivan Waghorn	07.45
Bryan Clarke	08.09
Jacqui Puttock	08.09
Kevin Puttock	08.09
Neil Higham	08.35
Sarah Higham	08.35

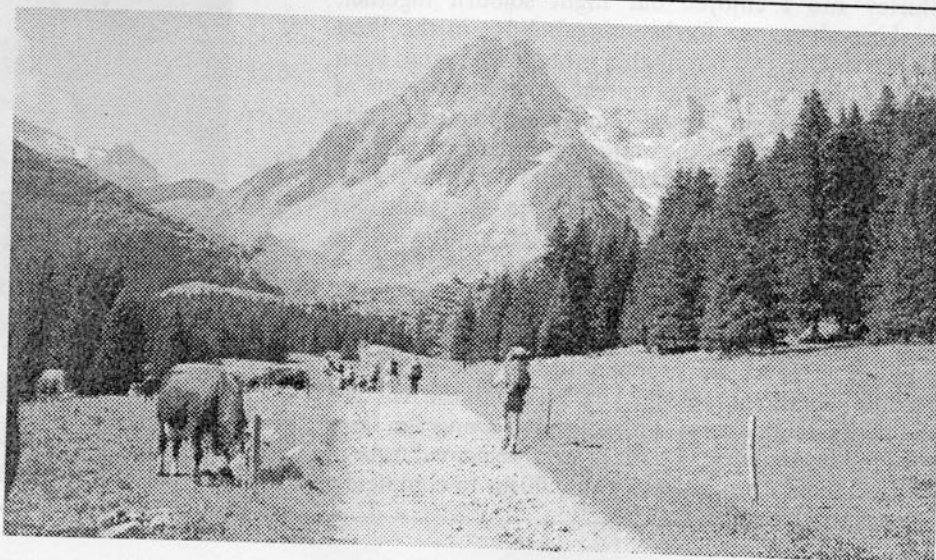


Jim James nearing the finish of the High Weald Walk, at the entrance to the churchyard at Wadhurst.

HIGH WEALD WALK – 11th August 1996. 84 finishers.

Name	Club/Group	Time	Name	Club/Group	Time
C Boakes	LDWA	04.00	P Sargent	–	07.28
K Jones	LDWA	04.00	B Field	Kent	07.30
M Bulger	Seaford Striders	04.14	C Mahon	Kent	07.30
R Sharp	Crawley AC	04.29	B Bowers	Essex/Herts	07.35
G Tucker	LDWA	04.47	S Chan	–	07.35
P Marien	Plumstead Runners	04.52	J Nicholson	–	07.35
S Robertson	Swanley & District AC	04.52	J Rutledge	Essex/Herts	07.35
P Sapsard	–	04.53	B Allen	LDWA	07.42
G Ives	100km Association	04.54	P Berry	Kent	07.43
M Pickard	–	04.56	K Dron	Kent	07.43
K Fancett	London	04.58	L Butters	–	07.44
A Lade	Seaford Striders	04.58	B Buttifant	Kent	07.44
M Bunting	London	05.34	N Fry	–	07.44
M Nutburn	Kent	05.36	C Simmons	–	07.44
D Smith	100km Association, Kent	05.49	J Dunster	Surrey	07.50
C Pacifico	Portslade Hedgehop	05.55	D Clark	–	07.55
P Stratton	Portslade Hedgehop	05.56	I Cox	Kent	07.55
D Smith	Ashford & District RRC	05.57	A Hitchings	–	07.55
M Smith	Ashford & District RRC	05.57	B Nicholls	LDWA	07.56
D Appleton	Blackheath H	06.19	C Nicholls	–	07.56
G Hayward	Blackheath H	06.19	T Beeching	–	08.00
M Cotterill	Essex/Herts	06.36	C Clay	White Cliffs RA	08.01
D Scott	LDWA	06.36	J Clay	Kent	08.01
J James	Kent	06.46	P Clay	White Cliffs RA	08.01
M Pursey	Kent	06.46	P Clay	Kent	08.01
G Smith	Kent	06.46	N Ford	–	08.01
P Rush	Ashford & District RRC	06.50	D Bowdell	LDWA	08.07
T Wilks	LDWA	06.50	B Gillibrand	Kent	08.07
A Lawson	Kent	06.52	K Hayes	–	08.14
R Thornburgh	Kent	06.52	M Hayes	–	08.14
D Wisdom	LDWA	06.52	S Gill	Kent	08.16
M Sutton	London	06.53	P Hatcher	Kent	08.16
R Folkard	Essex/Herts	06.56	K Warman	Kent	08.16
T Lyons	Essex/Herts	06.56	D Cowley	Kent	08.19
S Higgins	Kent	07.02	M Rickards	Kent	08.19
A Sayer	Surrey	07.02	H Fry	–	08.20
P Watson	Kent	07.02	R Jewkes	–	08.20
T Barker	Sussex	07.13	P Thompson	Norfolk/Suffolk	08.20
T Midwinter	–	07.13	C Chorley	Anglian/Norfolk/Suffolk	08.21
J Glasser	London	07.22	B Sauerzapf	Norfolk/Suffolk	08.21
S Milne	–	07.22	B Tuckey	LDWA	08.22
H Stemp	LDWA	07.22	P Whitestone	LDWA	08.48

“...the scent of pine trees, and
crickets chirping in the
meadows...”
See Shirley Higgins' article
on page 5.



Wealden Waters Marshals' Walk

IN THE SUBURBAN STILLNESS OF 8 O'CLOCK on the 8th September, Shirley Gill and I were the first staggering starters from Tunbridge Wells Tennis Club. A lovely calm morning took us through Frant to Checkpoint 1 at Bowles Outdoor Centre where we disturbed four supporters' peace. Suitably refreshed, we followed the Sussex Border Path through fields and orchards and past a small flock of jet black sheep. Shortly afterwards, I was stung for the third time in my life (the second being the previous weekend on the Shotley Peninsular Challenge, and the first being some years ago when I bought a pre-owned Austin Allegro).

Another swarm – Trevor, Jan, Pam and Jim – swept past but we saw their tails again at the first drinks stop in the Medway Valley. The long, unrelenting slog up onto Ashdown Forest was made easier by the cooling and very welcome breeze. After Camp Hill, the oasis of drinks stop number 2 was soon reached. A few miles of bracken-thrashing took us to Nutley, where a superb checkpoint and willing marshals were waiting for us.

Secret sunlit copses and wide forest tracks were followed westwards in the warm afternoon. I apologise to my fellow walkers for the lack of picnic table after Goat car park – it was there when the route was checked in July, honestly! The next checkpoint was at Weir Wood and once again personal attention by the marshals there was well received. Early evening stillness and the occasional company of Neil and Roger led us over Dry Hill, where, somewhat ironically, the only mud on the route was found. It was still present here on the main event as our Mobile Drying Unit had blown a fuse after its over-use on the Yorkshire Dales 100...

We torched up just before reaching checkpoint 4 at New Barns Farm, where more ample and varied refreshments were available. From here, our route led us across many fields and stiles of assorted shapes and size towards Bough Beech Reservoir. Near the slurry lagoon, a seemingly lost Roger suddenly appeared behind us. The clear starry night was just perfect for walking through, and we soon arrived at checkpoint 5 to gorge further.

Shirley and I enjoyed our night sojourn together, thinking about our forthcoming holiday in the West Country. Our two torchlights meandered across open fields and enclosed paths to reach the street lights of Tonbridge at about 2.00am. Moira and Peter Rickards were waiting for us in the multi-storey car park to serve possibly the earliest breakfast either of us had ever had. Suitably nourished, we continued on the somewhat unexciting section to Five Oak Green and on to our last checkpoint (number 7) by the roadside at I don't know where.

Our weary limbs demanded rest and they had twenty minutes of it as we propped up against a tree on Pembury Green. We pushed on over both the A21 and the newly-built stream bridge to plod along the farm road to Hawkenbury. A light drizzle welcomed us back to the Tennis Club just prior to 7.00am to complete a most enjoyable walk.

That enjoyment was greatly helped by our marshals who gave freely of their time in order to support us so well. Our varied fare included sandwiches, soup, hot dogs, various cakes, rice and fruit, trifles, salads, fresh figs (thank you Mr Editor!), yoghurt, nuts and raisins, cheese and biscuits, tomatoes, flapjacks, the 3-course cooked breakfast and hot and cold drinks. Not bad for the £4 entry fee! There can't be many other walks where the number of marshals exceeds the number of walkers, but it happened here. So I am sure the other 11 walkers will want to join me in sincerely thanking the following 13....

Pauline and Peter Barnett, Geoff Betts, Tom Bowman, Pat and Bryan Clarke, Shirley Higgins, Ian Needham, Neal O'Rourke, Moira and Peter Rickards, Judy Rickwood and Tom Sinclair. Thank you one and all.

Keith Warman

For those of you who have never done a Marshals' Walk, I hope the above has whetted your appetite for the future.



The WWW Marshals' Walk, Checkpoint 2.



"A fig for you.."

14th Wealden Waters Walk 12th and 13th October 1996

Report and Results of Marshals' Walk

From as far afield as Cornwall and Yorkshire, 111 people entered this year's walk, with 88 actually starting. The overcast but dry skies meant good conditions generally, although isolated mud was reported, particularly on Dry Hill. One unfortunate walker managed to plunge headlong into the mire, but reports that he had to be hosed down at New Barns Farm are completely unfounded! Entries were slightly up on last year, with a last minute flurry of entrants – perhaps caused by the delay of the August edition of "Strider". Congratulations are due to the 77 finishers, especially those doing so for the first time. Well done! Details of those 77 finishers appear on a separate sheet.

The remarkable Tony Twyman completed the course yet again to maintain his unique feat of being "the only person in the history of the Universe" (his words!) to finish every Wealden Waters – 14 so far. This year, apparently, he wearily arrived at CP6 (Tonbridge), slumped into the nearest seat and announced, "The bloke who invented sitting down deserves a medal". We think you do too, Tony, and hope you may entertain us for many more years. George Foot joined the small band who have completed ten or more and Shirley Hume at last caught up with her husband Chris' completions, but it took a broken arm to keep him away. We all wish Chris a swift recovery.

Once again, grateful thanks are due to Kent Group members and friends who organised and marshalled the event, including Neil Higham who also checked the results sheet. Our Chairman, Paul Hatcher, mentioned at the start that delays may occur at night-time

checkpoints during busy periods as our resources were once again very stretched. Nine manned checkpoints/drinks stops are a heavy commitment and the organisers would gladly welcome a few more volunteers! So, Kent members out there, please consider offering your services next year prior to entering the walk. Of course, there is a "Marshals' Walk" available before the main event, to enable you to do the walk.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND GRATEFUL THANKS are due to the following for their support:

Tunbridge Wells Tennis Club (our Headquarters). CP1 – Bowles Outdoor Centre: CP2 – Nutley War Memorial Hall: CP3 – Weir Wood Sailing Club and Southern Water Authority: CP4 – Mrs Schorr, New Barns Farm: CP5 – Kent Trust for Nature Conservation: CP6 – Tonbridge School: CP7 – Five Oak Green Scouts: Mr Webb, fruit grower from Plaxtol, who provided the apples for the Finish.

MARSHALS' WALK

Twelve Kent Group members started and finished this event, held on 8-9 September, in order that they could help on the main event. A staggered start from the Tennis Club from 8am in ideal conditions with a light breeze gave a comfortable walk to test the route and description. The twelve walkers were very grateful to the thirteen marshals for their wonderful support. Refreshments ranged from fresh figs, salad, soup and hot dogs, to a 3-course cooked breakfast in Tonbridge prepared by Peter and Moira Rickards!

MARSHALS' COMPLETIONS

No.	Name	Club/Group	Start time	CP1	CP2	CP3	CP4	CP5	CP7	Finish	Total	Completed
2	Andrew Boulden	Kent	11.15	13.07	17.30	19.35	21.40	00.12	04.34	06.06	18.54	6
3	Martin Fox	Kent	11.15	13.07	17.30	19.35	21.40	00.13	04.34	06.09	18.54	5
5	Ken Heath	Kent	11.15	13.07	17.30	19.35	21.40	00.13	04.34	06.09	18.54	4
11	Roger Thornburgh	Kent	09.35	11.18	15.35	17.55	20.28	23.18	04.27	06.07	20.32	5
10	Dave Sheldrake	Kent	09.40	11.38	15.50	18.17	20.45	23.36	05.07	06.58	21.18	6
1	Trevor Blake	Kent	08.30	10.23	15.05	17.30	19.55	22.42	04.20	06.10	21.40	5
8	Jan O'Rourke	Kent	08.30	10.23	15.05	17.30	19.55	22.42	04.20	06.10	21.40	1
7	Jim Oddy	Kent	08.30	10.23	15.05	17.30	19.55	22.42	04.20	06.10	21.40	4
9	Pam Prince	Kent	08.30	10.23	15.05	17.30	19.55	22.42	04.20	06.10	21.40	6
6	Neil Higham	Kent	09.35	11.18	15.35	17.55	20.28	23.52	05.46	07.28	21.53	8
4	Shirley Gill	Kent	08.00	10.14	15.20	17.45	20.31	23.19	04.34	06.48	22.48	2
12	Keith Warman	Kent	08.00	10.14	15.20	17.45	20.31	23.19	04.34	06.48	22.48	7

Save the Children Fund

**Chatsworth Challenge, 25 miles,
Sunday 13 September 1996**

We were pleased to receive our invitations to this year's Chatsworth Challenge, having not been able to gain entry to the 1995 event. We drove up on Saturday and pitched our tent at Foolow, 4 miles from the start at Baslow in the Derbyshire Dales.

A couple of swifties were taken in the local pub, which delightfully had no games machines and no juke box, just a hardy pianist offering theme tunes from classic movies. Then it was back to the tent under a crystal clear starlit sky with a hope that the following day would bring good weather.

Baslow Village Hall was spilling over with the 330 entrants when we arrived. We swigged down our welcome cup of tea, assembled on the green outside the hall and were heralded off by one of the organisers at 8.30am into the crisp, clear sunny morning.

Our first obstacle was to negotiate a couple of entrants who had stopped in the middle of the throng to allow their dog to poo! A steep climb out of Baslow became a walking dance of the seven veils as the temperature soared. At the top, under clear blue skies, we were treated to the glorious panoramic views from Baslow Edge, Curbar Edge, and Froggat Edge, only to have this fast, easy-going track plummet, three miles out, through woodlands below Froggat Edge with the field bunching up over several stiles. Out of the wood we climbed to the first refreshments at four and a half miles, by which time the field was beginning to stretch out. Another two miles saw us at our first checkpoint at the secluded Eyam Youth Hostel, built substantially from Derbyshire stone in the form of a miniature castle. From here we were riding the back of the Long Stone Moors until we gently descended into woodland to Abney Community Hall, checkpoint 2, 8.75 miles out.

Leaving this checkpoint the route took us through Bretton Village towards Foolow. An error made by following the people in front led us off the route at Foolow, but by good use of the compass and commanding a map from a startled tourist, we yomped across country to arrive at roadside checkpoint 3 near to Housley House.

Moorland followed open farmland to Black Plantation which crossed the halfway mark. We descended from the moors into the sleepy Great Longstone village and checkpoint 4.

We now followed a long trudge along the flat dismantled railway line of the Monsal Trail. The highlight however was checkpoint 5 at the site of the Bakewell Station, the fabric of which has been restored to its former splendour. Towards the end of the Monsal Trail, 18 miles out, we were vying for space with suicidal mountain bikers. We dropped sharply where the Monsal Trail ended, the track taking us into woodland.

Here, our attempts to cross the bridge at the confluence of the rivers Derwent and Wye were hampered by perishing tourists taking photos of their sprogs on the narrow bridge. Having turfed them off, we proceeded through dense coppice to checkpoint 6, 21 miles, at Rowsley.

From here the River Derwent and the path ran almost parallel through the Burntwood Quarry and Smelting Mills Wood to take us to checkpoint 7 at Beeley village hall.

The final 4 miles were along the flat Derwent valley hugging the river. At Beeley Lodge we crossed the road and entered the southern gates of Chatsworth park. The remaining 3 miles felt as though they would never end as we dodged and weaved through family ball games and sunbathers for the last hour of the walk back to Baslow. The stunning weather had caused people to pack up their picnicking gear and swim suits and head for Chatsworth Park in their droves. Chatsworth House came into view at 24 miles, bathed in the afternoon sunlight.

The finish back at Baslow hall was a model for other events to follow. We were clocked in, our weary bodies were told to sit at a table and we were waited on by young helpers who ferried out hot drinks and delicious pie and peas to us. Later the ceremony continued with successful finishers' names being called out and our certificates, badges and pins being presented to us at our tables.

Copies of '97 entry forms are available at the monthly Monday group meetings. (Note - places go quickly!).

Pete Berry and Kim Dron

9hrs 5mins. 204th out of a field of 330.



*'1066 and All That'. Taking a break
at Herstmonceux Castle.*

Wot no Custard?

On Sunday 10 November sixteen intrepid walkers set off under the leadership of Tom Sinclair for a social walk from the car park in Wrotham to the Swan PH in West Peckham and back. (Is it my imagination or are the starting places of Tom's walks getting progressively closer to his home?)

It was raining as we set off at 8.40am and so it continued till around midday. With a stop for a minute's silence at 11am we arrived at West Peckham at 12.20pm and enjoyed various refreshments, ranging from a full roast beef dinner to a cheese roll. However, after enduring our high-speed morning in the rain the bitter blow struck when it was discovered that there was no custard served with the lovely desserts on offer!

A quick poll revealed that all those asked (1) had looked forward to having custard, and representations were made to Tom who promised that no walk of his in the future would be without custard if he could so arrange it.

We set off again at 1.40pm and arrived back at the car park in Wrotham at 3.40pm after a pleasant and dry afternoon through the Kent countryside.

All expressed their thanks to Tom for another excellent route and walk.

Bryan Clarke

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

This year I had a problem in recruiting sufficient volunteers to man checkpoints etc. for the Wealden Waters event. Fortunately everything did work out in the end. However, I do think it would be fairer if more members would come forward to assist, especially those who usually walk on the main event but to date apparently never offered their services.

Having been a Kent member for 12 or so years and having seen the same faces each year on checkpoints it would be very nice to see some new ones for a change. So, if you haven't marshalled on events in the past, please bear this in mind when assistance is requested, as any offers of help will be greatly appreciated.

Neal O'Rourke

It is disappointing to learn of Neal's difficulties in recruiting enough people, but I have seen one 'thank you' letter whose writer thought we had more than enough people on the checkpoints and it has been encouraging to see the way many who have joined the group in the last couple of years have 'mucked in' by helping on checkpoints and, bless 'em, providing material for this Newsletter. Talking of 'thank you' letters, I am sure Pam Prince will have received many – she certainly deserves to be heartily thanked for taking on the job of WWW Entries Secretary.

Tom S.

A Wee Bit of Weavers' Way

Jenny (my wife) having had a yen to see some good friends of ours who have retired to Norfolk and the said friends having kindly said, "Come up on Friday and stay for the weekend", 9.30am on Saturday 3rd October found me passing the site of Checkpoint 1 on the Poppy Line Marathon at the north end of the Weavers' Way in Cromer. For the first few miles I was on the familiar Poppy Line route but left it just before Felbrigg Church and continued southwards.

The way-marking was good and only once did I have to make a diversion to avoid damaging crops – the mud in which the potatoes, now awaiting harvest, had been growing looked particularly glutinous. The track passing close to Felbrigg Church soon led to St John's Church, Metton, where I was surprised and interested to see, in front of the war memorial, a bench inscribed, "In commemoration of peace, 1945-1995".

The Way, still well way-marked, took me in a southerly direction through the hamlets of Hanworth and Alby Hill, each with a church, via Thwaite Common to Erpingham where it turned West along the road. I soon passed the 'Spread Eagle' pub which, I was later informed, used to have its own brewery attached, and reached another hamlet, Calthorpe, with a good-sized church: I wondered were these the so-called 'wool churches' built by wealthy wool merchants centuries ago.

Here the Weavers' Way turned South but after a mile or so I turned West on farm tracks and field paths (again the way-marking was pretty good) to reach the village of Itteringham where I had a tryst with Jenny, Alan and Liz for 1.30pm. Having entered the front door of the 'Walpole Arms' shortly before the due time I was about to savour a pint of Adnam's 'Broadside' when 3 familiar figures came in sight by the back door. Apparently Jenny had thought that I might not reach the pub before it stopped serving food at 10 to 2, while Alan had predicted that I would be on my third pint!

Neither were right as I had plenty of time to enjoy the excellent fare in the pub washed down by a second, but not a third, pint of the flavour-some ale. Indeed if I were writing a guide book to the Weavers' Way I would probably say: "about 10 miles south of Cromer a diversion to the West to the 'Walpole Arms', Itteringham, is recommended". I hope to walk other sections of the Way, which ends in Yarmouth, on later visits to our friends.

TS

WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE

1997 sees no Surrey Summits or Three Forests Way, so Kent Group will be promoting the White Cliffs Challenge instead of the Wealden Waters. The Marshals' Walk will be on the 5th/6th April and the Main Event on 18th/19th October – when you will (of course!) be marshalling – will also test the area to support Kent Group's application to host the Hundred in 2000. Make a note of both dates in your diary NOW.

The entry form is not yet available and members and their families are invited to submit a design for a cover for the form to me A.S.A.P. so that it can be printed and displayed at other events, thereby stimulating interest in this new event.

Designs are also needed for a Certificate and for a badge for this 62-mile event, which may be a 'one-off' and could, perhaps, incorporate '1997'. (How the white, 'Invicta' horse can be depicted against a background of white cliffs seems problematical to me, but I am sure some of you will want to take up the challenge. *Ed*).

Paul Hatcher,
[redacted]

SOUTHERN TRIPLE CHALLENGE

This year's Wealden Waters Walk was the middle of the sequence – Surrey Summits 96, Wealden Waters 96 and Three Forests Way 96. For completion of these three events, you may claim a badge and certificate for £2.00 (pay "LDWA Kent") from Laurie Lowe, [redacted]

None of the 25 participants has sent me a report on Shirley's splendid Staplehurst Stumble on Saturday 26 October but they all seemed to enjoy it (I certainly did). My own walk on 10 November coincided with the absolute deadline for this issue which I hoped would prevent Bryan Clarke (or any of the other 14) sending in complaints about bad weather, mud, puddles, brisk pace (what me in my state of health?), lack of custard at the pub and a steep hill after lunch.

Tom S.

KENT GROUP PROGRAMME

If anyone is prepared to lead a social walk for the Group from April onwards in the New Year, would they please let me have details by 14 January 1997 at the latest, so that they can be included in the April issue of 'Strider' and, of course, in our own Newsletter.

Dave Sheldrake, *Secretary*

This issue of the LDWA Kent Group Newsletter has been set, as an experiment, by DTP computer composition, in Ehrhardt, Ariel and Poppl-Laudatio, and with illustrations screened at 43 d.p.i., by John Preston Bell. Photoprinting and finishing by Bryan Clarke.

Brecon Beacons Weekend, 17/19 January 1997

This will be our 6th annual visit to South Wales and our H.Q. will again be Danywenallt Study Centre, Talybont-on-Usk, (GR 107205). Recommended maps for the area include Landranger 160 and 161 and Outdoor Leisure Series of the Brecon Beacons.

This weekend is essentially a social occasion and NOT just for the so-called élite walkers. Everyone is welcome; all we ask is that you come properly equipped for winter hill walking.

SCHEDULE

Friday 17th

Assemble at Danywenallt 6.30pm approx Buffet Supper at 8.00pm.

Saturday 18th

Breakfast 8.30am. Walks, hard, not so hard and easy, all start at 9.00am.

EVENING DINNER 6.30-7.00pm.

Sunday 19th

Breakfast 8.30am. followed by short social walk. Tea or coffee available before returning home in mid-afternoon.

Packed lunches are provided on both days

The cost of this package is £52, which we think is still good value, and for those who wish, bed and breakfast (DIY) will be available on Sunday night at a cost of £10.

FRIDAY WALK

This optional extra will again start from New Beechenhurst Car Park in the Forest of Dean on B4226 between Cannop and Speech House Hotel, Car Park entrance (GR 613118). Refreshments may be obtained here before we start the walk at 10.30am sharp. Lunch at Royal Spring Inn, Vention, (GR 604168).

Peter and Pauline Barnett
[redacted]

Retirement of Alan Ball

On Saturday 16 November 1996 at a brief ceremony held at the Bricklayers Arms in Chipstead, our retiring Treasurer, Alan Ball, was presented with a framed picture of Otford as a token of thanks from the Kent Group. We felt it to be a suitable memento of his having lived in Otford for many years. He is moving to Devon where we hope he will enjoy his new way of life.

The occasion was organised by the local RA Group with which Alan was closely associated for many years and the Kent Group took the opportunity to tender in person our own appreciation for his hard work and help as Treasurer.

Bryan Clarke