



# LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

## Kent Group

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

# NEWSLETTER

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Number 42

April 1997

## COMMITTEE

Chairman.....PAUL HATCHER [REDACTED]  
Joint Secretaries.....DIANE AND JIM JAMES [REDACTED]  
Treasurer.....NEIL HIGHAM [REDACTED]

## MEMBERS

TREVOR BLAKE [REDACTED] JIM ODDY [REDACTED]  
NEAL O'ROURKE [REDACTED] TOM SINCLAIR [REDACTED]  
KEITH WARMAN [REDACTED]

## KENT GROUP PROGRAMME APRIL TO AUGUST 1997

SUN APR 13

### THIRLEY'S THURNHAM THIRTY K

18 miles approx. Meet at Cobham Manor Riding School near Thurnham, GR815573. 9 a.m. start.  
Pub stop, food available. Leader: Shirley Higgins [REDACTED]

SUN MAY 18

### VARIATIONS ON A MOUNTBATTEN THEME

18 miles approx. Meet 9 a.m at West Street C.P., Wrotham, GR612593. Food at pub on green.  
Leader: Tom Sinclair [REDACTED]

MON JUN 2

### POST-HUNDRED POTTER AND PARLEY

Evening Walk. About 6 miles. Meet 6.45 for 7 p.m start at 'Horse & Groom' C.P. GR596606.  
Join usual pub meet on return. Leader: Tom Sinclair [REDACTED]

SAT JUN 7

### WOODS AND WATER

20 miles approx. Meet at 8.30 a.m. at Bewl Water Little Dam, Rosemary Lane, Flimwell (off A21),  
GR700320. Park at roadside on dam. Pub stop. Leader: Ernie Bishop [REDACTED]

THURS JUN 12

### WINDMILL WALKABOUT

Evening Walk, 6-7 miles. Meet 6.45 for 7.00 p.m. start at Meopham Green on A227, GR640651.  
Leader: David Sheldrake [REDACTED]

MON JUL 7

### PROMENADE FROM AND TO THE PROVENDER

Evening Walk. About 6 miles. Meet 6.45 for 7p.m. start at The Provender, GR853486.  
'Phone Paul Hatcher to order one of MARTIN'S CHILLIS.

SUN JUN 29

### CREAM TEAS WALK

Meet 8.30 a.m. Pluckley Village near Church, GR926454. About 20 miles. Pub stop.  
Leader: Paul Hatcher [REDACTED]

SAT JUL 19

### CROSS CHANNEL CLIFFS CHALLENGE

About 38 miles. Leader Graham Smith [REDACTED] See page 20 for details.

SUN JUL 27

### HIGH WEALD MARSHALS' WALK

For those helping on event. Details: Ernie Bishop [REDACTED]

SUN AUG 10

### HIGH WEALD WALK

28 miles round Tunbridge Wells from Village Hall, High St., Pembury, GR622407, OS map 188  
Start: 8.30 a.m. Runners: 10 a.m. Finish 5.30 p.m. Offers of help to Ernie Bishop [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, A.20, in even-numbered months, from 8 p.m. onwards.

# From the Editor

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*Dear Fellow Kent Group Members,*

The Gatliff, on which there was the usual good turnout from the Kent Group (a few of us did the 20k route), seems a long time ago and it was, by all accounts, a tough one. No report on that event but thanks, as always, to all contributors whose topics include antipodean athleticism, book review, canine capers, musical mud, pyromania in the principality and Tour de Trigs.

Thanks also to Andrew Boulden and family who once again organised the Annual Lunch and the preceding walk and refreshments in December and the 9 mile walk and the buffet lunch which preceded the A.G.M. on 26th January. Some of you will have noticed that Andrew is no longer on the Committee, having retired as the second-longest serving member, but I am pleased to be able to report that he will continue to organise those two functions.

In between those two events there was a walk-out of the new 20-mile route for the Sevenoaks Circular on 29th December, the Night Walk on a bitterly cold Friday 3rd January and the Brecon Beacons weekend - see reports on pages 12 and 13.

To return to the A.G.M. Paul was re-elected Chairman and reported that membership had increased during the year, with a welcome influx from East Kent, and that our three events had been successful: the 20 mile route and the meal at the finish had proved popular on the Sevenoaks Circular and would be repeated; the route of the High Weald Walk, from Wadhurst, had been much praised but more entrants were needed as we only just 'balanced the books' and the Wealden Waters had enough entrants (more welcome but not too many) but marshals had been slow to volunteer their services to Neal O'Rourke.

Paul expressed thanks to all 27 helpers on the Yorkshire Dales Hundred, to Alan Ball, Treasurer up to November and to Neil Higham, Treasurer since then, to David Sheldrake who was retiring after 9 years as Secretary, to Andrew Boulden for organising the afore-mentioned functions and to Pete Barnett (what about Pauline? Ed.) for again arranging the Brecon Beacons weekend.

The longest serving member who retired was Brian Buttifant who has for many years carried out the role of Liaison Officer. There was a longish discussion about that role but the upshot was that the Committee will continue to have power to invite to any meeting any member who could contribute to any topics on the Agenda (e.g. an event) but such members would not be expected to speak on other topics and would not have voting powers.

Paul also drew attention to the White Cliffs Challenge on 18/19 October (Marshals' Walk 5/6/April), thanking those who had sent him designs for the entry form, badge and certificate and encouraging all present to support this NEW EVENT. Paul indicated that because the production costs of the new-style December Newsletter had been higher than usual it **might** become necessary to increase subs, as from January 1998, from £3 to £4.

During the last year new members have been receiving a letter telling them about the Kent Group's activities. A copy of the letter is enclosed by way of a reminder to us all. Also enclosed are the report and results of this year's "Sevenoaks Circular", the Minutes of the 1997 A.G.M. and a list of group equipment and who has what. Please tell Trevor Blake [redacted] if you have any items of group equipment. One more enclosure: a schedule of "Who does What" in relation to our three challenge events.

Tom Sinclair,  
[redacted]

Contributions for August issue by the first  
Monday in July.

## 1996 SHOTLEY PENINSULA CHALLENGE

**O**n the last day of August Brian Buttifant and I journeyed to Holbrook on the Shotley Peninsula for what may have been the last time this event was staged. Organised biennially since 1984 by Brian Adcock on behalf of Essex & Herts LDWA, this year's route was 54 miles, which allowed Brian to delve into the Stour valley as well as figures-of-eight around the peninsula itself.

Familiar faces were met at the start; flowing tea eagerly consumed and one last visit to the Gents' Powder Room meant I was ready for this East Anglian meander. It was a testament to the route planner's skill that so many miles were crammed into so small a map area, although at no time on the walk did I feel that this was to the detriment of scenic variety and enjoyment.

The assembled field, 150 strong from as far away as Devon and Scotland, set off in warm sunshine at 9.30 a.m. on the Saturday but, as usual, I let their tails disappear for five minutes before dragging myself away from yet more tea and setting off in pursuit.

The first field was very arid and conditions were good for quick times for those interested in such things; I just wanted to enjoy the very pleasant scenery of an area relatively new to me. The increasing heat of the morning meant that my white cap and sunglasses were donned straightaway as I strolled towards (and, for a short while, along) the River Stour. After the first roadside checkpoint near Sutton, the route snaked generally westwards to the next, in a barn near Brantham. The selection of refreshments was up to the usual high standard of this Group.

From checkpoint 2, we again descended to the Stour valley and alongside the river, now much narrower, to pass Willy Lott's cottage and Flatford Mill. Willy himself was out but there was a bloke called Constable, I think, trying to flog paintings to unsuspecting tourists at 20 guineas each: far too much.

The walk up-river to Dedham through cattle-grazed meadows was a sheer delight and over all too soon. The High Street of Dedham was no less so, despite humming with visitors like me. More sun-speckled meadows and cool shady tracks led to checkpoint 3 at Langham church. I had been walking with Keith Noble up until here, but he must have slipped away while I was engaged in liquid refreshment. This was the furthest west we went; from Langham we doubled back eastwards for another lazy stretch by the Stour, this time on the opposite bank.

After a couple of miles, the route took me away from the river and along tracks towards East Bergholt,

where I was stung by a bee (not, I should hasten to add, the one that was to inflict the same on me a week later on the Wealden Waters Marshals' Walk). East Bergholt was peaceful and the unusual church, with its even more unusual detached bellringing chamber, provided an interesting diversion as well as being the unmanned checkpoint 4. The swarm of camera-clicking tourists disgorging from a belching pink coach (er sorry, scene-cruiser) did nothing to detract from the setting.

The route then followed fields and woods through very pleasant countryside with flitting butterflies to checkpoints 5 at Bentley and 6 at Tattingstone White Horse. Here the local Fire Service's mobile field canteen was dispensing hot rations, much appreciated at 31 miles. A short stretch by Alton Reservoir (teasels by the path here) was followed by open fields in the evening sunshine to checkpoint 7 on the River Orwell. Well, not exactly on it, but alongside it in a small hamlet called Freston.

The riverbank and woods were taken eastwards to the beauty spot of Pin Mill, where checkpoint 9 was conveniently located in a waterfront shed. Another good choice of refreshments to be feasted upon, and, in the fast-fading light of a wonderful day, I sought out the telephone box to report my position to Shirly who was surprised to learn that I had covered 39 miles in ten and a half hours. There's still life left in the old dog.

Towards the very end of Shotley Peninsula I chanced upon a torchless Keith Noble sauntering along a wide track towards the barn checkpoint (10) at Shotley Hall. Soon we were climbing the levée of the Orwell to follow it to its confluence with the Stour at Shotley Gate. On the far bank the docks of Felixstowe were humming with activity even at this dark hour. There seemed enough lights to satisfy a small town and the whole appeared as if craft from some far-off galaxy had just arrived. A full, milky moon, shrouded in cotton-wool clouds, rose above this apparition to give a memorable and most haunting sight.

We swung westwards across the lock gates at the Marina entrance, shot quickly and uneasily past a throbbing disco pub which was positively vibrating the ground under our sore feet, to reach a waterfront tent called checkpoint 11. My ankle was giving me problems by now and I felt a little queasy, but my thoughtful companion waited for me and we were soon scrambling along the foreshore on a very difficult public footpath. Leaving the riverside, and not too soon this time, our route took us through the sleeping Erbarton, after which we actually used (in the opposite direction) 200 yards of a track we had followed six miles previously, although this was not easy to realise in the starlit early hours.

The final checkpoint, 12, was in the farmworkers' canteen at Harkstead Hall Farm, and very welcoming it was too with cheery marshals and delicious rice and fruit. We then aimed towards the Stour yet again before stumbling along a narrow path with a boggy stream alongside just waiting to envelop tired walkers. A short road section led us back to the comforts of the finish at Holbrook Village Hall, which we reached at 2.30 a.m. I believe Brian Buttifant finished within the next hour.

It was a shame that no report was published but Brian Adcock and his loyal troops put on a first-class event and I hope that Essex & Herts Group can hold it again in the future. It is one of the longest walks I have ever done - I started in August and finished in September!

Keith Warman.

## Auckland Marathon

Jackie and I arrived in New Zealand two weeks before the race, giving me time to acclimatize to the time zone and finish my final training for my first road marathon and Jackie some time with her parents.

Having previously only run one 10 mile race and one half marathon I was unsure that tapering down my running programme in the final week before the race was a good idea. However I did what was recommended in the Runners' World training plan that I had been following except that I ran a couple of extra miles each day just in case it was wrong. Two days before the event we drove down to register and after doing so we spoke to one of the event organisers who offered to drive us round part of the course. (Maybe he thought I was the guy from Manchester who was hoping to break the world record for the most marathons run.)

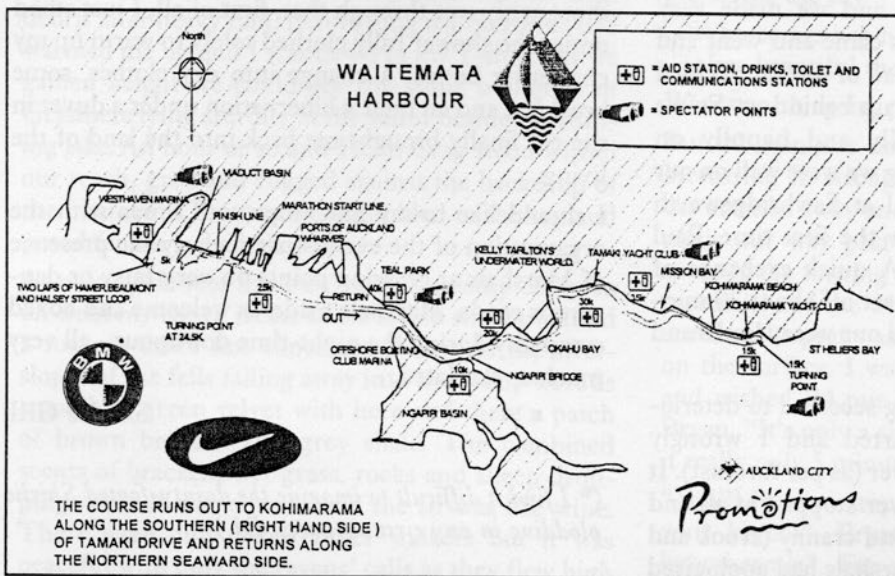
The night before the race it started to rain. We spent

the evening watching TV and on the news was a report of two prostitutes who had been murdered in the "red light" area of the city - not the sort of story we paid much attention to. What I didn't know was that the prostitutes had been seen talking to a man with a Union Jack draped over his shoulder shortly before the murders. I had had the idea of turning the union flag into a running shirt for the event which Jackie had done for me with the aid of scissors and a sewing machine.

On the morning of the race it was still raining hard. All the competitors were called to line up just before 7 a.m. and then we were off. The first part of the route was 5 km. around the dock area, which has been used for the Ironman Triathlon, and then back past the start line and on along Tamaki Drive (the road to the bays and marinas which the residents of Auckland have on their doorstep) on the first part of a double loop as we started heading away from downtown Auckland.

"Come on Great Britain, Come on the man from K' Road", I heard from the crowd. I understood the GB bit but the man from K' Road was beyond me until a local runner came up alongside me and said, "I know what you were doing last night". I said I didn't know what he was talking about, so he told me about the man captured on the closed circuit TV talking to one of the prostitutes just before the murders the previous evening. This conversation took place as we passed the first police car on the route and I began to think wearing the Union Jack was a big mistake because every police car I passed made me wonder if they would pull me out of the race.

As I continued around the route the wind got stronger and when I took a drink at the third drinks station and tried to take a sip from it on the run most of it went up my nose. (I normally use a runner's bottle, which I was glad I had with me). A marshal at this station who was handing out wet sponges offered to buy my shirt.



Sketch map of the Harbour at Waitemata, provided by the writer.

Just past this station the route turned and we headed back towards the city with 15 km. gone and it was still raining. One hour after the start of the marathon a half marathon with some 1300 runners got under way. I was about half way back to downtown Auckland when a voice cried out, "It's the man from K' Road. I felt as if most of the runners looked over and said, "Yes, that's him", as they passed by on the other side of the carriageway.

Approaching the start line again we turned on the second loop of Tamaki Drive. I soon reached and passed the back-marking car and runners of the half marathon who were walking. The organisers had cyclists on the route keeping people to the right so as to let the wheelchairs and faster runners through. I was weaving my way through the slower runners and, once past, I moved over and I must admit to taking my eyes off the road ahead and falling over a sign on the roadside saying "Caution - Runners".

Picking myself up and checking that I had only cuts on one leg and a finger I continued on towards the turning point and back towards the finish. The same Marshal at the drinks station was still after my shirt.

It was nice to turn and head back as we got out of the wind which had been a lot stronger on the second loop than on the first. I passed a couple of runners suffering from cramp and the runner to whom I had been speaking around the dockland area and didn't see him again.

As I arrived at the last drinks station another runner asked how far it was to the finish and was told about 5 km. I took my last drink and started to pick up my pace and think about crossing the line. The closer I got to the finish the greater the number of spectators became. A few hundred metres from the line I felt someone coming up behind me and some people in the crowd calling out for her to pass me. I was having none of that and from somewhere found the energy to sprint for the finish line and cross under the time clock as directed by a marshal who was keeping marathon and half-marathon runners separate; then down the tunnel to receive my medal and an energy bar. It was all over - 3 hours, 42 minutes 9 seconds.

Kevin Puttock

## "...AND THERE LET US WALLOW IN GLORIOUS MUD!"

**M**y first attempt at the Three Forests Way divides neatly into two separate parts in my tired brain. The first part - DRY; the second part - WET. Sod's law prevailed and, of course, the WET part was (i) in the dark; (ii) unrelenting; (iii) at peak tiredness stage and (iv) along the muddiest sections anyway!

The day started well. Keith Warman and I left Gilwell Park Scout Centre at 9.10 a.m. having decided to let the main field forge ahead so that we could plod\* along at our own pace. Conditions overhead and underfoot were excellent and we made very good time. Cheery checkpoints came and went and we soon learned of a group ahead of us that decided on a little diversion and ended up behind us. So we marched steadily, purposefully and happily on towards our goal. By late evening we were well on our way and enjoyed our hot meal at Sawbridgeworth Checkpoint where we met, for the first time, Paul Hatcher and Kevin Puttock. A quick exchange of greetings followed before they set off about 20 minutes ahead of us while we rested our weary limbs and enjoyed a hot pasta meal.

It was after this that everything seemed to deteriorate somewhat. The rain started and I wrongly thought it would be just a shower (as per forecast). It was a very long shower! It never stopped at all and seemed to invade every nook and cranny (crook and nanny??!!). During the day Marshals had apologised for the lack of mud but, oh boy, there was no need

for apologies now! In fact, sometimes we could not even see the mud - it was well submerged under lakes of water. There was no choice but to wade through secretly hoping that no very deep holes lurked unseen!

We trudged on and, as daylight dawned, finally reached our destination - in fact we did a sort of shuffle-type run up the driveway to try and complete in under 22 hours - we made it with three minutes to spare!

The hot shower was utter bliss - I was so cold and thoroughly wet through that, first of all, I just stood under the shower fully clothed solely to warm up my chattering bones. A change into dry clothes, some breakfast and an hour's hibernation under a duvet in the car finally brought me back into the land of the living.

I should like to say how impressed I was with the organisation of the event - particularly the presence of Marshals at crossing points on very busy or dangerous roads. Marshals made us welcome and oozed sympathy during the night-time downpour - all very much appreciated.

Shirley Gill

(\* I find it difficult to imagine the dainty-footed Shirley plodding in any circumstances. Ed.)

# Autumn in Grasmere

The loveliest spot that man hath ever known, Wordsworth said of Grasmere in the Lake District and who am I to deny it?! We often visit there for a few days surrendering once again to its magic.

That Monday the forecast was for a bright morning with brief showers developing in the afternoon and the cloud base at 2,000 feet. Sensibly then, we decided on a short excursion to Helm Crag at 1,200 feet returning to the valley in the early afternoon. Nevertheless our rucksacs carried wet weather gear as well as maps, camera, binoculars, picnic and, of course, that bible of the Lakes, Wainwright. Leaving behind the village, where the coach trips were arriving for their daily ritual of following in Wordsworth's footsteps, we started to climb gently up the small, stone-walled lane which led towards the hills.

There were patches of blue in the sky and the mountains stood out against the drifting clouds. Here and there we passed stone cottages and houses, gardens bright with late summer and early autumn flowers. Silver birches, willows and sycamores were already showing autumn colours and casting crunchy leaves on to the lane. We passed, on the left, the path to Easedale Tarn. Finally, as the lane became a track, we came to our turn off. Straight ahead was the path to Far Easedale but we took a small rocky path to the right which led to Helm Crag.

Soon we were climbing steeply, my breath coming in ragged gasps as I negotiated rocks and stones in the pathway, stopping now and then to 'admire the view'. In front of us we saw glimpses of a young man, clutching a spade and ascending at a run. It appeared he was clearing out gullies choked with debris after heavy rain. Before long my exertions had warmed me up and I was down to my T-shirt. As we gained height we could see the stone buildings of Grasmere lying sturdily in the valley beside the shining lake. An hour or so and Helm Crag stood within our reach, grey and rugged against the backdrop of the mountains. In turn we scrambled to the top and posed for the inevitable photo.

At over 1,000 feet the wind was decidedly chilly so on went my fleece jacket as we found shelter behind a rock to drink hot chocolate. Below us the near-slopes of the fells falling away into the valley were as smooth as green velvet with here and there a patch of brown bracken and grey shale. The combined scents of bracken, wet grass, rocks and sheep droppings were in our nostrils and the air was like wine. There were only a few other walkers but it was peaceful with only the ravens' calls as they flew high across the valley; and the sounds of the sheep, their

lambs almost indistinguishable in size from the adults at this time of year.

It was time to turn back - or was it? Before us was the ridge leading past Gibson's Knot to Calf Crag with a long walk back through Far Easedale. It beckoned irresistibly. We'd scrambled out from behind our rock to look anxiously at the sky. Dark clouds overhung the high mountain tops but there was a gleam of light and a blue patch over Grasmere and the remaining clouds didn't look too threatening. Our decision was easily made. It was two miles along the ridge to Calf Crag and no mists obscured the views. As we climbed another few hundred feet mountain after mountain appeared all around us receding into the distance: the near ones green and rocky, the further ones dark against the grey sky. As John Ruskin wrote: "Mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery". We tramped silently along, Bryan leading the way and I following: both absorbing the atmosphere in our own ways.

Presently we were near the summit of Calf Crag which rose up sheer before us. It was time for lunch. We found a flattish rock apiece and sat just as drizzle started to come down. We put on our kagools before contentedly munching our picnic. Our friends from earlier in the walk, whom we had passed as they lunched, exchanged a few words with us as they went on their way. One of them, we'd discovered, came from Darenth, just a mile or so from where we live.

We could see either side of the ridge. Far below us was Far Easedale with a silver stream curling its way down the valley collecting more water as it went. Over the other side we glimpsed Easedale Tarn between the rocks and beneath it the waterfall of Sourmilk Gill frothed and rushed down the rocks to the valley. Looking the other way a rainbow was clinging to the side of one of the fells and then curving across the sky.

"Who comes not hither ne'er shall know  
How beautiful the world below....."

Wordsworth again, putting my thoughts into words. But the rain was now falling steadily and the wind increasing in strength as we rose, hastily brushing the crumbs away and putting on our rucksacs. As we made our way past Calf Crag and along the path towards the turning to Far Easedale the rain became torrential and the wind cold and boisterous. Beneath our feet the peat was squelchy and pools of water lay on the surface. I was becoming cold as well as wet and wished I'd put on my waterproof trousers like Bryan. "It's only a shower" I'd said at the time - was it really only 5 minutes ago?

"You'll have to stop and put on your fleece under your kagool", Bryan told me, "You'll be getting hypothermia". For a few minutes I trudged along hoping it would stop, but now hailstones were

bouncing around us so hastily I whipped off my rucksack, dug out gloves and fleece jacket and shook off my soaking kagool. Bryan held it while I quickly sorted myself out. That was much better. True my trousers were wringing wet and the water was dripping inside the tongue of my boots so my feet were in puddles inside but my top half was warm now and life was bearable.

"Four and a half miles to a cup of tea", I thought rather dismally to myself at this point. Oh, why didn't we turn back?

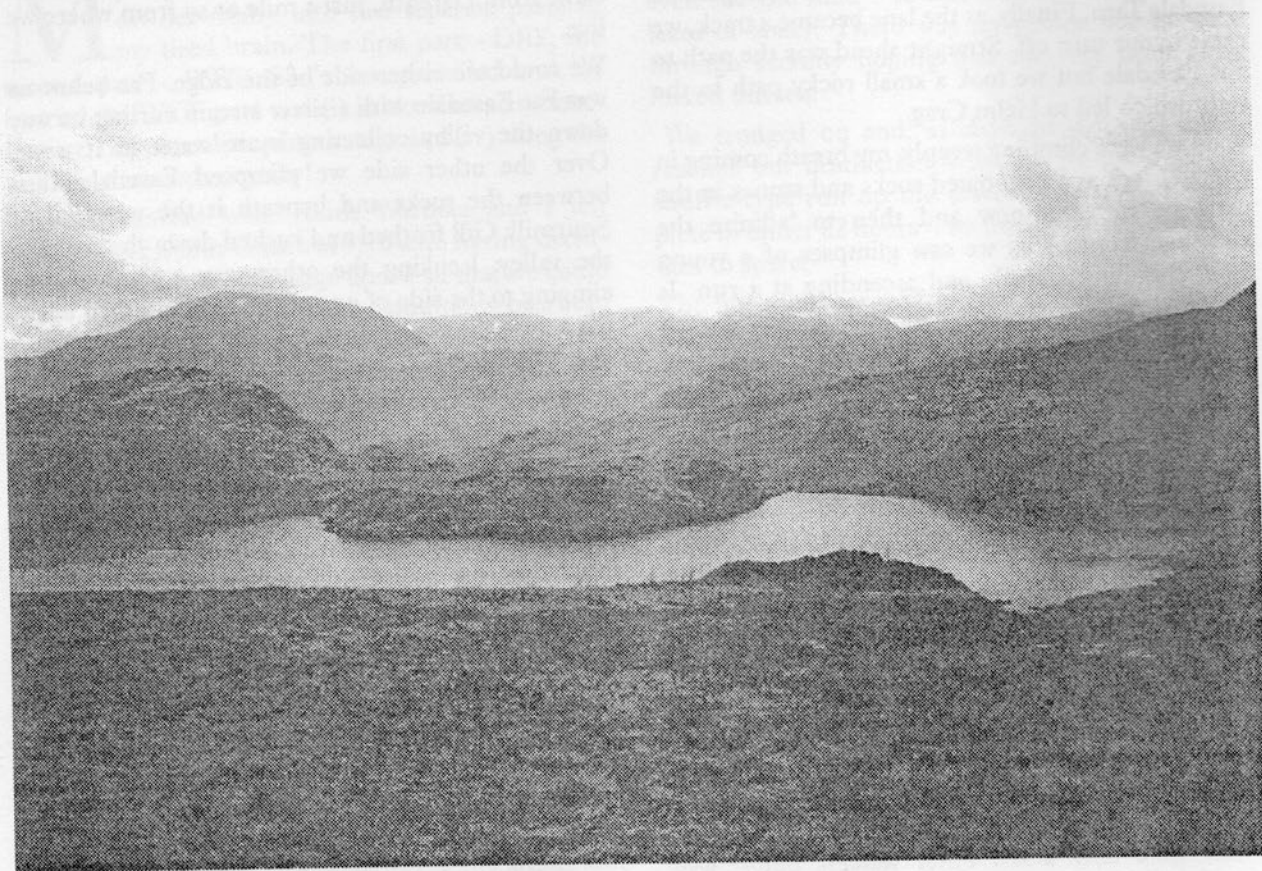
At last, however, we turned to go downhill and soon were out of the worst of the wind. Presently the rain too had died away to a steady trickle and I was able once again to enjoy my surroundings. Far Easedale is a beautiful valley and the Bridle Path going along it used to be Packhorse Trail. It was easy to imagine pedlars trudging along with their wares, farmers herding sheep to market and travellers making for the next valley. Not for them the protection of modern waterproof clothing. They would have been soaked to the skin and frozen too. Only a swig of ale would create some sort of warmth in their bones, for vacuum flasks weren't invented. The rocky path twisted and turned, sometimes alongside the stream, sometimes high above it. The stream broadened as it chased down. It was pure and clear as it rushed over

the rocks. Wizen hawthorn and rowan trees, covered in red berries, leant away from the wind.

Presently we were back to the small lane and a path leading off it had a sign saying: "Permissive route through woods, past Wordsworth Memorial. Walkers Teas". That sounded good to us and we gladly diverted! The Memorial was in Latin and our joint ability in that direction failed to provide a translation so we continued in the direction of 'Walkers Teas'. A notice on the door said "Please remove boots and ring bell or walk in", so we did and came into an elegant hallway. Despite our damp and somewhat tousled appearance the proprietor greeted us affably and directed us to the warm, comfortably over-furnished lounge where we sat in floral armchairs, drank from bone china cups and ate home-made cakes. We managed, with an effort of will, not to fall asleep and soon retraced our footsteps back to our small hotel in the centre of Grasmere.

The friendly telephonist greeted us with "It's been a lovely dry day for you, hasn't it?" No, we didn't crown her with the wet boots which we had removed preparatory to putting in the drying room. We politely said "No, it hasn't, we've been drenched!", and told her our tale.

Pat Clarke.



*ANGLE, not Easedale Tarn and April not Autumn, but the spirit is right.*

## BOOK REVIEW

By Way of Beachy Head, Joyce Tombs, Praxis Books 1996. ISBN 0-9528420-0-9. Softback A5. 210 pages including sketches and sketch maps. Available from Praxis Books, "Sheridan", Broomers Hill Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex RH10 2DU, price £6.00.

The author subtitles her book "The story of a long walk" and a long walk it is, being over 1,000 miles in total. This book is a clear and meticulous account of her walk from Beachy Head to Newcastleton, Scotland, and, in the following year, from Newcastleton to Cape Wrath.

Joyce tells the reader how the walk was conceived, planned and executed in a thoroughly readable manner enlivened with stories of her encounters with people along the way (Three Kent Group members get mentioned by name).

The book is well produced and soundly bound to cope with many readers. The proof-reading failed on a few occasions, but no criticism can be made of the content.

This book can be recommended to all those with an interest in walking, not necessarily for those who like long daily distances but for all the adventure in walking along new paths.

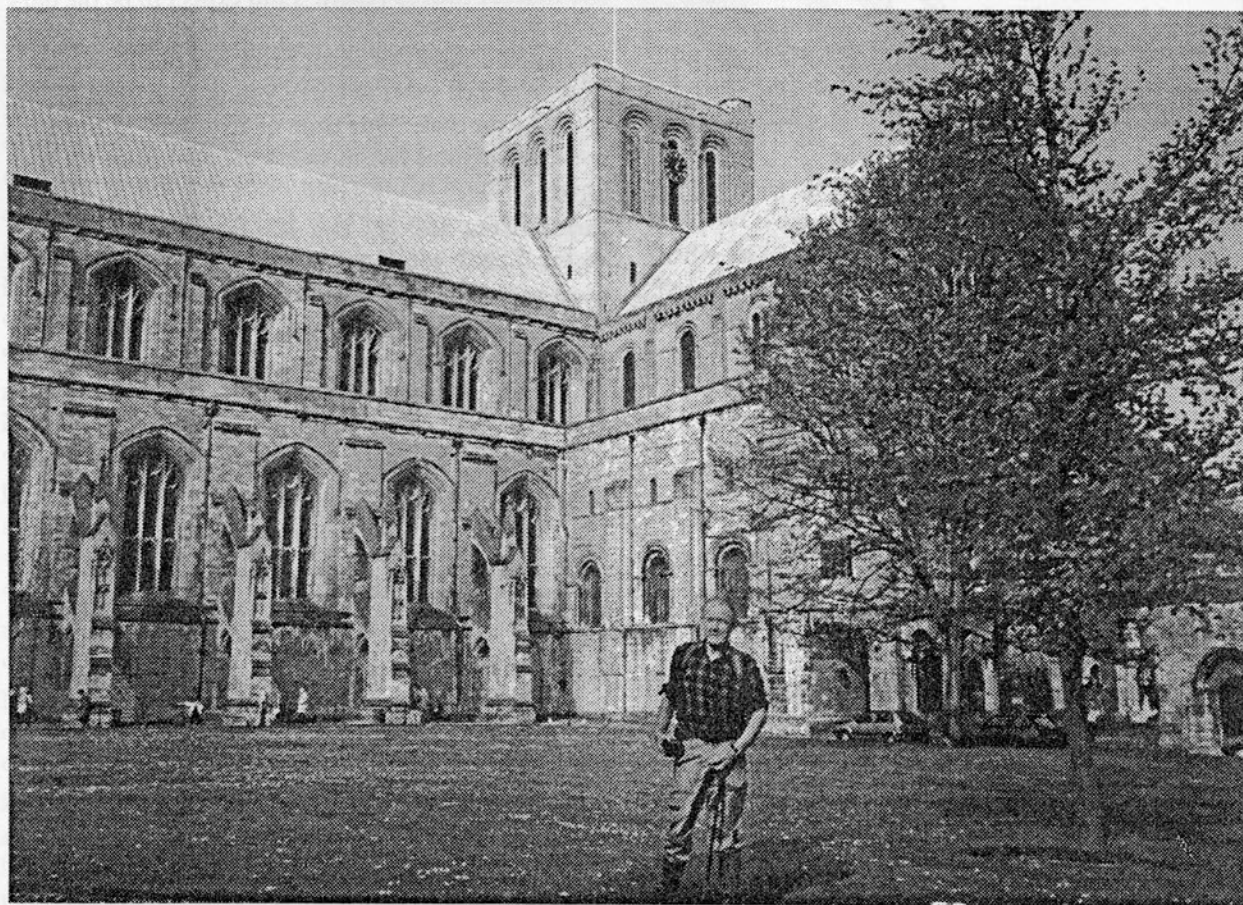
Bryan Clarke.

PS. I have, since writing this, seen a review in "another place"!

## OBITUARY PETER WATSON

It was with a real sense of shock that we all heard of the quite unexpected death of Peter Watson with whom a number of us had been walking so very recently. As a keen member both of the White Cliffs group of the Ramblers' Association and the LDWA his enthusiasm for walking was infectious and both his pace and his achievement on challenge walks quite remarkable. His quiet, gentle reticence made one feel all the more privileged when gaining his friendship and he was an excellent walking companion - a good listener, always having interesting conversation to impart and showing genuine consideration for us all. Peter was a real gentle man and must assuredly have been an excellent doctor.

Both the White Cliffs Ramblers and the LDWA were strongly represented at Barham Crematorium on a crisp but brilliantly sunny day in November. In saying our farewells we all knew how much richer we had become through knowing him.



*Winchester Cathedral, near the start of the Downsman Hundred but taken at the finish of the Three Castles Walk (Windsor, Odiham, Winchester).*

## Prize for Pam Prince and Proof that Perseverance Pays

**D**o any Kent Group readers remember the story about the Tour de Trigs? It was a good account by Ann Beeching, in December 1991, and she called it "A View from the Back". Ann told the story very well, about how our team was disqualified because Kathy didn't have the proper leather boots, and so Ann and I plodded on in Arctic conditions with ad hoc team members and finished. It took us 25 hours 46 minutes - so much for the "Touring Bats". Each of us had a little fur bat as a memento. I still have mine, I wonder if Kathy and Ann still have theirs?

Since then I have walked the Tour de Trigs several times and have always finished but never with my team intact - it has been a chapter of disasters! Following that first disqualification I was asked by Noelene Cummins to form a team and I decided another all-ladies team would be good. I 'phoned Renate Romer but she declined and gave me her husband, Hugh. As you may know Hugh is a good walker and navigator and Noelene Cummins has won the mixed team trophy on many occasions. When our team, LDWA Friends, set out it was looking good but poor Noelene was later taken off in an ambulance, suffering from hypothermia. Hugh and I joined up with others and finished in 19 Hours 27 mins. but that doesn't really count without a full team..

The third attempt, by an Isle of Wight team called "The Caulkheads" (a traditional name for IOW people who used to caulk the joints in the boats when shipbuilding was in its heyday in Southampton and Cowes) was also doomed. One of my Caulkheads was suffering from the after effects of 'flu and anything like that soon finds you out.

The fourth attempt also had an unhappy ending. I went along with two super ladies from Stafford. They were both fit, they had even asked me, and we called ourselves "The Golden Girls". Jean Fuller sprained her ankle. She was a nurse and was off work with problems for some time afterwards. I really did begin to wonder if I was putting a jinx on this event!

Dave and I are members of Norfolk and Suffolk as well as the Kent and Wessex groups (I could tell you how this came about but that's another story). Chris Chorley and I had both finished without our teams in 1995 and after breakfasting together I had said to him 'if you are fool enough to have me, I will always be in a team'. So it was that I had a phone call from Norfolk way. Our team was to be called 'Jill Green does it at last'. That team never even started - Shame! A reshuffle took place. Ann Beeching, Ann

Sayer and Roger Moss were a team. Ann Beeching underwent an eye operation and rightly decided it was not wise to do the Tour de Trigs. Meanwhile several other Norfolk and Suffolk people were forming teams so I was given to Ann Sayer to replace Ann Beeching. I don't know how Ann felt about this because she knew my dreadful track record! She called us the Nightjars. Jill, Ann, Roger - very good. Next we got news that Roger Moss had heart problems. He was told not to do anything energetic until he had an ECG. I think we all agree that the Tour de Trigs is somewhat energetic and it was just a week before the event. Ann and I went round the Gatliff looking for people "who did it in boots". I have often been with Pam Prince but, as far as I know, she has always had trainers on. However Ann S. had been on holiday\* with Pam so she knew that Pam was indeed the proud owner of a good pair of leather boots. Pam agreed to be a Nightjar. So, on 7th December 1996 there I was going through that kit-check again.

Thank you Pam. We all did it. Pam was wonderful. It has to be said that about three quarters of the way round she did turn to me and say "Jill, don't ever ask me to do this again". As we were successful I see no reason to subject her to this particular adventure again. Pam went home with a trophy and we were the fastest ladies team. I did expect to be the oldest to finish because we had a total age of 175 years but when I read the small print it's the FASTEST team over 120 years so three young men aged 34, 41 and 47 won that. Our time of 23 hours 32 minutes was certainly not fast but we were the oldest team to finish.

Roger Moss has got the all-clear to be energetic again. Thank you, Ann and Pam for my congratulations card "Jill Green has done it as a team at last". I shall keep that with my certificate.

*\* For the record, Ann Beeching was also on the same holiday - see Shirley Higgins' report in the last issue - and has asked me to clarify that Ann S. was the one who shared a room with Pam and Shirley and helped them to festoon it with dripping clothes. Ed.*



*Pam Prince still looking smug about her Tour de Trigs Trophy (also shown) nearly two months later.*

# A Walk in Wonderland

It is not widely known that Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, otherwise known as Lewis Carroll author of the "Alice" books, was a founder member of the LDWA. At the time, however, long distance walking was considered even more eccentric than nowadays, so this fine gentleman was forced to conceal his passion for the sport under the veil of mathematical puzzles. Here is one such example, dating back to 1880 (just about when Pete Barnett got his first pair of goatskin trainers). I present it to you as a festive conundrum, to occupy the brain cells between the Queen's Christmas Broadcast and this year's showing of 'The Wizard of Oz'. Answers on a postcard, please....

**"Goblin, lead them up and down!"**

The ruddy glow of sunset was already fading into the sombre shadows of night, when two travellers might have been observed swiftly (at a pace of six miles in the hour) descending the rugged side of a mountain; the younger bounding from crag to crag with the agility of a fawn, while his companion, whose aged limbs seemed ill at ease in the heavy chain armour habitually worn by tourists in that district, toiled on painfully at his side.

As is always the case under such circumstances, the younger knight was the first to break the silence. "A goodly pace, I trow!" he exclaimed. "We sped not thus in the ascent!"

"Goodly indeed!" the other echoed with a groan. "We clomb it but at three miles in the hour."

"And on the dead level our pace is what?" the younger suggested; for he was weak in statistics and left all such details to his aged companion.

"Four miles in the hour," the other wearily replied. "Not an ounce more," he added, with that love of metaphor so common in old age, "and not a farthing less!"

"'Twas three hours past high noon when we left our hostelry," the young man said musingly. "We shall scarce be back by supper-time. Perchance mine host will roundly deny us all food!"

"He will chide our tardy return," was the grave reply, "and such a rebuke will be meet."

"A brave conceit!" cried the other, with a merry laugh. "And should we bid him bring us yet another course, I trow his answer will be tart!"

"We shall but get our desserts," sighed the elder knight, who had never seen a joke in his life, and was somewhat displeased at his companion's untimely levity. "Twill be nine of the clock," he added in an undertone, "by the time we regain our hostelry. Full many a mile shall we have plodded this day!"

"How many? How many?" cried the eager youth, ever athirst for knowledge.

The old man was silent.

"Tell me," he answered, after a moment's thought, "what time it was when we stood together on yonder peak. Not exact to the minute!" he added hastily, reading a protest in the young man's face. "Let thy guess be within one poor half-hour of the mark, 'tis all I ask of thy mother's son! And I will tell thee, true to the last inch, how far we shall have trudged betwixt three and nine of the clock."

A groan was the young man's only reply; while his convulsed features and the deep wrinkles that chased each other across his manly brow, revealed the abyss of arithmetical agony into which one chance question had plunged him.

Chris Barnett

*(This article reached me just too late for inclusion in the December issue: perhaps the early stages of manning the finish on the Downsman Hundred would be a good time to 'occupy the brain cells'. Tom S).*



## SEVENOAKS CIRCULAR - WALKOUT OF TWENTY MILE ROUTE - 29.12.96

On the Sunday after Christmas I rose with a very lazy lark and decided to stroll westwards along the Pilgrims' Way to meet those gallant souls who had met Brian B. at 8 a.m. in Sevenoaks for the start of this social walk. Leaving home about 11.45 a.m. I had only gone about 100 yards when I spotted some familiar figures at the top of the alleyway which leads to the side entrance of the "George & Dragon" where Geoff and Ann had been told to expect us. A little 'local influence' soon saw us all piling through the aforesaid side entrance, ordering food and drinks and warming ourselves by the log fire BEFORE 12 noon.

A few moments later Brian B. joined us! I wondered whether some people had been so keen to walk off the excesses of the festive season that they had set a fast pace but Jan O'Rourke, one of the leading group, had been checking the route description so I was relieved to find that it seemed straightforward to follow. Having settled the bill and my wife and daughter down to a slightly later lunch I popped home to fetch my day sack only to see, on emerging, Maurice and Peter Faircloth disappearing round the corner. Probably due to my own seasonal excesses I had a job to catch them and Brian B and Ivan W and by the time I did the field was already beginning to string out.

About 3 miles into the walk I lent Peter my copy of the Route Description but he did not seem to appreciate this attempt to continue his education out of term time! A bush stop a little later found me struggling to catch the tail-enders and I was pleased to see

kind Ivan waiting for me at the top of Raspit Hill. We walked companionably along the ridge through the woods, down to and along the road, across the Golf Course to Godden Green and thence into Knole Park and up the steepish path to the Car Park.

There we found most people were at various stages of changing boots and clothes, drinking from flasks, piling gear into cars so I had not been quite as sluggish as I thought and my lift home, bless her, was still there.

Tom Sinclair

## One Person's View of a Night Walk

Looking into my local one bitterly cold January evening (I nearly got frostbite in the 5 yards from my front door to the 'Rose & Crown') I found it strewn with an uncustomary array of rucksacks and very necessary special gear for the 7 people who were about to set out with Ivan W. I enjoyed a sociable half-hour over a drink with Jim Oddy, Brian B., Dave Sheldrake, Frank Hewson, Ian Cox and the aforesaid Ivan W. before watching them and two Scouting visitors from Kemsing don several layers of clothing and their rucksacks and set off in a westerly direction towards the Pilgrims' Way. Pleading night blindness and several kinds of cold feet I turned eastwards and then up some not very steep steps to bed.

Dave Sheldrake later told me that he had got warm on the up slopes and that the refreshment pauses, including one in the bus shelter at Ightham, had been brief so as not to lose much-needed body heat. All 8 survived the intense cold - well done!

Tom S.



*This photo is of Ightham bus shelter and was taken on the 1995 Marshals' Walk of the Sevenoaks 20 and is thus vaguely relevant to both the above reports.*

## BRECON BEACONS WEEKEND 17 - 19 JANUARY 1997

**T**ogether with four other 'first-timers' I joined the Kent group's annual weekend - the first day's walk setting off in the Forest of Dean on Friday morning. Despite travel delays there were ten of us on this initial walk; another nine were to join us at the Danywenallt Centre during the evening. At 10.30 a.m. the weather did not look promising but, as forecast, the skies were to clear and by noon we were able to shed our waterproofs, not to be needed again for the duration of the weekend. As a loosener we were treated to a very enjoyable 10 mile walk - interrupted, of course, by the obligatory lunch stop which was most welcome - although some mutterings were heard at the lack of custard to go with the spotted dick or jam roly poly! However, the beer was good.

We arrived in plenty of time at the Danywenallt Centre where the full complement of 19 gathered for a thoroughly satisfying buffet meal to prepare us (together with a huge breakfast the following morning) for Saturday's more arduous venture into the hills. On this we were joined by three visitors but with the after effects of the recent 'flu epidemic the number of walkers was reduced to sixteen. It was therefore decided that the usual 'easy' walk would be abandoned (in the end 5 of the remaining 6 went for a 4 or 5 mile stroll before picnic lunch at the Centre, Ed.) leaving an 'elite' group of seven to undertake an 18 mile walk and a second party of nine, including me, for a quite demanding 16 miler. The weather treated us very kindly and both groups enjoyed a full day's walk with very good views. Of course the hard

men (and woman) arrived back earlier than the softies - notwithstanding the difference in distance - and managed to look very smug about it all.

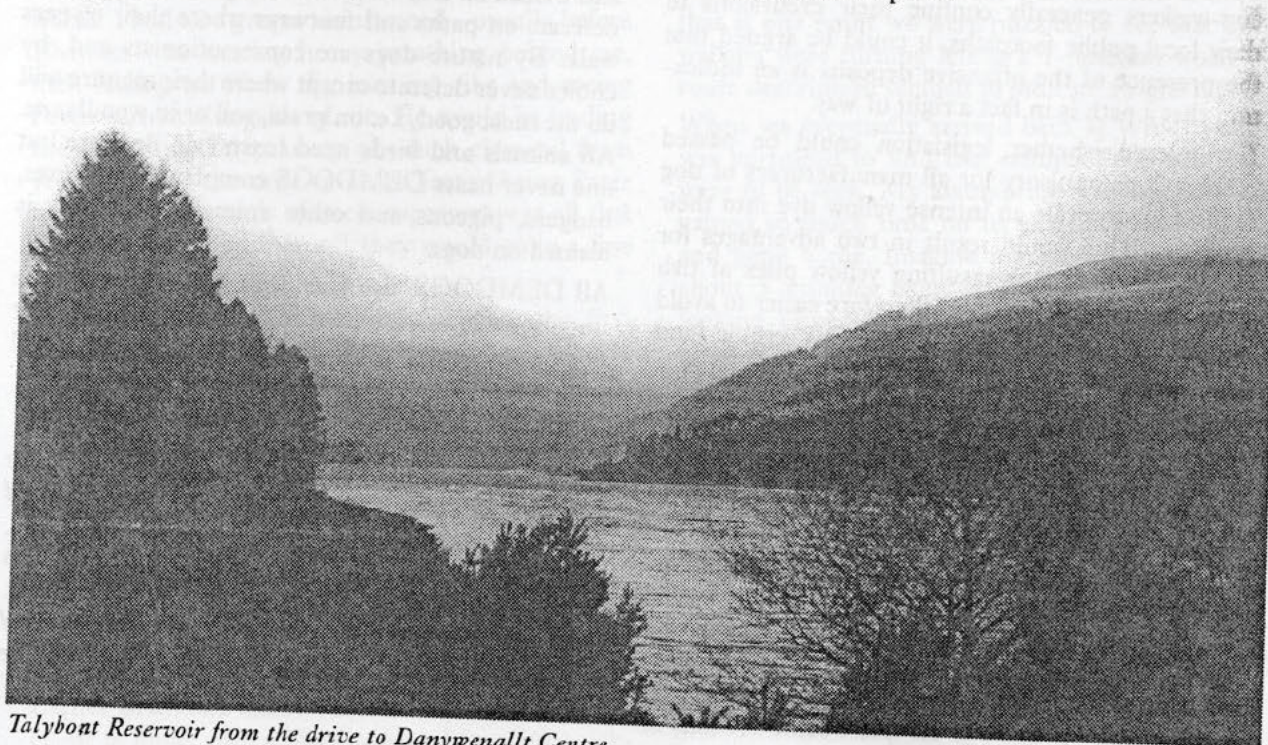
The day was completed with an extremely good evening meal, after which a few took off for the local pub, but most decided to stay at home with an adequate supply of 'bring your own' wine and beer and indulge in some reminiscent chat - a fire under the control of an extremely efficient leading stoker adding to the sense of comfort and pleasure.

On Sunday a party of 18 (including one visitor) set off for a short walk, about nine miles, allowing the unfortunates who had to go back for Monday morning work to return to the Centre for tea and cakes. A leisurely afternoon was spent in preparation for departure to the Coach and Horses where the remaining eleven of the party rounded off the weekend with a really lovely meal. There was just a shade of disappointment at a shortage of crab cocktail and the Duck à l'Orange was off - in the best traditions of Fawlty Towers, but the alternatives were readily accepted. I must say that the meal was not fully appreciated by your correspondent as I was driving!

In conclusion, may I express my sincere thanks, and I am sure all on the weekend will join me, to the organisers and walk leaders of this annual event. The booking, I understand, has already been made for 1998\* at the same venue and I, for one, will hope to be under starter's orders for it. It really was an exceptionally enjoyable weekend and tremendous value for money. Thank you all.

Peter Groundsell.

\* 16-18 January. Contact Peter Barnett [redacted] to reserve a place.



*Talybont Reservoir from the drive to Danywenallt Centre.*

# Putting One's Foot In It

Laurie Lowe

*This is the second in a very occasional series of doggy tales. For the first see Newsletter no. 9, December 1985.*

"As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning" - to quote another Laurie - I found myself striding along in bright sunny weather. All was well with the world, or at least with my small part of it, when suddenly my foot slipped forward as my weight came down on it. My initial response was one of surprise as there was no mud around and the path had a good, firm surface. A visual inspection, which was swiftly followed by an olfactory sensation, identified the problem: I had stepped in a pile of dog tish. I had not taken the caution needed when walking a footpath which approaches an area of habitation. Experience shows that the tish level increases rapidly as one nears a village and finds oneself on a dog-walkers' path. It can be a veritable minefield of canine deposits.

We have RUPPs - Roads Used as Public Paths and BOATs - Byways open to All Traffic. I suggest a new category to be known as FUCTs - Footpaths Used as Canine Toilets. These could be identified by a special waymark symbol (all suggestions to the Editor, please).

As I continued on my way, now accompanied by that all-too-familiar pervasive odour, I got to thinking about this problem. It is very unlikely that the situation will change for the better, so perhaps we should try to turn this fact of life to the walker's benefit. As dog-walkers generally confine their excursions to their local public footpaths, it could be argued that the presence of the offensive deposits is an indication that a path is in fact a right of way.

I wondered whether legislation could be passed making it compulsory for all manufacturers of dog food to incorporate an intense yellow dye into their products. This would result in two advantages for the walker. First, the resulting yellow piles of tish would be highly visible and therefore easier to avoid and, second, they would act as highly visible (and organic) waymarks in their own right. Thus a stranger in the area would be reassured that he/she was treading a public right of way. I speculated on the possibility of setting up a lobby group under the acronym CACCCY - Campaign Advocating Canine Crap Coloured Yellow.

My thoughts strayed further into the realms of fantasy. What if we were to incorporate radium salts into dog food? The deposits would then glow in the dark! What a boon on overnight events! My observations on the frequency of the piles of tish suggest that it may be possible to complete some sections of

an overnight walk without having to squint at map or route description by the light of a flickering torch. Just follow the glowing piles! But what is this? A possible snag? Radio-active substances in dog food could cause deformities in the off-spring of breeding dogs. But let us think positive, here we could have a source of yet more bizarre variations in the dog world which may be accepted and even eventually win prizes at Crufts.

"Yes", I thought, "I am on to something here". Then suddenly my foot skidded sideways and I realised that I had not noticed that I was now approaching the next village and was once again on a FUCT!!

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## DEMDOGS

There can be little doubt that DOGS are one of God's greatest gifts to mankind. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that HE caused them to be named after HIMSELF, merely reversing the letters, whilst HE caused man to be named only by reversing HIS wife's name NAM.

Dogs are never happier than when serving man by herding sheep, guiding the blind, taking brandy to lost mountaineers, guarding homes, locating drugs, finding buried persons after buildings collapse etc., etc. In return for a bowl of water and one meal a day a dog will give a lifetime of love and faithful service.

DEMDOGS hate dogs and dogs, being extremely sensitive animals, are aware of this and dislike DEMDOGS. Demdogs agitate for all dogs to be muzzled and walked on leads and then complain because dogs defecate on paths and footways where their owners walk. By nature dogs are conservationists and, by choice never defecate except where their manure will do the most good, i.e. on grass, soil or in woodlands. All animals and birds need to and do defecate but one never hears DEMDOGS complain about foxes, badgers, pigeons and other animals - all mess is blamed on dogs.

All DEMDOGS also fear dogs and it may not be unreasonable to suggest that their complaints about dogs are due to this fear rather than to the actual activities of the dogs. Woof, Woof!

Poppy Dunton

*N.B. Readers should be aware that 'Poppy' Dunton is so mild-mannered that she has, on occasion been allowed out with the "Wednesday Wrinklies", (Laurie, Jean, Shirley and me). It should also be noted that the photo overleaf is only relevant because it contains a dog. Beyond the dog and the people (Howard, Jenny and Gemma and our friends Peter and Edith Duff) are the Mountains of Mourne. Ed.*



## Punchbowl Marathon

February 1997

**H**aving completed the Punchbowl Marathon more times than most people have had hot blisters, I had become a bit blasé about this annual ritual which takes place in deepest Surrey.

At the venue in Witley there seemed to be no reason why it would be any different this year. I had grown accustomed to setting off with the mass of walkers at the early start time, experiencing some congestion at the early stiles and then finding that the field soon thinned out as we got on to the good, wide, Surrey tracks. I had also grown accustomed - usually before 10 miles - to hearing heavy breathing behind me, then feeling an elbow dig into my ribs and seeing Peter Barnett alongside of me. He would be leading the 'A' team, the make-up of which changed from year to year - the only constant factor being Peter himself. A few words of encouragement was all that I could expect and then off they would go in a fine spray of mud and sweat.

This year it was a bit different! Before the first checkpoint the sound of heavy breathing proved to be from Andrew Boulden and Gordon Facer only. "Peter", I was told, "had a late start and was somewhere behind". A short while later a nudge in the ribs made me feel more at ease and announced the arrival of Peter amongst our small group comprised of Brian Haigh, Shirley Higgins, Brian Russell and myself. Peter seemed happy to progress at our more moderate speed and we all stayed together, walking comfortably and chatting, until we reached my favourite section of the route - Kettlebury Ridge. Earlier Brian had announced that he had been exercising at home with a Nordic skier. My mind quick-

ly conjured up a vision of him doing P.E. in the presence of a tall, blond, buxom, Scandinavian female, before he added - by way of explanation - that a Nordic Skier is some form of mechanical exercise machine.

Anyway, it had obviously done him some good and, as Peter was now firing on all cylinders, they began to pull away along the ridge. I tried to stay with them but by the time we reached the checkpoint at Tilford I realised that I had blown it. I suggested to Brian that he and Peter should push on together and that we lesser mortals should follow at our own pace. The remaining part of the walk was uneventful except that at one point we were puzzled to see that some walkers were turning left at a T-junction when the route description seemed to indicate a right turn.

When we eventually arrived back at Witley Hall, I was surprised to find that neither Peter nor Brian were to be seen. My assumption was that they had gained so much time on us that they had finished and gone home. Imagine my surprise then, when, about 5 minutes later, they appeared at the door looking rather sheepish. They had also made an error at the infamous T-junction and had needed to complete a long road section to get back on route.

There must be a moral here - but I am not sure what it is! Perhaps something about taking too much exercise with a Nordic Skier can damage one's ability to read a route description accurately!

*Again, the photo overleaf is of limited relevance. It shows, l to r, Laurie Lowe, Brian Haigh, Ron Roweth and myself, and was taken by Shirley Higgins when the five of us did the Three Castles Walk in three stages a few years ago. Ed*



## New Forest Marathon

Jean, Laurie and I had pre-entered for the New Forest Marathon as entries on the day were not allowed this year. The forecast for Sunday, February 16th was for wet and windy weather, so we wondered if it was worth going all that way to get soaked, but eventually we made the decision to go. We left at 4.45 a.m. and stopped for breakfast on the way.

The walk starts from Burley Youth Hostel where conditions are very cramped. There is no route description for this event. Entrants are given grid references for the checkpoints and have to mark the suggested route on their own maps from a few master copies displayed outside the hostel. This is difficult to achieve as there is a cluster of people round each map and no room to spread out your own Leisure Map.

It had been calm and dry during the drive down and we hoped the rain would keep away for a while but we had walked less than a mile when we were forced to stop and struggle into our waterproof jackets. Overall the weather wasn't quite as bad as the forecast had predicted, but we did have plenty of wind and rain. Outdoor Leisure Maps are not the easiest things to deal with in these circumstances!

There was a lot of mud and surface water on the tracks. Jean took a nose dive into a large puddle and one of my trainers came off in a boggy patch. At least the watery mud in the New Forest is less tiring than the glutinous variety we experience in Kent!

In spite of the less-than-ideal conditions we all enjoyed the walk. Apart from a long stretch beside the busy A.31 the route was very pleasant, taking us across open heathland and through wooded areas, known in the New Forest as Inclosures. We felt it had been well worth the long journey to take part in a relaxed event, organised by friendly people, in attractive scenery.

Shirley Higgins.

## FUTURE EVENTS

### Marshals' Downsman Hundred 3rd, 4th and 5th May

We have been asked to provide the food at the finish on this occasion as well as on the main event - should we be doing something about our image? - and Trevor Blake has kindly/rashly volunteered to make the arrangements. PLEASE 'phone Trevor on [REDACTED] SOON so that you can do a shift that suits you and he can sleep peacefully, secure in the knowledge that he will have enough willing hands on the day/night.

### The Downsman Hundred 24th, 25th and 26th May

We will be serving food and drinks at the finish in Eastbourne from 9 a.m. on Sunday 25th to 11 a.m. on Monday 26th. 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.

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 Willington School. At the time of writing we are not sure what arrangements the organising Committee has made/will make for transport from Eastbourne to the start in Winchester but if anyone could be available early (say, 7 a.m.) on Saturday 24th May with a car to ferry our members doing the event to Winchester please let me know so that I can put people in touch with one another.

Paul Hatcher [REDACTED]

### Summer High Weald Walk (Tunbridge Wells Circular) - 10th August

Forms now available at monthly pub meets or from Ernie Bishop [REDACTED] who will welcome your help in making this 28 mile event more widely known and, of course, in manning checkpoints on the day or on the Marshals' Walk on 29th July.

## HALF A WYE WANDER

**T**he familiar figure of Brian Buttifant coming up the path to our kitchen at 7.59 a.m. announced to me that it was time to drive eastwards for Paul's Wye Wander. Not having fully recovered from the inflamed foot which had severely impeded my movement in the Brecon Beacons I had decided, after consulting Paul about the practicalities, to do just the morning part of the walk and Brian had been happy to go along with that scheme.

Twelve of us joined Paul (does that make a butcher's dozen?) and set off past Wye Church, where Brian later drew my attention to a modern, metal sculpture. Ahead we could see the crown cut in the turf to reveal the white chalk beneath. After a steepish climb, which revealed my lack of fitness only too clearly, and contouring close to the top of the ridge Paul took us on an undulating course which led to Crundale Church. I noticed, as I had on previous visits (including one on a Wednesday 10 days before), that there was no habitation in the immediate vicinity of the church and wondered again if there had been a village there before the Black Death in the mid-14th Century.

(There are a number of such churches in Kent and I am planning a visit to one of them, Dode, on a social walk in May.)

The route continued to undulate and the upward gradients, including one through a field of turnips (?) with several, variously-clad scarecrows, kept finding me out. I knew we were close to a good 15th Century Inn called the Compasses but it was too early to be thinking of refreshment and, in any case,

Paul's route did not take us past it. During a section of woodland tracks we had a "coffee break" after which, having gone ahead to take a photograph, I was instructed to take the lead. I managed this so successfully that Kevin (Yes, Kevin) remarked to Paul that I was going too fast as our small group was getting strung out. I am sure this was in part due to Bernard keeping closely behind me throughout but I am also sure it did me a lot of good.

Approaching the outskirts of Shalmford Street Paul told me that I had proved a point and not a moment too soon for just then we reached tarmac which, as you may know, is not my favourite walking surface. Over the Stour and along its banks briefly before skirting around Chartham and across a very sticky ploughed field to reach the "Chapter House" pub, where the food and service was very good and the landlord so accommodating that those who had brought their own food could eat it openly. One could wish more landlords had such a common-sense approach. The forecast rain had held off throughout the morning but as we emerged from the pub it started in earnest and Brian and I were glad to be toddling down to the station for the train back to Wye followed by the drive home to hot baths.

Paul told me later that the remaining 9 miles (the total distance was 18 not 16 as printed in the programme) had been wet, mostly on the North Downs Way and cheerfully accomplished by the remaining eleven. Thanks, Paul, for organising a very good walk.

Tom S.



*This photo was taken when Paul was leading another walk some years ago, but he hasn't changed that much.*

## White Cliffs Challenge Walk 100K (62.5 miles). 18th/19th October

Firstly many thanks to Alan Lawson and Keith Warman who submitted designs for a badge, a certificate and a cover for the entry form, as reproduced below. The entry form is now available and all members are asked to give wide publicity to this NEW EVENT by taking forms when visiting other parts of the country and talking about it to any who might be willing to listen.

An appeal for marshals will, no doubt, appear in the next issue but why not make a note of the dates in your diary NOW and then telephone Neal O'Rourke [redacted] to volunteer?

See page 23 for Shirley's Cryptic Crossword: closing date for entries 30th June. Last date for contributions Monday 7th July. Tom

## THE WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE

SATURDAY 18th and SUNDAY 19th OCTOBER 1997

A 100Km walk in celebration of the  
25th Anniversary of the LDWA: 1972—1997



Crown  
Cliffs  
Castle  
Cathedral  
Crown

*Start at the beautiful village of Wye in Kent, 'neath the shadow of the white Crown carved in the chalk of the North Downs and head towards the famous White Cliffs on the coast at Folkestone. A bracing clifftop walk brings you to Dover and beyond before needing to turn your back on the coast and head inland. Look out for Dover Castle before setting off into the Kent countryside towards Canterbury and its cathedral. From here the last leg of the White Cliffs Challenge brings you back past the Crown to Wye.*



THE LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

**KENT GROUP**



## "A JAY FLEW INTO MY FIG TREE..."

"A Jay flew into my Fig Tree" may sound like the title of a Gerald Durrell book but it actually happened as I was getting up on Friday 7th March to prepare for my northward journey with Keith and Shirlie to the A.G.M. in Keswick. The drive was uneventful, though tiring for Keith whose ankle tendons are proving slow to heal, except for the excellent sustenance provided by Shirlie which we enjoyed while pausing in Stamford and Bowes and a brace of nesting (?) curlews overhead.

Tea and Jenny's fruit cake accompanied my unpacking before I embarked on a publicity drive for the White Cliffs Challenge for which, judging from the interest, we should get a good few entries. At dinner we were joined by the President, Sir John Johnson, whom we found to be a very agreeable companion.

Saturday morning saw the arrival of Paul and Mary who joined Shirlie on the coach to Grasmere for the 16 mile "B" walk and Ron and Ann who sensibly avoided the tarmac part of the "A" walk (18 miles) by driving to a convenient point to join the others. A little later I joined the "C" walk on a leisurely stroll by Derwent Water which before long turned into a stiffish climb to the top of Walla Crag at 1,234 feet. A gradual descent via a viewpoint near Ashness Falls brought us back to the lakeside and soon to the Mary Mount Hotel. There the efficient Westmorland and North Lancs. Group's Secretary, Caroline Wyles, had organised soup and sandwiches for those who had ordered them in advance.

The afternoon walk, after crossing a boggy area on planks (choo-choo train for the Falconers' 7 year-old daughter) was to be along the lake's edge but four of us had spotted a contouring path about 300 feet above the lake and, with the leaders' permission, struck up hill and enjoyed wonderful views across the lake with Skiddaw and Blencathra ahead. We reached the hotel at 4 o'clock (in good time for an early bath) and I found Keith in good spirits having spent the day being driven round various parts of the Lake District by Bernie Pearson and his wife, Jean.

Ron and Ann were chatting with Keith when I came down and gave a glowing report of their walk as did Shirlie when she came back a little later - not surprising as the weather was perfect. The population at our table in the lounge ebbed and flowed (the Guinness just flowed) and I found myself going into dinner with Barbara Blatchford, Margaret Steer and her daughter Judith and sitting with them and the couple from the Midlands with whom I had walked in the afternoon. Good Roast Lamb washed down by Côtes du Rhone made for a certain somnolence during a very good talk and slide show about mountain rescue, particularly the use of dogs in that valu-

able work but I revived in time for Ken Falconer's well-organised Barn Dance. There I found the steps of "Strip the Willow" and suchlike dances soon came back to me under the expert tuition of Shirlie Gill while Paul and Mary Hatcher as well as Molly Groundsell were a credit to the Kent Group.

You must be wondering, gentle reader, "what about the meeting?", but that didn't happen until the Sunday morning at 10 o'clock. Bernie Pearson stood down as Chairman after 3 years, as laid down in the constitution, and said he was willing to serve on the Committee. Roger Michell was elected Chairman and later expressed his intention of visiting all the groups during the year so I offered to send him a copy of this Newsletter so that he would have our programme. Les Maple was re-elected as Secretary and Tony Willey as Treasurer while Steve Clarke resigned as "Strider" Editor and was replaced by Richard Bradbury, whom some of you may have encountered on the Bucks Bumble. There were nine nominations for the seven vacancies: these did not include Derek Magnall who had resigned as Publicity Officer but did include Steve Clarke who was elected along with Janet Chapman, Tim Glenn (who had given up the job of Local Groups Secretary), Graham Hemsley, Geoff Parsons (Membership Secretary for 1 more year only), Brian Smith and Avril Stapleton. The April issue of "Strider" should tell us who will be responsible for which duties but there will obviously be some changes.

There were interesting discussions about the constitution, which is currently being reviewed by the Committee with guidance from London Solicitors (don't hold your breath for news!) and about the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations recently introduced by the Health & Safety Executive and their effects on our events and on the LDWA's public liability insurance policy. I hope to give an up-to-date report in the next issue but meantime it looks as if we shall need to spell out more fully in our entry forms that each individual enters at his/her own risk. The fact that the National constitution is to be changed does not necessarily mean any change in the constitution of Local Groups and it appears that our present one will meet any criteria likely to be laid down by the National Committee.

The Treasurer reported an increase in some costs - travelling expenses and the production of "Strider" - and advised that it might become necessary to raise the subscription, which had remained at £6.50 p.a. for 5 years, from January, 1999.

Next Year's A.G.M. is to be held in Llanwrtyd Wells, Wales, on 13/14/15 March which might mean a change in the date of the 1998 "Sevenoaks Circular". The meeting closed with an excellent keynote speech from Sir John Johnson whose mellifluous tones and well-chosen words were in sharp contrast

to the "independent" member who had demanded an apology (for what misdemeanour was unclear) and had received a sharp set-down from "the floor".

Tom Sinclair.

## CHANNEL CLIFFS CHALLENGE

The Channel Cliffs Challenge - a 38.5 mile social walk between Dover and Folkestone and Boulogne and Calais - is on Saturday, July 19. The walk involves making your own booking for a round trip on Hoverspeed's Folkestone-Boulogne SeaCat and Calais-Dover hovercraft services, so please do so as quickly as possible. The walk is geared to catching the 8am. SeaCat service from Folkestone which is likely to become fully booked before July 19.

**IF YOU DON'T HAVE A TICKET BEFORE YOU GO YOU ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THE WALK BEYOND FOLKESTONE.**

**DON'T FORGET YOUR PASSPORT**

**MONEY** - you can get money changed into francs at the Folkestone SeaCat Terminal (or at Wrotham Post Office, Ed.) but it's advisable to change your money before you go.

**REFRESHMENTS** - either bring your own food for the day or you can make use of the plentiful shops and fast-food outlets on the French side of the Channel. There will NOT be time for a meal in Calais but there will be time for a few bar stops en route.

Contact Graham Smith on [REDACTED] if you have any queries.

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## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We urge all members to come to the A.G.M. but particularly those who haven't tried it before. It is an enjoyable day's socialising with only a couple of hours or so of actual business. There are two different length walks in the morning followed by the meal. During the afternoon the meeting is conducted in a friendly, informal manner.

Pat and Bryan Clarke.

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## Cover illustration

Thanks for this Edition's cover are due to Rev. Denis Sweetman, former Vicar of Eynsford, Farningham and Lullingstone, from whose pen and ink drawing it has been taken, and who sends his blessings to the Kent Group from Northumberland. St. Botolph's, Lullingstone, is passed at about the 9 mile mark on the Sevenoaks Circular (30 mile route). Ed.

## SEVENOAKS OUTCROPS WALK - a very personal memory

**O**n a typical Sunday morning for this time of year (overcast, windy and with rain threatening) a motley crew assembled in One Tree Hill car park. As we greeted one another I was wondering why it was called "One Tree Hill" as we were clearly in a very wooded area with no obvious specimen to give it this title. I was also worrying about the fact that, having climbed a very steep gradient with the car in second gear, I would probably, after a downhill jaunt, soon be required to make such an ascent on foot. However, we set off - with just a shrug and a laugh from our leader when I mentioned this possibility - and soon reached a worthwhile viewpoint with a seat suitably inscribed "One Tree Hill", which a little later in the day we might have been tempted to try out.

Compared with most events in the LDWA calendar this appeared, at 10 miles, to be a leisurely stroll, but with the promise of local points of interest and "lots of incident" so, for someone like me with a childlike, insatiable curiosity and a taste for mystery and exploration of the unknown, it was an invitation not to be missed.

Soon I found myself in familiar territory (in reverse) and realised I was passing the Godden Green Clinic - well known landmark to entrants of the Sevenoaks Circular (not the 1997 route, Ed.) and haunt also of at least one pop star who has used its "drying-out" facilities. As we turned the corner and trekked down the side of the Green my walking companion informed me that her grandparents had once lived in the fine cottage on the far side and she remembered playing there as a child.

As we walked in single file up through some woods, we espied another party ahead on the way down. "Make way for the Scouts" someone cried. At this point I was last in our group and when I encountered the leaders of the approaching group I was astounded to discover they were faces I knew well and loud greetings and expressions of surprise were exchanged. Scout leaders indeed they were, from my home village of Pembury, but accompanied by a YHA group on this occasion. Two more familiar faces were bringing up the rear and strains of that old rhyme "...if you go down in the woods today, you're in for a big surprise..." went through my mind. On reaching the top of the hill we were confronted by a posse of riders with animals all shapes and sizes and I wondered what we would meet next. They soon disappeared down the other side of the hill, however, and we were free to continue along the ridge.

After crossing a road we paused at the edge of woodland while Martyn outlined the history of the Seal Chart murder of 1908, whereby a Major found his

wife shot in the summer house of their garden - a mystery never apparently solved and a disturbing scenario, worthy of an Agatha Christie novel. Food for thought as we descended through the woods close to the tragic event.

After crossing the A.25 (hastily) we came to a National Trust noticeboard with information about Oldbury Camp and Martyn outlined the next part of our journey. After a steep climb to the elevated perimeter we commenced our circuit, standing well aside for a moment to allow four or five enthusiasts on two wheels to take a run at a mud bowl designed to test their expertise and daring. Soon we were offered a dicey scramble down an almost sheer drop to a trackway below or "an easier route for the wimps". After one glance at the former I opted for the latter and found that milder descent exhilarating enough. The two sub-groups joined forces at the bottom and then climbed a bank on the other side, passing a curious waymark sign, which consisted of two carved footprints - a symbol I'd never seen before.

We made our way along the ramparts, following the medieval road, and were later led to a curious oblong of water in a sheltered spot. This stagnant pool had apparently been excavated for swimming in, way back in the 1920's, and still remained although the house it belonged to had long since disappeared. Going on we paused to count the deer in a deer farm (four) and later passed the murky depths of a pond much used in the past by horses needing to quench their thirst on the old Waggon Road. This was fed by a natural spring which had supplied water for the whole camp.

Eventually we came to an outcrop about 20ft. high and were offered the opportunity to test our rock-climbing skills. Martyn pointed out the most usual route and two agile chaps, with suitably long arms and legs, successfully hauled themselves to the top in a very short space of time. A third contender (female) bravely had a go but was defeated by the dimensions of the task.

The lunchtime stop was scheduled for "the Caves" - that would make a change from a pub, I thought, imagining our Iron Age ancestors gnawing bones in a huge rocky cavern. Such romantic images were soon quashed when the caves turned out to be all of 2ft. 6ins. high and I discovered that exploring them entailed crawling on hands and knees along a sandy-bottomed crevice for several minutes before emerging a few feet away on the other side of the tree. A few determined souls applied themselves to this excursion whilst I settled down on a narrow ledge to attend to the more demanding urges of hunger. As we gazed at the view ahead Martyn explained how evidence had been found in the valley of a settlement 2,000 years old but the only signs of human habitation I could see were the smoke rising lazily from a

bonfire and what appeared to be a cement works afar off - but then suddenly a sharper eye spotted the white caterpillar spectacle of Eurostar tracking across in the middle distance.

As we retraced our steps back from this rocky perch we turned our backs on the big house on the hill once inhabited by a former Governor of the Bank of England as well as by the more famous (rather than infamous) film star, Elizabeth Taylor. We rambled on, climbing through the peaceful Fishponds Woods, up Raspit Hill and on to Ightham Mote. From here we encountered Wilmot Cottage and the secrets of the Conoco oil-drilling venture.

Now nearing the end of the walk we arrived at another viewpoint, this time offering a vista which was breathtaking - both figuratively and literally as the wind, now almost gale force, whipped around our ears. We paused briefly to take this in before plunging down a bank, weaving our way over, under and along fallen trees - presumably a legacy of the Great Hurricane of 1987.

A brief final trot past the White Rocks outcrop (the highest we had seen yet but now not safe to climb) brought us to the last hurdle of the day - a bank to scramble up. No problem, I thought, as we queued up one behind the other. I wondered what the hold-up was until it was my turn and I came to the bit where the angle seemed so close to the vertical that the soft mud gave way beneath my feet until, left with only an urgent knee-hold, I gladly grasped the stick held out (so scornfully refused only a minute earlier) and gratefully, if ignominiously, was pulled to the top. My thanks to the strong arms on the other end! And so, with gloves covered in prickly burrs, we thus regained One Tree Hill car park and ended our tour of the Sevenoaks outcrops.

My thanks to Martyn for an unusual and entertaining day.

Jennifer Branson.

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## FOUNDERS' FOOTPATHS

This is the name of a 25 mile route in Surrey recently devised by Tony Youngs of Surrey Group in memory of the LDWA's founders, Alan Blatchford and Chris Steer.

The route links the National Trust downland sites of Blatchford Down and Steer's Field, Pitch Hill on the Greensand Ridge (with the toposcope dedicated to the founders), Peaslake (where Alan Blatchford's famous advertisement for the Tanner's Marathon was spotted by Chris Steer thus providing the meeting of the two men and the subsequent setting up of

the LDWA) and the Youth Hostel at Tanner's Hatch which was until quite recently an alternative start and finish point to Leatherhead on both the Winter and Summer Tanner's Marathons.

The circular route also visits Friday Street, Farley Heath, Albury and Abinger Hammer and includes sections of both the North Downs and Greensand Ways.

I understand that the London LDWA Group will be staging their first challenge event, to be called "Founders' Jubilee Challenge", based on this route, as their contribution to the Association's 25th Anniversary this year. The date is provisionally set for 26th October 1997 and details will no doubt appear in the August (and perhaps also in the April) "Strider".

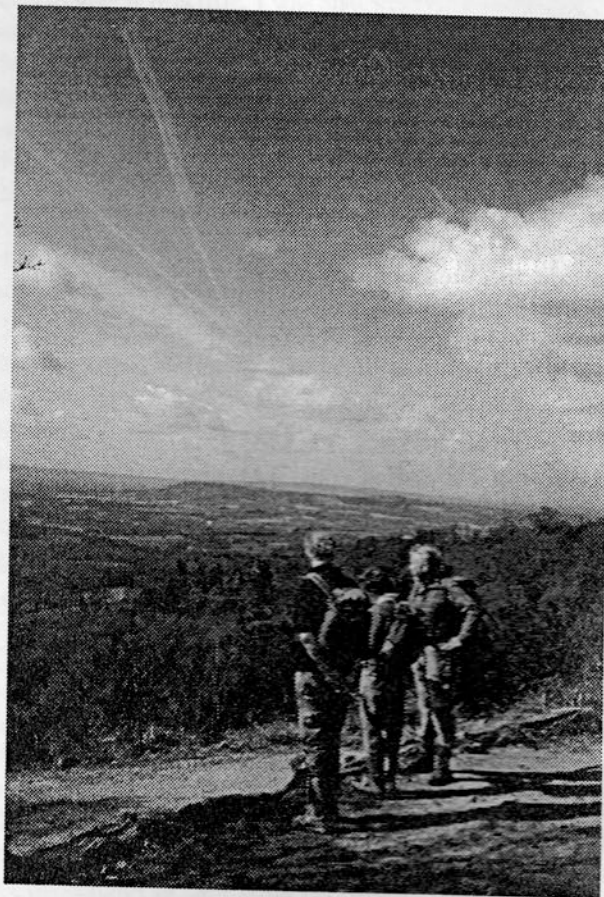
Tony Youngs is also considering Founders Footpaths being made an Anytime Challenge Walk sometime in the future so that the walk may be attempted in your own time, with the possibility of a certificate and a badge being available for purchase.

I am in possession of an outline map and it seems a scenic route amidst Surrey countryside familiar to those who have taken part in the Tanner's Marathons. I hope to be able to enter the event in October and trust that Kent Group members will support London Group's inaugural event to remember those whose enthusiasm and hard work sparked our flourishing Association 25 years ago.

Keith Warman.

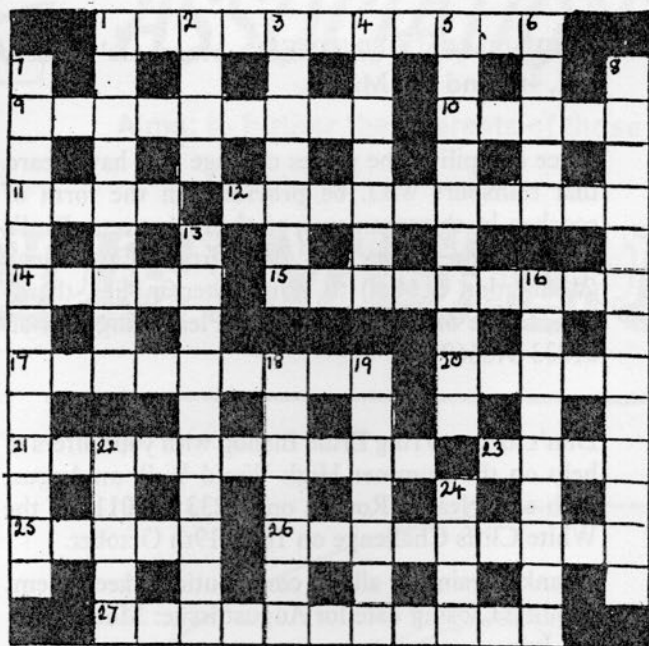
## Kent Group Programme, August to December

Details of social walks will be needed by 12th May (when there is an evening walk) so that they can be included in our programme in the August issue of "Strider".



*Above: View from Pitch Hill near Founders' Toposcope.*

*Below: East Bergholt Church (I think) - see Keith's article on page 4.*



# CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

compiled by

Shirley Higgins

Solutions to the  
compiler by 30th June.

Small prize for first  
correct solution drawn  
from the Thorlo Sock.

## ACROSS

1. On your feet after middle section of route. Amazing! (11)
9. Island pub where you don't have to pay! (9)
10. Drink and exercise to rapidly rejuvenate yourself initially. (5)
11. Points to a junction behind. (4)
12. Extraordinary sight there in the Lake District. (4,6)
14. Girl and boy in the heart of the Dales. (5)
15. Comparatively senseless person. First to enter event perhaps. (6,3)
17. A former stretch. '.... on RD steeply uphill to ....' for example. (2,7)
20. Revolution in icy Cleveland. (5)
21. Forms filled in incorrectly, mix-up is in metres. (10)
23. All this will keep you going. (4)
25. Concerning the countryside in Peru, rally was held. (5)
26. Third across the Channel. (9)
27. Command, it is said, of county golf club. (5,2,4)

## DOWN

1. Has equipment for ice and drifting snow on a northern river. (4,2,3)
2. Examine flower. (4)
3. Turning, or is not turning. (7)
4. Surprisingly he named Ian. (7)
5. Eagerness that is about politician at Nice maybe. (10)
6. Prickly bush may result in blood round top of socks. (5)
7. Two lads circumnavigate route after girl failed to spot FP sign (6,7)
8. Event where you take a winding path, following edges of Mersey, then right and half left. (6,7)
13. Where you could do some floral walks. (4,6)
16. Old hundred with up to date happening. (9)
18. Perturbed and put out - dear tea! (7)
19. Starts play at 27. Drinks no longer available we hear. (4,3)
22. Number 7 might be the last one! (5)
24. Being the French man perhaps. (4)

# STOP PRESS

## *LDWA – the first 25 years*

Keith Chesterton of Surrey Group has been asked by the National Committee to produce a booklet of not more than 100 pages with the above title – or something similar – and he needs our help in compiling stories about groups, people and events.

He is interested in the formation of groups and how they are run, by whom, their programmes, etc. etc. As for events he has specifically mentioned, in a letter which was handed out at the A.G.M., the Peakland, Dartmoor and Chiltern 100s, the Gatliff and the Vectis (I seem to have heard a tale about several Kent Group members crossing to the Isle of Wight very cheaply in an "Age Concern" minibus), amongst others.

Keith particularly asks for information and stories about:

Ernie Bishop, Mike Brown\*, Di Bullard\*, (nee Pegg), Gerri Burgess\*, Alan Castle\*, Steve Clarke, Sue Coles, Tony Cresswell\*, Peter Dyson, Ken Falconer, John Feist, Bob Ford\*, Jill Green, Tom Harding, Frank Hodson, Mac MacArthur, Les Maple, Haydn Morris\*, Bernie Pearson, Keith Pennyfather\*, Geoff Saunders, Ann Sayer and Brian Smith. He does not have addresses or telephone numbers for those marked with an asterisk.

He also asks for people's views from different angles on such controversial subjects as Runners on walking events, taking short-cuts on events, giving preference to experienced people entering 100s, organising official Marshals' walks for 100s.

If you have any material which might be useful write to:

Keith Chesterton, [redacted]

[redacted] send him a fax on

[redacted] or give him a ring on [redacted]

[redacted] If you send material on a floppy disc in a known word processing language, that will make his task easier

Go on, do it NOW. You might even get your name in print!

**DOWNSMAN HUNDRED – Marshals' Walk**  
3rd, 4th and 5th May.

Since compiling the pieces on page 16 I have heard that transport WILL be provided, in the form of coaches, by the organisers, on the main event. Paul's request for offers of lifts from Eastbourne (Willingdon School) to Winchester applies, therefore, to the 3rd May not 24th. Please ring him on [redacted]

Don't forget to ring Ernie Bishop with your offers of help on the Summer High Weald Walk on August 10th and Neal O'Rourke on [redacted] for the White Cliffs Challenge on 18th/19th October.

Thanks, again, for all the contributions: keep them coming! Closing date for August issue: Monday, 7th July.

Tom Sinclair, 28th March 1997.