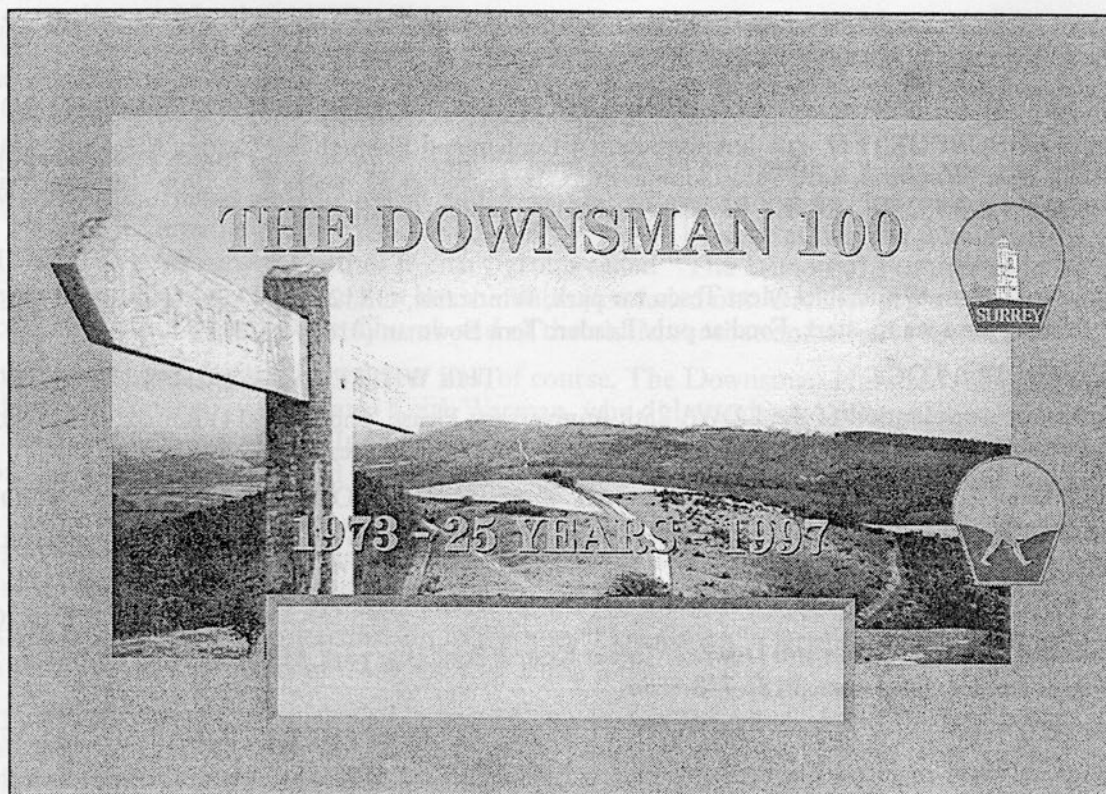




LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION *Kent Group*

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

NEWSLETTER



Number 43

July 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 AUGUST 1997 TO JANUARY 1998

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])

SUN AUG 17

ELHAM VALLEY WALK

20 mile walk in the Elham Valley (the area will be used for the Millennium Hundred). Meet at Ivy House, Stelling Minnis, GR147483, for a 9 a.m. start. Parking on Green opposite house. Pub Lunch. Leader: Liz Keeler ([REDACTED])

SUN SEP 7

A HISTORICAL WANDER

22 miles. Meet Rye market car park, GR919206, off Rope Walk, for 8.30 a.m. start. 50p parking fee on entry. Lunch stop in Hastings. Leader: Neal O'Rourke ([REDACTED])

SUN SEP 21

LESTROIS CHATEAUX (OR FAIRCLOTH'S FOURTH FROLIC)

34 mile **UNSUPPORTED** walk linking Scotney, Bodiam and Sissinghurst Castles. Meet at Cranbrook car park near Windmill, GR776359, for a **PROMPT** 7.30 A.M. start. Pub Stop. Leader: Maurice Faircloth ([REDACTED]). **ONLY** for walkers able to complete the distance.

SUN OCT 5

WANTSUM MILES

25 mile walk from Whitstable. Meet Tesco car park, Whitstable, GR121654, (A299 to second Whitstable roundabout) for a 9 a.m. start. Food at pub. Leader: Tom Bowman ([REDACTED])

SAT/SUN 18/19 OCT

THE WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE WALK

Kent Group's celebration of the LDWA 25th Anniversary. Please 'phone Neal O'Rourke, ([REDACTED]) with your offer of help with marshalling the event if you have not already done so.

SUN NOV 9

TOM'S TRADITIONAL TODDLE

Meet 8.45 a.m. Western Road car park, Borough Green, GR 607573. 18 miles approx. Food at pub. Leader: Tom Sinclair, ([REDACTED])

SUN NOV 23

DARWIN'S DELIGHT

20 mile walk around Keston and Downe. Meet at Keston Ponds car park, GR640419, for a 9.00 a.m. start. Pub stop. Leader: Jim James ([REDACTED])

SUN DEC 7

ANNUAL LUNCH PRECEDED BY OPTIONAL SOCIAL WALK

Application from enclosed. Enquiries to Andrew Boulden ([REDACTED]) to whom the form and cheque should be sent.

FRI JAN 9 1998

INVICTA NIGHT WALK

Approx. 21 miles. Meet at "The Bush", Aylesford, GR 733592, 9.30 p.m. for 10.30 p.m. start. Leader: Ivan Waghorn ([REDACTED])

FRI/SAT/SUN JAN 16/17/18 1998

BRECON BEACONS WEEKEND

Contact Peter Barnett ([REDACTED]) to reserve a place.

SUN JAN 25 1998 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Note the date NOW. Details in next newsletter.

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

Dear Fellow Kent Members,

Early on the morning of Saturday 5th April I was dishing out the April issue to the 28 participants in the Marshals' Walk for the White Cliffs Challenge but none of them seemed to want to read it during the event! Congratulations to the twenty who finished, particularly to those for whom it was their first 100 kilometre walk, and commiserations to the 8 who didn't make it.

At the Horse & Groom on the following Monday I heard the news that Kate Michaela Higham had weighed in at 5lb. 7oz, at 11.30am on 2nd April. Congratulations to Sarah and to Neil who, understandably, was not amongst the entrants for the Marshals' Walk for the White Cliffs Challenge.

Nocturnal mileage, between bed and cot, meant that Neil was apprehensive about the Marshals' Downsman Hundred on the 3rd-5th May (see Brian Russell's comments in 'Letters to the Editor') but he finished (his tenth Hundred, more congratulations!) as did the aforementioned Brian Russell, Don Newman, Martin Fox, Paul Hatcher, Kevin Puttock, Ann Sayer, Andrew Boulden, Peter West-Kelsey and Jill Green. Congratulations to them and to any other Kent Group finishers whose names have not been mentioned.

In between the two Marshals' Walks Shirley led nearly twenty of us on an 18 mile (30k) social walk on a very sunny April day only managing to lose three before she even started (they were late!) and two towards the finish who were soon located. Thanks, Shirley, for an excellent walk with a good pub stop.

Probably because I didn't ask anyone no reports have come in on Shirley's walk or on the Variations on a Mountbatten theme which I led in mid-May. One or two people on that walk and since have asked, "Why Mountbatten?". For those who don't know or have forgotten the Mountbatten walks were an annual event run by a rather military group called "The Legion of Frontiersmen". I don't know what has happened to the Legion but the walks just faded out. On later pages you will find pictures of Ridley Church and Dode Church and of the old Mountbatten badge.

The main event since the last Newsletter was, of course, The Downsman Hundred. Congratulations to all those who finished, particularly Keith Warman, who did wonders to recover from a severe ankle injury and complete his tenth Hundred, and to Jean Dunton, Shirlee Gill, Andrew Keeler, Alan Lawson, Jan O'Rourke and David Sheldrake all of whom completed their first 100 mile walk.

Many thanks to all those who manned the feeding station at the finish. All the participants and the helpers from other checkpoints seemed very appreciative – the one who was heard to say over breakfast that it was his third meal certainly should have been! See Bryan and Pat Clarke's report on p. 8.

Thanks to Reg Chapman for permission to use the "Downsman" Certificate for this issue's cover. Thanks to Paul Hatcher for organising the rota at the finish.

A disappointing response to Shirley's Crossword puzzle. For the solution and the winner of a small prize see pages 10 and 11. Why not have a go at the anagrams on page 11. No prizes, answers are on page 12.

Many thanks for all contributions. Deadline for December issue Monday 3rd November or, at a pinch, Sunday 9th, when there is a group walk.

Tom Sinclair.

WHITE CLIFFS' CHALLENGE

A MARSHAL'S EYE VIEW OF THE MARSHALS' WALK

The week running up to the weekend of the marshals' walk (5/6 April) was more like Summer than Spring, with blue skies and very warm sunshine. The question was, would it last long enough for us to enjoy it? Thankfully it did, although Saturday morning dawned dull and overcast as nearly thirty members set off at their staggered times from Wye public car park, eager to get this inaugural walk under way.

Soon after the start we were walking in view of the crown chalk land mark set in the Downs on our left, and this signalled our first stiff climb of the day to gain the North Downs Way which we were to follow all the way to Dover. With the sun eventually coming out and a very stiff wind egging us on, we passed through some delightful, rolling countryside, interspersed with some very pretty Kentish villages; their gardens bursting with Spring flowers.

This all brought us to C.P.1 at Farthing Common, where the combination of good food, a good view and easy chairs tempted us to stay longer, so reluctantly we dragged ourselves away to continue along the North Downs Way, heading for the next objective - Folkestone.

Lunchtime saw us finally reach the coast, and C.P.2 where we were afforded a splendid view overlooking the Channel Tunnel complex, this being the first time that I'd seen it.

The route now followed its name sake, giving us a delightful roller coaster trip along the top of the cliffs before dropping us very steeply down into Dover. After a brief respite along the promenade it was back on the climb again to the Langdon cliffs and C.P.3, ideally situated overlooking the docks. A much needed rest was taken here, watching the coming and going of the various ferries before reality tapped me on the shoulder and said that we have come out to do a walk today!

The cliff path continued as far as St. Margaret's at Cliffe where we finally left it to head inland towards Canterbury.

There now followed more rural countryside, less hilly than we had passed through previously but equally pleasant, and after passing through the checkpoints at Ripple, Shepherdswell and Patricbourne, we finally entered the Cathedral City of Canterbury, a little after midnight. The streets were pleasantly quiet apart from some local 'late nighters' taking the mickey out of us when they found out what we were doing.

Rejoining the North Downs Way on the outskirts of the city meant that we were finally turning towards

Wye and the last stretch home, and although there were only 13 miles and two C.P.s to go, a veritable sting in the tail lay in wait for us by the name of Denge Wood. This interminable place just went on and on and on...! when was it going to end I kept asking myself? Thanks to Paul we did eventually leave it but I did hear afterwards that a couple of other members went astray. They, like us, won't forget that section in a hurry.

All that was left now was a short distance back to the finish and a damp, very nippy dawn found us, this time walking above the crown before the last descent from the Downs back into Wye and a very well earned rest. We had taken a respectable 21 and 3/4 hours.

Thanks Paul and Ivan (and the others who joined and left us) for your company and leadership and an even greater vote of thanks to all those members who willingly gave of their time and set up their stalls to tempt us with their home made goodies. Without you all this would not have been possible and it all went together to make this marshals' walk, not only very enjoyable, but a great weekend's walking in a very relaxing atmosphere.

Brian Russell



Paul, Ivan and Brian leaving Check Point 2 on White Cliffs Marshals' Walk.

THE KERRY WAY

This was to be the third and final stage in the plan to prepare Jean (Dunton) for the Downsman Hundred. Stage One had been our three consecutive days in March on the White Cliffs Walk - checking the route description in readiness for the Marshals' Walk - an event which Jean completed. Stage Two was 6 days in April on the Dales Way from Menston, near Ilkley, to Bowness.

The Kerry Way, in South West Ireland, is the longest of the Irish Long Distance Paths. It is a route which circumnavigates the Kerry Peninsula over a distance of about 130 miles. We planned to divide this into 8 days of walking. It was decided not to book accommodation in advance but we carried the Kerry Way Accommodation List to help us find rooms at the end of each stage. The one exception was at Gearhameen where there is just one farmhouse offering B & B in an isolated area known as Black Valley: I booked this before leaving England.

Jean, Shirley and I travelled to Holyhead in early May and took the night ferry to Dublin. Onward travel by train had us in Killarney with an afternoon free to explore the small town. A good evening meal in the Flesk Restaurant set us up for the start of the walk the next day. Several people told us that the West of Ireland had recently enjoyed quite a few weeks of warm, dry weather but now they feared that the good spell had ended. They were not entirely correct in their forecast. We had a couple of days of heavy showers interspersed with sunny spells during the early stages of the walk, but as the holiday progressed, the showers became less frequent and the sunny spells longer. However, shorts remained at the bottom of rucksacks until the afternoon of day 8 - mine remained there for the entire trip.

After our brief stay in Killarney, we set off from the official starting point at Flesk Bridge and were soon walking through the Muckcross Estate clad in water-proofs. We deviated slightly from the official route to take in the ornamental gardens of Muckcross House and then we took the tourist route up past the Torc Cascade. Suddenly we had left the tourists behind and we found ourselves in wild, open country. The gently undulating route passed between boulder-strewn hills and occasionally descended into boggy valleys. We met only one other person on the way to the Black Valley - a young walker going in the opposite direction. We had not yet got the hang of Irish maps and had become a bit concerned that we had missed a vital right turn but he was able to confirm that we had not yet reached that point.

Our first day ended at Black Valley, situated under the southern flanks of MacGillycuddy's Reeks. These are the highest Mountains in Ireland and I had allowed an extra day in our itinerary so that we might explore The Reeks if the weather was suitable. Unfortunately the forecast was for more heavy showers and this, plus the fact that we could see snow on the tops, decided us against venturing into what was for us an unknown terrain. Perhaps another time!

So the next morning we set out early to cover the 21 miles to Glenbeigh. This was to be our longest day and progress was slow during the morning with several steep ascents and slippery descents. We spurned the accommodation on offer at The Climbers' Inn in Glencar and pushed on. We were able to make better progress during the late afternoon on forest tracks and minor roads. The final climb to Windy Gap was a slog but we were rewarded with magnificent views over Dingle Bay.

Continued overleaf



Pat and Bryan Clarke walking on the 2,000-mile Appalachian Trail, the Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia USA. The full story of their epic walk appears on page 8.



*View north along
Blackwater Valley from
Kerry Way.*

In the evening we dined in the local hostelry. Like many such places in Ireland, it looked somewhat scruffy from the outside, but inside, the main bar was packed with locals and visitors all enjoying the good atmosphere. At the rear we discovered a nice restaurant where we enjoyed a good meal in the company of a group of very merry East Europeans who seemed to be stragglers from the recently-held Eurovision Song Contest! We managed to settle the big question which had been worrying Shirley - "Is draught cider available in Irish pubs?". The answer seemed to be: "Only in the summer months!" So she settled for bottled cider called "Stag" - which she found to her taste and which was readily available at all subsequent pub-stops!

The third day took us to Cahirciveen. Much of the route was along the line of an old coach road to Kenmare. It seemed incredible that horse-drawn coaches could have negotiated this route which is set high on the hillsides above the modern road which forms the Ring of Kerry tourist route. The scenery was magnificent - mountains to our left and the sparkling waters of Dingle Bay to our right. In the distance the mountains of the Dingle Peninsula invited us to make a return visit to tackle the Dingle Way. The final section of the day's route was through an area of extensive peat digging, where our way between the depressions left by this activity needed our combined waymark-spotting skills. The day was rounded off by a meal in The Shebeen Bar which boasted "Our Irish Coffee is the Best" - and who were we to argue with this claim?

The following day started with a long ridge section - again with spectacular views all around. The undulating route, with steep ascents, sometimes over exposed rock, and tricky descents meant that it took us 5 hours to cover 6 miles. The weather was

still changeable. The ever-changing light on the mountains and the clear atmosphere were wonderful. We were enjoying the walk - the only fault we could find was in the poorly designed ladder-stiles. These needed great care when negotiating them with a heavy pack, due to the large distance between rungs and the lack of a good hand-hold when at the top of the structure,

We reached Waterville by late afternoon and were dragged into a cheap but cheerful B & B. Waterville seemed to consist of one main street which reminded Jean of a scene out of a Western film. She was sure that John Wayne would appear from a bar for a shoot-out with the local villain. We did not meet a gunslinger when we dined in the Lobster Pot Bar later. I experienced a bit of a problem during the night which entailed numerous trips to the non ensuite toilets.

The next morning - after a stop at the chemists to replenish the anti-diarrhoeal supplies - we set out in steadily improving weather for Caherdaniel. We met a group of 5 walkers from N.W. Kent. They were doing day walks with small packs, so we were able to feel a bit superior as we left them behind with cries of "We'll see you in Asda!" The main climb of the day was over Eagles Hill - described as the highest point on the Kerry Way. Once over the col, the descent was on a good grassy track. By the time we reached Caherdaniel I was feeling fairly knackered. My high overnight mileage to and from the loo was beginning to tell! I sat on a low wall and left Jean and Shirley to sort out a B & B. They returned from the 'phone box to announce that we were booked in at the Olde Forge, a mere half-mile along the coast road. It was the longest half-mile I can remember, but we had struck lucky as it turned out.

During the night Shirley succumbed to the bug. Fortunately her room was en-suite so her overnight mileage was not as high as mine had been the previous night. We decided that the extra day which we had in hand should be used as a rest day so we arranged to stay at the Olde Forge for another night. We lazed around in the morning and took a gentle stroll to the nearby beach in the afternoon. It was while we were at this B & B that we came across an 'Old Gaelic Blessing' which seemed to us to be appropriate for walkers:-

May those who love us, love us,
And those who don't love us
May God turn their hearts;
And if he doesn't turn their hearts
May He turn their ankles
So we'll know them by their limping.

Remember this the next time you are at the finish of a Hundred and count your enemies!

We started the seventh day feeling better for the rest and made good progress. I had originally planned an overnight stop at Sneem, an attractive if somewhat touristy village. We were there by 3.30 p.m. so, after a beer and a packet of crisps, we decided to do some extra miles to Tahila Cove. We 'phoned ahead and booked in at the Tahila Cove Country House. This proved to be our most expensive overnight stay. Included in the price was a chambermaid who turned down the sheets while we were at dinner. I wondered what she made of the smelly socks and sweaty clothing draped over the radiators and furniture when she entered the rooms in our absence!

Our next destination was Kenmare. Again a very scenic route but this time with a couple of interesting river crossings via very dilapidated bridges. I was sent over first on the reasonable assumption that if the bridge withstood my weight, then the others would be safe. Later we followed a pleasant tree-shaded path along the edge of Kenmare River, before a lunch break at Pat Spilane's Pub at Templenoe. The final climb over Gortnamullin Hill had us searching for waymarks in the rough, trackless terrain, before dropping down to Kenmare,

The last day saw us climbing to another "Windy Gap" (our third pass of this name.) from which there were more great views of the ever-present Reeks - now free of snow! A couple of miles of descent and we re-joined the outward route from Killarney. On this stretch we met two walkers who were doing the newly-established Irish Coast-to-Coast (Dublin to Valencia Island). They looked very fit but we noticed that they only carried daypacks and it transpired that they had vehicle back-up throughout their walk. By now we were so relaxed and into the casual Irish Way of life that we managed to miss completely the correct route down past

the famous Torc Waterfall. We could hear it but not see it! We found ourselves once more in Muckross National Park and celebrated our return with two pots of tea for three at the tea rooms of Muckross House.

Thus ended a most enjoyable walk. Superb scenery - constantly changing terrain - none of it tedious. The weather was not bad (for South West Ireland) and we agreed that cool, breezy conditions were better than having it too hot. And there are another 12 Irish Long Distance Walks in the book!!

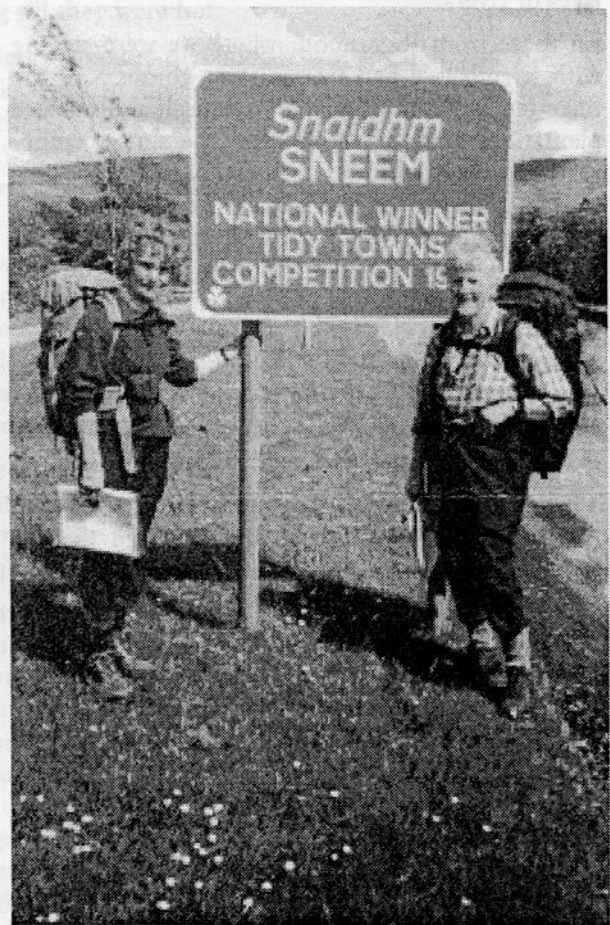
Footnote:

By contrast our return journey to England was something of an epic for three people with a combined age of 188 years - but that's another story!

Sore Footnote:

Jean successfully completed her first Hundred - taking only a few more hours than our return journey from Ireland.

Laurie Lowe



"Scruffy grannies Keep Out"

(NB The Editor is not responsible for the opinion of contributors).

The Appalachian Trail, Virginia

We were fortunate to be able to walk on this famous long distance path in the United States of America last April before it became too hot. On the day the photograph was taken it was Spring with a temperature of around 60°F.

Yes, that really was us on the Appalachian Trail. There we were in Virginia, USA, breathing the fresh, pure, air of the Blue Ridge Range and treading where so many had trodden before. The photo (note the LDWA Kent logo) shows us on part of the 200 yard walk which was all we managed, as our companions were definitely not 'thru-hikers'. In fact a few yards was about their mark! Behind and in front of us the dark hills towered in the background. The path at this point descended to the car park and then ascended again, surrounded by mixed woodland as far as the eye could see. Below us we could see the deserted car park with only the Dodge Caravan we'd arrived in visible, until a pick-up truck arrived and a young man jumped out and greeted us cheerfully as he bounded up the path. He was doing a trial walk before bringing a school group to watch the dawn break from a nearby viewpoint. Far below were more trees and glimpses of lakes or rivers.

En route from Richmond, where we were staying with friends, we had intermittent glimpses of the huge James River. The maize, squash and tobacco plantations were out of sight as the almost empty road was edged by miles of forest. Now and then we caught glimpses of the typical verandah-fronted clapboard houses. Pat's only disappointment was we didn't see anyone rocking in a chair on the verandah, although one did have a rope hammock. We stopped at a view point to look at the long, hazy stretch of the Blue Ridge Mountains. They are the easternmost ridge of the southern Appalachian Mountains covering an area between Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and northern Georgia.

These hills were old when only the native Americans – the Cherokee tribe – lived there a thousand years ago. They were a large and powerful nation, living in square or rectangular bark-covered houses, farming corn, beans and squash. They hunted and fished in their mountain slopes and valleys. They kept dogs as pets. They called the Blue Ridge mountains 'the blue wall' or 'the unending mountains'. When the Europeans came to Virginia there were estimated to be 20,000 to 30,000 Cherokee living there. Theirs is a fascinating history and it is a shame that so much of it is lost in the mists of time.

Before reaching the Appalachian Trail we called in at Monticello where Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the USA, had his private residence.

Sadly his wife died after only 11 years of marriage and out of 6 children he was left with only one daughter. It seems that even wealth didn't help to keep children alive till adulthood in that era. He came from a rich family who ran a big plantation helped by a large slave community. Jefferson didn't believe in slavery but realised that no good could come of giving the slaves freedom with no prospects of keeping themselves or their families. Instead he treated them humanely and trained them to have skills – blacksmithing, carpentry, bricklaying, etc., and made sure that they had enough food and clothes to wear. Monticello looks picturesque and has many domestic innovations showing Jefferson's interest in architecture. He believed passionately in education, was interested in maps and map-making and had many other interests besides politics. Monticello remained his home after his spell as President and his daughter became housekeeper, coming there with her family and staying with him until his death.

We ate lunch at a roadside Tavern which also boasted a Museum. The staff were dressed in 18th Century costume and typical Virginian food was served – fried chicken, tomatoes and black beans, before continuing along the scenic road to find the Appalachian Trail. The sun was shining and it had the warmth of late Spring. Everywhere trees were in leaf and the native flowering Dogwoods, the flowers of which are one of the emblems of Virginia, were covered with white blossom. Purple-flowered Judas trees stood out among the greener vegetation. We didn't see the colourful Cardinal birds, also an emblem of Virginia, until later. Meanwhile American robins (blackbird sized), mocking birds and sightings of other birds, strange to us, kept us happy. It was certainly warmer than New England where we had encountered below freezing temperatures!

Then at last we were on the Appalachian Trail, our feet itching to walk just a little further and see round the next corner. Unfortunately it was not to be on this occasion! One day we would like to go back and arrange some walking on the Trail. Meanwhile if anyone is tempted to see the Appalachian Mountains for themselves or do some walking there, we can vouch for the friendliness of the natives, the long stretches of easy-driving roads, the food and the scenery. We have a book on the Blue Ridge Range which we'll be ready to loan out in about two months time when we've read it! Climate wise we are told that July, August and September can be unbearably hot and humid and the winters very cold and snowy. Personally we would choose April or May though we understand their weather is subject to similar vagaries as ours but probably more extreme!!

Bryan Clarke

Downsman Hundred

24th, 25th and 26th May 1997

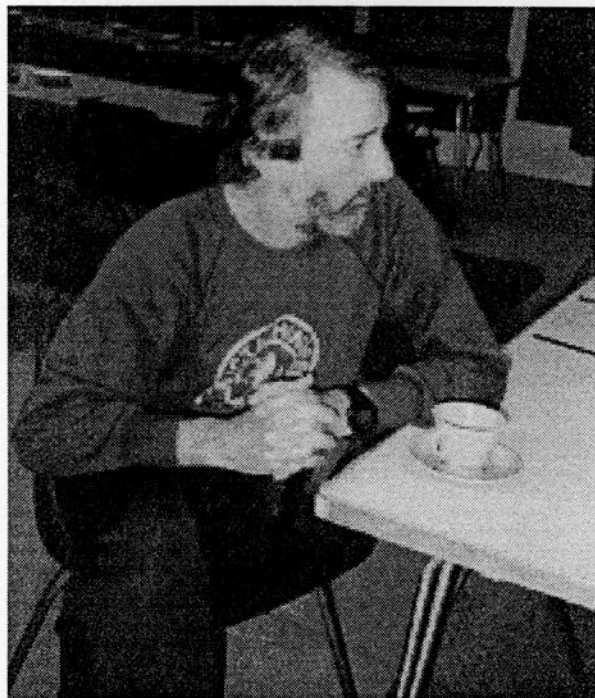
30 Kent Group members completed the 1997 "100"; for six of them it was their first. Congratulations to you all. The 6 first-timers were Jean Dunton, Shirlie Gill, Andrew Keeler, Alan Lawson, Jan O'Rourke and David Sheldrake. Our Shirlie was then seen, after a short sleep, helping out with a tea towel in the kitchen.

The following is an extract from a letter from Janet Chapman:- "A big thank you to you for organising and hosting such an excellent Checkpoint. Please extend our thanks to your wonderful Kent team and supporters who worked so tirelessly through the day and night to feed what must have seemed like the five thousand and not 500. I have a suspicion though that the 500 became more like 750 for, to quote Laurie Lowe, "some seemed to have been round three or four times with first an evening meal followed, after a sleep, by breakfast". There was even a suggestion that they were coming in off the streets of Eastbourne, having only to perfect a limp to get a free meal."

I would like to add my thanks to all members and friends of the group for all their efforts and special thanks to David and Christine Wood for seeing the food into the School on the Saturday. This enabled me to be at the start in Winchester and to see our walkers on their way throughout that day.

Paul

The Kent Group was on catering duty again at the Finish at Willingdon School, Eastbourne, for this year's 100 mile event. A rolling shift system was in



"By George I've done it!"

use, starting at 9am on Sunday and finishing at 11am on Monday. The overlap gave a chance for details of procedures to be passed on. Our particular shift started at 5pm on the Sunday evening and went through to midnight.

The first four or five hours were very busy; we had to cook and serve a choice of four hot meals and the team was hard pressed at times and could then have done with more people. The previous team had also had a busy time apparently as fast times brought finishers in by the "bus load"! The hot meals to be prepared were: sweet and sour chicken, beef stew, chicken and dumpling stew and a vegetarian stew. Also to be cooked were peas, carrots, potatoes, rice and custard with ginger sponge and swiss roll to be cut and heated. Bread and butter was served on the tables with jam and marmalade provided. This was a heavy load and we wondered if so many meal choices were really necessary. The washing up was also a continuing task though towards the end we realised there was a supply of paper plates and started to use them. This left only the pans, etc., and cups and saucers (saucers, what luxury!) to be washed. It must be said, however, that the preparation of these dishes amounted to opening tins, emptying the contents into a saucepan, heating and stirring till they were hot.

A large amount of rubbish was created and full sacks had to be frequently removed from the kitchen to the wheely bins outside (soon overflowing). A shortage of black plastic sacks was averted when a supply was discovered in a remote corner of the school!

However, from around nine o'clock things quietened down and by midnight we were almost at a standstill. Some finishers had probably gone off for a sleep and would appear in the morning for their meal! It was good to see Kent Group finishers come in and to meet old friends and exchange news.

We wonder if it is perhaps time for a change from doing the Finish catering. Perhaps another Group should have a chance to train up for the job? It does require a lot of organisation amassing helpers.

Jan and Reg Chapman, our illustrious Downsman Hundred organisers, pinned courtesy notices up along the route which contained their telephone number for enquiries. Reg received an irate call from a parish councillor who said that the walk could not take place as they were not going to have so many walkers on THEIR footpaths! Reg explained politely that the walk was going to take place and would be using the national network of Public Rights of Way. This did not go down very well and eventually the telephone connection was unexpectedly cut off!!

Bryan Clarke.

Letters to the Editor

From the Country Member for Hertfordshire:-

MARSHALS DOWNSMAN HUNDRED

7th May 1997.

Having just about recovered from the weekend's excursion this is a note to thank you for transport from Eastbourne to Winchester on Saturday. In case you haven't heard we really had the elements literally thrown at us. Saturday night we had severe wind and thick fog and from dawn until early Sunday afternoon we again had wind, fog and torrential rain lashing down on us. Thoughts of exposure, hypothermia, pneumonia and other ailments were constantly on our minds. Anyone could have quite easily died up there on the Downs in those conditions. Sunday afternoon, however, thankfully turned out sunny and still quite breezy but this was most welcome after what had gone before. I finished at 11.10 p.m. on Sunday evening and only about 6 people (I think) had to retire. I now have to look forward to sweeping the night section (thoughts of gloom and doom) on the main event - I just hope the weather is better.

Yours sincerely
Brian Russell.

From the Norfolk and Suffolk Group Secretary:-
26th May 1997.

MILLENNIUM HUNDRED

May we, please, formally request consideration for running one Checkpoint on your Year 2000 event.

Our needs are few(ish):-

1. Close proximity to a Pub.
2. Preferably one selling Real Ale (and food).
3. A distance of around 75 miles: this is where the real suffering begins and we are true sadists.
4. Somewhere not too posh - 'cos we aren't

Anyway - put us where you like.

Please also thank all your members who were so kind to our lot on both the Marshals' and Real (!) Hundreds this year.

Best wishes
Bobbie Sauerzapf.

WOODS AND WATER

Saturday 7th June 1997

Although the prolonged drought had been broken by significant rainfall earlier in the week the sandy Wealden loam soon quenched its thirst and the going was good underfoot. Moreover the dubious forecast proved quite fictitious and instead we enjoyed perfect walking weather though possibly being a trifle humid on occasions. We set off promptly at 8.30 a.m. from Bewl Water Little Dam at Flimwell, a party of 19 led by Ernie Bishop, following a delightful route of infinite variety. Before long we were among the rhododendrons and azaleas of Bedgebury Pinetum, the damp pine needles underfoot delicately scenting the air whilst we enjoyed the richly coloured blossoms of the shrubs. From Bedgebury Cross we explored the more open countryside south of Goudhurst, passing through the estate of Scotney Castle, skirting Finchcocks and swinging round towards Lamberhurst and the ruins of Bayham Abbey.

For our lunch we stopped at "The Elephant's Head" - but not for long! An absolute virago of a publican, behaving in an irrational and quite unwarranted manner, subjected us to a torrent of verbal abuse, objecting strongly to some of us eating our sandwiches in her pub garden! She proved unmoved by politeness and so we (4) withdrew from the bar, cancelling our order for drinks. However a nearby bus shelter proved far more accommodating and we ate our sandwiches with a degree of exclusivity that far outstripped that of "The Elephant's Head". They say elephants never forget - we will remember that particular elephant and avoid it in future.

Our afternoon route continued through woodland north of Wadhurst, returning to Bewl Water at Cousley Wood. From here we followed the water's edge eastward across the big dam and on through Chingley Wood, arriving back at the starting point around 5.00 p.m. From the shade of pinewood to the shimmer of sunlight on water it had been a day of tonal contrasts with good fellowship all along the way. Our thanks to Ernie for such a splendid route - and with facilities (loos, and ice cream) surely second to none!

Kelvin Carter

Crossword solutions (all correct) were received from Cathy Mahon, Joyce and Richard Tombs, Laurie Lowe, Mike Pursey and Tom Sinclair. Mike's was the first to be drawn out of the Thorlo sock and he has chosen Landranger Map 19 as his prize.

Shirley Higgins.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD SOLUTION



TOM'S WALK - MONDAY 2ND JUNE 1997.

Eighteen entrepid (sic) excursionists excitedly exited (that's enough!) the Horse and Groom car park to take part in a six and a half mile stroll around the beautiful valleys of Stansted and Fairseat which lie on the northern slopes of the North Downs.

Tom said that the route had taken two and a quarter hours when he had walked it out. When it was mentioned that that would take quite a chunk out of the pub time he said that there were a couple of ways of shortening the walk.

It soon became obvious to us that Tom had chosen the time factor method of shortening the walk. We arrived back at the Horse and Groom after two hours, with the New Eltham Joggers, who had joined us for a relaxing stroll, saying that some people do the London Marathon at a slower rate! (so I should hope; it's 20 miles longer. Ed.)

However, there are no complaints as the company and route were excellent in some superb scenery with a marvellous sunset too. Thanks, Tom, for leading another first-class walk.

Pat and Bryan Clarke.

Anagrams of place-names on new Sevenoaks Circular Route

1. Randy Show Town
2. Trot Much Wash Out
3. Still Mulling over a Loan
4. A Ghill Might Lave Hal
5. Mabel Franks Map
6. Churn Charles Hod Fly
7. Yearly Toe Chunter
8. Lather Vandal Type
9. Swine Never Use Lead
10. Tuna or Grouse Feathers
11. Susie Fooled Then
12. Ankle Soc Label
13. Douch Soft Trout
14. Lank Poker
15. Stag He Might Thither
16. Tory Cleaner
17. He Bathes Duck
18. Hell Tube Loth
19. Over Dank Oases
20. What! Rut in School Chambers?

For the answers turn over the page and stand on your head.

Sevenoaks Circular Placenames

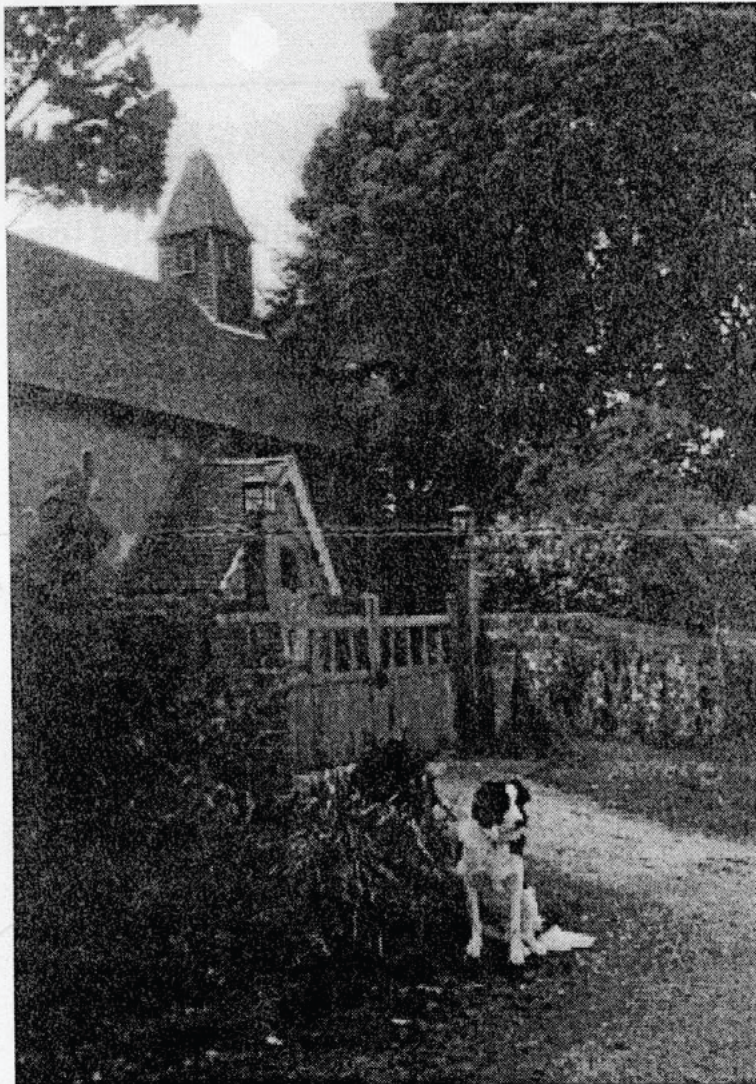
1. North Downs Way
2. Wrotham Scout Hut
3. Lullingstone Roman Villa
4. Ighiteham Village Hall
5. Mapledan Farm
6. Eynsford Church Hall
7. Raley Youth Centre
8. Darent Valley Path
9. Wildernesse Avenue
10. Forge House Restaurant
11. Stonehouse Field
12. Blacksole Lane
13. Orford Scout Hut
14. Knole Park
15. Ighiteham High Street
16. Rectory Lane
17. The Buck's Head
18. The Bull Hotel
19. Sevenoaks Road
20. Saint Bartholomews Church.

BADGES FOR THE INVICTA HUNDRED 1992

I have a very small quantity of badges for the above which were left over at that time. If anyone would like a spare badge (providing of course that they successfully completed either the Marshals' Walk or the Main Event) perhaps they would like to contact me on [REDACTED]. There will be no charge.

I can then put one aside for them until I either receive a SAE or some other arrangement is made. Due to the number of badges I have this offer is made on a strictly first come-first-served basis, so would anyone interested please contact me in the first instance.

Keith Warman.



This photo is NOT relevant to the report on the previous page. It was taken when I was checking the route for the "Mountbatten Variations" social walk. It shows Ridley Church which is mentioned in the Domesday Book and the dog which shared Jim Oddy's picnic when we paused for "elevenses" on the day.

Tom S.

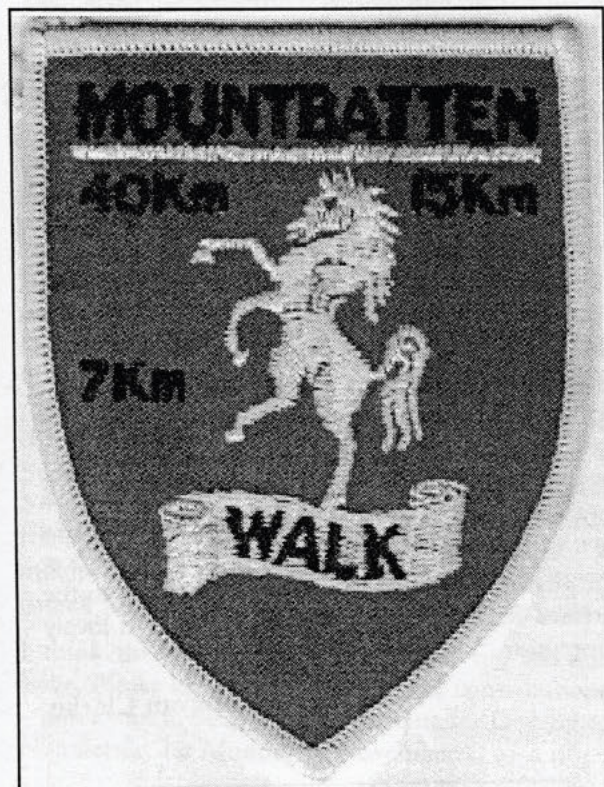


"In an almost forgotten valley between Luddesdown and Holly Hill, astride the North Downs, the small Norman church of Dode stands sentinel over the site of its former village".

Thus begins the information sheet which some of us picked up when we paused and looked around the church on the afternoon of the "Mountbatten Variations". Those on the walk thought it well worth a visit which can be arranged by telephoning [REDACTED]. The address is: Wrangling Lane, Great Buckland, near Luddesdown, Kent.

The place is steeped in history and even prehistory as its walls contain a Sarsen Stone which indicates a link along a ley line to Kit's Coty and other sites. The nearby Holly Hill was originally Holy Hill and the name Wrangling Lane probably indicates a "moot" or meeting place of ancient origin. Dode Church was closed down soon after the Black Death in 1349 but is now available for services to all kinds of faiths and I am told it has also been used for concerts. Anyway I reckon it's in a jolly good walking area.

Tom Sinclair.



I believe I picked up this badge in 1990 when doing the event with Ivan and Susan Verrall and Ron Rometh whom I threatened to disqualify for not adopting the correct walking style on the approach to Checkpoint Foxtrot at Meopham Green.

MODERN NAVIGATIONAL AIDS

Anyone contemplating the purchase of one of these gadgets should first read the article by Ronald Faux which appeared in *The Times* just after the last issue had been 'put to bed'. It is a long article but after mentioning how valuable the Magellan Global Position System (GPS) had been in the Namibian Desert – but less so in the Cairngorms – Ronald Faux ends with this para:

"I found Frozen Fell and Little Cockup guided by the distant orbiting satellites. The GPS proved more accurate than my dead reckoning by compass and as the mist grew thicker I confidently pressed the buttons to give me a reciprocal bearing back to my starting point. I was several strides on course, registering three miles an hour when the screen went blank. The batteries had died and I had no replacements. But I did have my compass".

Perhaps we should insist that anyone carrying such a machine on our events should carry a spare battery just as they have to for their torches on overnight events.

Tom S.

Some snippets

After the Downsman '100' Phil Betts had a car crash into the back of his car on an otherwise deserted A22 near Polegate on his way back to Stevenage at 4.30am on Monday morning. Unfortunately Phil automatically braked when a rabbit ran across the road in front of him. The offending car, which had been driving too close, reversed rapidly, turned around, and sped off in the opposite direction. Phil's car was still driveable with the rear lights working so he made it back home safely. This shunt will put Phil to some expense as his insurance no claims bonus will be lost with no other person to claim from.

The Hertfordshire Hobble took place on Sunday 6th July in very hot conditions. Only a few Kent Group members were there, all completing their 13 or 26 mile routes and feasting on the strawberries and cream at the finish. The start at Wheathampstead is only an hour by road from the Dartford River Crossing and the route is in lovely countryside.

Bryan Clarke.

MILLENNIUM HUNDRED

As you have probably deduced from Bobbie Sauerzapf's letter on page 10 the Kent Group has accepted an invitation from the LDWA National Committee to run the annual "Hundred" in the year 2,000. It is to be called "The Millenium Hundred" – perhaps because the powers that be could not get their tongues around "Canterbury Centenary Circular".

A school in Canterbury has been booked for the Start/Finish and some route planning has been done because we shall be using parts of the White Cliffs route (don't forget to 'phone Neal O'Rourke on [REDACTED] to offer help on 18/19 October). After that event it will be time to start work on all the many aspects of running a major national, nay, international, event.

Those of you who were involved in the Invicta 100 in 1992 will know that as well as route planning and finding a base there are writing the route description and checking it, finding and booking check-point venues and getting people to staff them, planning menus and ordering food, transport of goods and people, communications, liaison with official bodies, National Committee (Avril Stapleton is to be our link person) and Local Groups, finance, entries, records, agendas for and minutes of meetings, kit checks, equipment, design of badges, entry forms and certificates and arranging manufacture and printing of them, entry qualifications, running the Marshals' Walk, First Aid, "shepherds" for tricky night sections and probably a few other things I haven't remembered.

If you feel that you have a contribution, however small, to offer please contact Paul Hatcher [REDACTED] or Tom Sinclair [REDACTED] for a chat. We are sure that there will be a job for everyone who volunteers even if it is not the job which he/she originally offered to do!

A meeting will be held at 2.30pm on Saturday 15th November at Wye Village Hall (GR054466) and it is hoped that we shall by then be ready to set up working parties to be responsible for specific areas as well as a small organising committee with powers to co-opt as and when necessary.

Make a note of the date **SATURDAY 15th NOVEMBER** now.

The following dates may be of interest to many:-

31st August The Ashford Ring Walk 22 miles Start 8.30 a.m. from Kingsnorth Village Hall car park. Contact Peter Whitestone, [REDACTED] Ashford Ramblers' pace.

20th September - Borough Green Triangle Part 2. 21 mile London Group social walk. Leader Alan Canham, [REDACTED] Start from B.G. Station at 9.59am (Perhaps not a good idea if you are planning to join the Faircloth Frolic the next day).

28th September - Dunsfold Kanter. a 20 or 12 mile Surrey Group event requiring map-reading skills. Details and entry form, to be brought on the day, from Diane and Jim James, Tom Sinclair or Brian Haigh, Surrey Group Secretary, [REDACTED]

25th October Founders' Footpaths. London Group's celebration of the LDWA 25th Anniversary. Entry forms from Ann Saver, [REDACTED]

THE WALKING WOUNDED

Phil Betts has had a tumble down the stairs, dislocated a finger and sustained severe bruising which will put him out of walking for a while. I am told that, inspite of his car being a write-off (see page 14) he is otherwise his usual cheerful self.

By the time you read this Harold Mann will have been in hospital for a hip replacement operation.

If our revered Chairman seems more "scratchy" than usual it is because he is suffering from Shingles. We hope, Paul, this has not been caused by the stresses of high office.

By the time you read this I expect to have recovered fully from the inflamed left foot which prevented me from doing the Rottingdean Windmill where, I understand, there was a smaller number of Kent Group members than usual.

As the Germans say "Gute Besserung" to all.

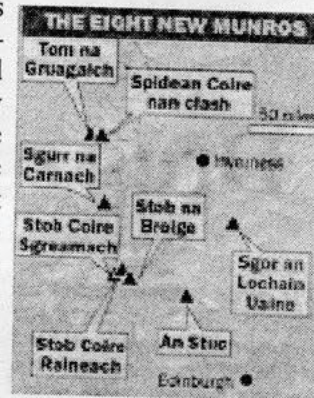
Tom S

WELCOME TO THESE NEW MEMBERS

Dennis Childs, Brian Russell, Beth Goldblatt, Peter Jones, Tony Beeching, D.J. and B.J. Warwick, Cathy, Emma and Geoffrey Rishman, Peter Cowdry, Catherine Marvell, David Bottle, Alison and Kieron Letts. I look forward to meeting those of them to whose names I cannot yet put a face.

MORE MUNROS

Some of you may have seen a report in the paper about a new edition of the Munro tables to be published by the Scottish Mountaineering Club in October/November (how have the details got into the paper now, I wonder). Apparently one summit is to be demoted to a mere "top" as it is not sufficiently above the surrounding terrain even though it is 3,000'. However there are to be eight new Munros and these are shown in the map below. The one in the Cairngorms, Sgor an Lochan Uaine, is also known as "Angel's Peak". There are at present 277 Munros and anyone who has already climbed them all will be allowed to keep their tie or brooch and will not be expected to climb the 8 new ones. For the rest the new total will be 284 but that, one must presume will not take effect until the new table is published.



HIDING A LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL?

Some years ago the group received a present of two striplights but now there is only one on the list of equipment which Trevor Blake keeps for us. These lights are very useful for checkpoints on overnight events and it would be nice to have them both in time for the White Cliffs Challenge in October. Do you have one lurking in the loft?! If so, please return it to Trevor who, for this purpose only, has joined Amnesty International.

Bryan tells me that a new booklet on the Darent Valley Path has recently been published and that the route now boasts a tea shop at South Darent. A booklet on the Medway Valley Walk has also been published but after sampling the first 13 miles of the route (Rochester to Maidstone) I am puzzled by Steve Clarke's enthusiasm about it in a recent *Strider*. However I am reliably informed that the remaining 15 miles (Maidstone to Tonbridge) are much better in terms of underfoot conditions (much less tarmac!) and surrounding countryside.

I think that's probably enough from me for this issue. Please keep on giving me your contributions - don't wait to be asked. Closing date for December Newsletter: 1st Monday in November.

Tom Sinclair



Talking of Founders' Footpaths, here (with stick) is Barbara Blatchford, widow of co-founder Alan, walking on the "C" walk at the Keswick AGM with Caroline Wyles, Cumberland and Westmoreland Group Secretary.