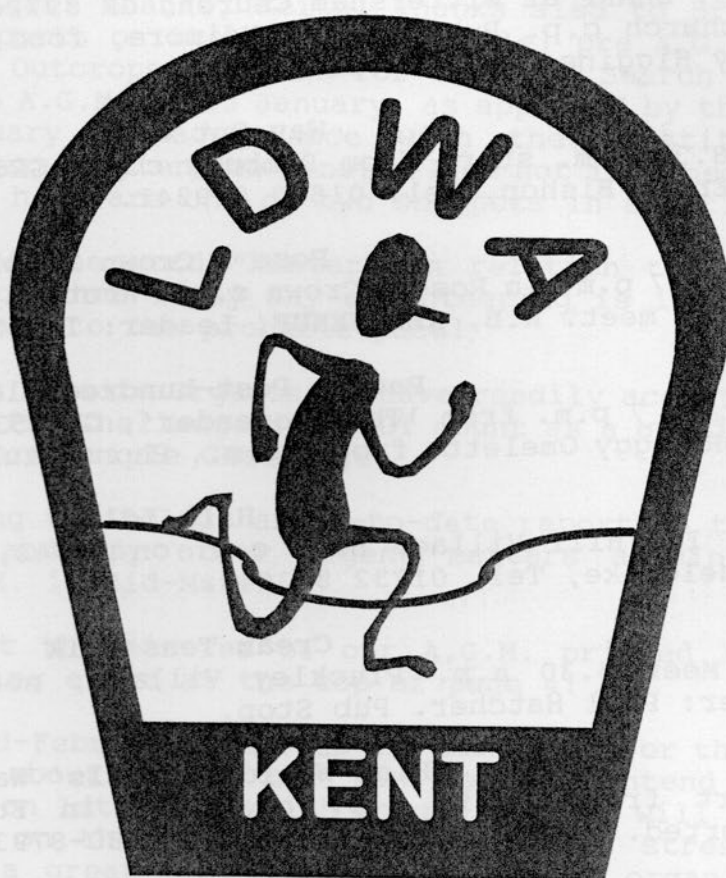




LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION *Kent Group*

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

NEWSLETTER



Number 45

April 1998

COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN.....PAUL HATCHER
SECRETARY.....TOM SINCLAIR
TREASURER.....NEIL HIGHAM

MEMBERS

ANDREW BOULDEN
JIM ODDY
ROGER THORNBURGH
BRIAN BUTTIFANT
HILARY THORNBURGH
KEITH WARMAN

KENT GROUP PROGRAMME APRIL 1998 TO AUGUST 1998

Sun Apr 26

Sneaking into Sussex

22ml. Meet 8.15. SHARP at Wittersham Church, GR 897269. Park in road NOT the church c.p. Pub stop at Udimore, food available. Leader: Shirley Higgins, Tel. [REDACTED]

Sat May 9

Way Out West

20ml. approx. 8.30 a.m. start from Pembury c.p., GR625407. Pub stop. Leader: Ernie Bishop, Tel. [REDACTED]

Mon May 11

Rose & Crown Ramble

6ml. approx. Meet 7 p.m. in Rose & Crown c.p., Wrotham, GR612592, returning for pub meet. N.B. NEW VENUE. Leader: Tom Sinclair.

Mon June 1

Paul's Post-hundred Plod

6ml. approx. Start 7 p.m. from 'The Provender', GR 853486. Chips with Sausages OR Veggy Omelette from 8 p.m.. Phone Paul to ORDER.

Thurs July 9

Ide Hill Idle

Meet 7 p.m. at Ide Hill Village Hall c.p. on B2042, GR488517. Leader: Dave Sheldrake, Tel. [REDACTED]

Sun July 19

Cream Teas Walk

20ml. approx. Meet 8.30 a.m. Pluckley Village, near Church, GR926454. Leader: Paul Hatcher. Pub Stop.

Sun July 26

High Weald Marshals' Walk

8.30 a.m. start from public c.p. on B2110 in Forest Row, GR427351. Supported. Leader: Ernie Bishop [REDACTED].

Sun Aug 9

High Weald Walk (Andredsweald)

25 ml. Offers of help to Ernie Bishop [REDACTED]

Sun Aug 30

A Keeler Kanter

20ml. Meet at Ivy House, Stelling Minnis, GR147483, for 9 a.m. start. Pub stop. Leader: Liz Keeler [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 Rose & Crown', Wrotham, (GR612592) in odd-numbered months, (as from 11 May 1998) and at 'The Provender', Pye Corner, Ulcombe, (GR853486) in even-numbered months, (w.e.f. 1 June 1998) from 8 p.m. onwards.

Dear Fellow Kent Group Members,

I was sorry to miss the Family Lunch in December but I am reliably informed that both the meal and the walk which preceded it were admirably organised by Andrew Boulden with help from members of his family. Ivan Waghorn led a small party (9) on a night walk in early January and Peter and Pauline Barnett, with Andrew Boulden as understudy, organised the Brecon Beacons weekend later in the month - see Shirley's report. Andrew will be organising the jaunt in the third weekend of January 1999 so contact him on [REDACTED] to enquire about it and book a place. Having been on all seven under the Barnett regime I can heartily recommend it - many thanks to Pauline and Peter and all good wishes to Andrew from the Chief Stoker.

In between there was the Winter Tanners and Keith has done a report on that; thanks, Keith. Thanks also to Bryan and Pat Clarke for reports on the shorter (7 mile) pre A.G.M. walk and the Sevenoaks Outcrops Walk and for the Word Search puzzle. The minutes of the A.G.M. on 25 January, as approved by the Committee on 9th February in accordance with the constitution, are enclosed. Having written the minutes I am not inclined to provide a summary but here are one or two snippets in addition:-

a.) the use of the word "kanter" in relation to Liz Keeler's social walk does not imply any orienteering is involved; it is just a reference to the probable pace!

b.) the Surrey Summits Organisers have readily accepted that the 1997 White Cliffs Challenge does NOT count as a qualifying event for the Southern Triple Challenge;

c.) I am hoping to include an up-to-date report on the National Constitution and any other urgent matters arising from the National A.G.M. in mid-March.

d.) having got the minutes of our A.G.M. printed I have just noticed a typing error at the top of page 4!

As I write (mid-February) entries are coming in for the Sevenoaks Circular and about 30 of our own members intend to do the Mashals' Walk on 1st March which should mean we will have enough support staff on the main event but, as Paul stressed at the A.G.M., it is a great help to the checkpoint organiser (Ernie Bishop [REDACTED] for High Weald, Neal O'Rourke [REDACTED] for Wealden Waters) if people VOLUNTEER to help.

The report and results of the Sevenoaks Circular will, I hope, be enclosed. I am indebted to Chris Barnett for his interesting variations, on the front and back covers, on the "walking man" logo. You are invited, gentle reader, to suggest suitable captions for them and for the photo of Neil Higham, Paul Hatcher and myself taken by Bryan Clarke after the Group A.G.M.

Contributions for August issue by the first Monday in July.

Tom Sinclair, [REDACTED]

THE WINTER TANNERS - 11th January 1998

With the prospect of a clear, dry day ahead, I found myself in the Leatherhead car park in preparation for another visit to the hills of Central Surrey. Lowry-like figures were shuffling around in the darkness booking out at the registration camping table, ably administered by Surrey Group stalwarts.

Into the gloom I began, with the street lights providing sufficient help to avoid using my torch. The staggered start was stress-free, and I was soon crossing Fetcham Downs and the Polesden Lacey estate in the company of London Group's Bill Thompson. Conditions seemed pretty good, in fact, unbelievably dry in places, although Surrey Group were destined not to let us off too lightly as we soon found glutinous paths in Effingham Forest.

The promised sun had not yet arrived, but the day was far from cold and I didn't once regret sporting shorts for the first time in a January. A level stretch of the North Downs Way followed by an unusually tranquil Shere took us to Checkpoint 1 on Shere Heath. Still heading away from the start, testing navigation was required as little-used paths were taken to join the Greensand Way for a short leg around Winterfold Heath. Here, on a damp log, I paused to join Laurie Lowe, Shirley Higgins and Jean Dunton for a short drink and a long sandwich.

The route then took us on a near easterly bee-line across Winterfold Forest and The Hurtwood. For nearly 4 miles we kept to the same direction, but encountered several steep and rugged ups and downs through delightfully silent woodland to eventually re-join the Greensand Way on its stony descent to Holmbury St. Mary.

A beautiful level path was followed around to Abinger Common and the welcome of Checkpoint 2 in the car park. I found this 8 miles section from the previous checkpoint to be quite testing. With the sun casting the day's first shadows, gentle field paths led us across the A.25, up past the Wilberforce Memorial and alongside Deerleap Wood. Heading north, one of the easier routes up the Downs was taken, followed by 2 slithery miles along the North Downs Way beneath box and yew boughs.

At Tanner's Hatch (Checkpoint 3), I caught up Ken Heath and Pam Prince before striding along a new route (to me) across Fetcham Downs and back to Leatherhead. Other Kent Group members spied during the day included Andrew Boulden, Gordon Facer, Don Newnam, Ann Sayer, Derek Wisdom and was that Rex Stickland who came tearing past me on Winterfold Heath?

A most invigorating day's walking along yet another new route devised and perfectly written-up by John Westcott.

Keith Warman

THE STOREY ARMS STORY

On the Saturday of our week end in the Brecon Beacons nine walkers piled into the mini-bus to be driven to the Storey Arms Centre. Ron was to lead us on a linear ridge walk back to Danywenallt. When we started our journey conditions were cloudy but dry. However, it wasn't long before the windscreen wipers were busy so on our arrival at the Storey Arms we had to struggle into our waterproofs.

The first part of our walk was a long gradual climb up on to the ridge. The rain eased for a while but as we gained height we were soon engulfed in mist. By the time we reached the cairn at Corn Du visibility was poor and we had to take care to choose the right path to Pen Y Fan. A steep, stony descent then we were ascending relentlessly to the top of Cribyn. We were buffeted by a strong south-westerly wind and it seemed sensible to stay away from the edge. The rain became more persistent and was stinging our faces. From Cribyn we dropped down to the valley below Fan Y Big and managed to find a sheltered spot for our picnic lunch during a respite from the rain. Looking North up the valley we were treated to a view of the sun shining on Brecon and the surrounding patchwork of fields. This bright interlude didn't last long. The cloud and mist came swirling back over the hill, filling the valley and obliterating the view.

It was time to be on the move again as we were getting cold. Instead of taking the steep path up to Fan Y Big we chose a track with a more gentle gradient and rejoined the ridge beyond the summit. We followed the edge hoping for the mist to clear so that we could enjoy the views, but there were only a few fleeting glimpses of the magnificent terrain. Fortunately a clear spell co-incided with our arrival at the junction of paths where we forked right to cross a featureless plateau to Carn Pica. We had to cross several areas of soggy peat, sometimes crawling out on our hands and knees. Navigation was difficult in the murky conditions but a combination of Ann's recently acquired Global Positioning System and Ron's compass brought us safely to our objective. We remembered having a coffee break here a few years ago in the snow.

At Danywenallt Ron had been told about a new way back from Carn Pica. This recently made path was a delightful finish to our walk. We headed south for a while as a watery sun made a brief appearance. Then we turned south east along a narrow ridge to Allt Lwyd. Finally the path turned north-east and as we descended the mist cleared and we could see the shape of the forest and Talybont Reservoir. A good track led down to the road where we walked alongside the reservoir, across the dam and back to base.

It was a very satisfying walk and perhaps one to repeat in better weather at some future date.

SHIRLEY HIGGINS.

Many thanks, Shirley, for that report. Meanwhile Andrew Boulden led a longer walk and Pete Barnett led Pauline, Ivan and Susan Verrell, Diane James and myself on an 11 mile stroll. T.

RESULTS
CERTIFICATE
RUNNERS
WALKERS
YARDS
MILES
MAP
ROUTE
HILLS
BLISTERS
SOCKS
BOOTS

Here are a dozen
familiar words for
you to find in the
Wordsquare below.

B	P	U	Z	S	T	L	U	S	E	R	D	R	R	V
R	O	D	K	K	W	E	I	D	S	B	O	X	C	T
X	G	O	O	C	J	M	K	R	K	U	F	I	E	E
H	C	Y	T	O	I	Q	E	L	T	D	C	Q	R	T
G	K	W	L	S	W	K	N	E	G	P	S	P	T	S
U	L	R	F	K	L	M	T	X	I	R	J	Y	I	R
M	S	G	P	A	M	Y	X	S	E	K	E	I	F	I
P	Y	N	W	D	E	T	H	N	X	X	S	G	I	Z
S	T	I	I	P	K	F	N	P	H	N	R	V	C	A
M	D	O	V	I	X	U	E	M	H	K	V	E	A	I
F	W	A	I	S	R	E	T	S	I	L	B	E	T	X
Q	C	M	H	D	K	I	A	I	L	L	A	P	E	M
D	E	M	J	R	J	Z	Z	E	L	S	E	H	M	V
R	F	Z	V	A	Z	J	B	R	S	S	H	S	K	Y
Q	F	B	Y	Y	F	O	Z	V	I	R	I	E	C	N

N.B. The words may be horizontal, vertical or diagonal
and may be read from left or right, top or bottom.

HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS

Do you remember those tiny, multi-coloured pieces of sugar(?) which used to be sprinkled on cakes as decoration? They were called "hundreds and thousands" but you are unlikely to find them on a checkpoint so not to worry. The important "hundreds" are, of course, the LDWA annual challenge walks and the Kent Group will be running the event in the year TWO THOUSAND.

A. WHITE PEAK HUNDRED 1998

At the last count Paul had 10 names of people to man our checkpoint at Bonsall Village Hall (GR279580, OS Landranger 119) which is at 35 miles and will need to be manned from 4 p.m. on Saturday 23 May to 2 a.m. on Sunday 24 May to allow enough time for setting up and clearing up. Paul [REDACTED] would welcome more offers of help but we understand that there is a pressing need for help at the finish. Anyone willing to offer such help should contact Colin Lees, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to see what is required. While in the area recently I drove to Matlock, bought Landranger 119 and found my way not very directly to Bonsall and back by a shorter route. It is a delightful village surrounded by good walking country. It has a pub but I did not sample the local brew as a car with an expiring car park ticket awaited me in Matlock.

B. DURHAM DALES HUNDRED 1999

Yes, it is a long time till then and it will be a long distance to travel but the Northumbria Group Secretary has asked us to run a checkpoint. It would help in the current planning stage if we could give them an answer fairly soon. If your present intentions include a visit to Durham over the Spring Bank Holiday 1999 and if you are willing to help on a checkpoint

PLEASE let Tom have your name by Monday 11th May AT THE LATEST.

Giving your name now will not be regarded as a definite commitment but it will give us a probable number to work on and thus enable us to say whether we can run a checkpoint ourselves or just provide support to other groups.

C. MILLENNIUM HUNDRED 2000

As reported at the A.G.M. there have been some minor changes in the Committee. Kevin Puttock, who worked closely with Paul in the planning of the White Cliffs route, will be Deputy Organiser while Trevor Blake and Jim Oddy will be responsible for the important matter of Equipment (somehow overlooked) as well as Transport. Andrew Boulden will be looking after Sponsorship and will be pleased to hear from anyone with ideas in that area.

An outline of the route has been drawn on the map and 20 mile sections of the route have been allocated to small groups who have offered to walk out their section and prepare a route description in the usual "Kent Group" style. If you think you can help with this essential and urgent part of organising the event, or perhaps with checking a section once the description is written, please contact Keith on [REDACTED]

DESIGN COMPETITION

An other urgent task is the designing of a 'logo' to be used on letter-heading, entry forms and the booklet containing details of B & B's and local history etc. Badges and sweatshirts also need to be designed and ideally a theme running through the various items should be the aim. Even if you think you cannot draw let us have your ideas - a verbal description will do. If you think you CAN draw don't let your artistic talent run away with too many colours as this will increase printing and production costs. About four colours is probably the maximum but otherwise let your imagination run freely on the "historic Kent" theme, our base in Canterbury, White Cliffs and the Millennium.

During last summer's "Cream Teas" walk I chatted with one of our regular visitors from Essex who has since sent me a design for a badge so get your pencils and paper out NOW!

Closing Date for Entries

31ST AUGUST 1998

Entries to: Tom Sinclair,

PRIZE

An O.S. Explorer Map of the winner's choice.

WHITE CLIFFS CHALLENGE

Since the December Newsletter two more letters of appreciation have come in. One of them from Michael Benison who also sent us many photographs some of which I sent on to Richard Bradbury for possible use in "Strider" and some of which are now in the Group album - this is kept by Laurie Lowe - if you have any current (1998) photos of social walks etc. do pass them on.

Although the event was undoubtedly a success a number of areas where lessons could be learnt for future events were identified at a subsequent committee meeting. These were:-

- a.) The Notes for Checkpoint Organiser should be given to the people concerned two weeks before the event;
- b.) The letters telling local residents about the event should be delivered about a week before the event.
- c.) There should be no discrepancies between the Kit List printed in the Entry Form and that sent with the Final Details;
- d.) A reception desk with staff to welcome entrants and point them in the right direction would be a worthwhile addition;
- e.) A "help" desk would be similarly useful.
- f.) A back-up team to lend support where needed could also help;
- g.) Consideration might be given to offering the option of a Vegetarian meal (some of us recalled problems in Settle).

MILLENNIUM HUNDRED (AGAIN)

At the same committee meeting it was clarified that Kent Group members would generally be expected to give support on the main event and (if they so wished) to do the Marshals' Walk. Support would be needed also on the Marshals' Walk but anyone giving such support and entering the main event should understand that they would **NOT** be more favourably treated than any other entrants if the event were oversubscribed and a ballot needed.

SEVENOAKS OUTCROPS WALK 1998

Sunday 22nd February had two social walks on the Kent Group calendar. There was one at Wye of around twenty miles and Martyn Berry's walk from One Tree Hill near Sevenoaks of about ten miles. Martyn Berry's Outcrop Walk is an annual event on the Kent Group calendar and this year, after a gap of a few years, we decided to join him. Another couple of friends, having had a leaflet from Bryan, were also keen to come so four of us shared a car to the meeting point near Knole Park. It was a perfect walking morning, the weather being bright but crisp. For much of the walk paths were dry but the previous day's rain had left a few muddy tracks on the lower levels.

Eight of us set off at 10.05. Unlike many of Martyn's previous walks there was only one 'teenager' to provide the youthful exuberance usually present. Nonetheless it was a cheery group who set off for a varied and interesting walk. Much of the route is centred round Oldbury Hill, a National Trust area, and our leader has a wide knowledge of the nooks and crannies and associated stories. Those who had been before were requested not to divulge their pre-knowledge. He was, perhaps, a little disappointed at the response to an invitation to explore the cave. In fact only Bryan and David volunteered, perhaps because he mistakenly told us that it was also the lunch break. I was quite surprised that Bryan was able to resist that! Although the air was decidedly chilly once we stopped walking, the view was very rewarding extending along the North Downs from Wrotham on the left to the Medway Gap on the right.

The afternoon included a short stop at Ightham Mote where Martyn gave a brief history for those who hadn't been to this beautiful old house. After this as we wended our way back up the hill and past Wilmot Cottage. Once again there were lovely views across the Weald though it was more cloudy by now. It was on this part of the walk that we first spotted Primroses in bloom. A solitary Lesser Celandine was also out and we spotted some unusual green flowers which Martyn rightly identified as Hellebore. It was actually called Green Hellebore and is apparently quite rare, growing only in England and Wales on chalky soil. Our eyes had already feasted on drifts of snowdrops, crocuses and even the odd daffodil. On the way up Wilmot Hill a blackthorn was a mass of white blossom. This is often confused with hawthorn blossom which comes out much later, after the leaves, normally in May.

Of course, apart from the snowdrops and crocus, everything is at least two weeks in front of last year. I recorded the first daffodil on 3rd March in 1997.

We can recommend this annual walk to all the Kent Group and their friends. Hopefully the other walk was as enjoyable.

Pat and Bryan

A WYE WANDER

I am reliably informed that the "other walk", as Bryan has called it, was very enjoyable and attracted a near record 34 of whom 33 kept up a good pace for the whole day with only one young lady, confident that she would get a lift later, staying at the pub. The pub seems to have coped well with the sudden influx of large numbers so why not ask Paul for its name and then plan a different walk around it. "First find your pub" is a good maxim when planning a social walk and another priority is a good parking place, preferably with loos, for the start. With a figure of eight route the two can be combined. The large number would seem to indicate a demand for more social walks in our calendar but we do need MORE PEOPLE to lead them. If you might be interested contact Tom by Monday 11th May so that details of your walk can be included in "Strider". If you would prefer your walk to appear only in our own Newsletter just say so. T.S.

A NEWS SNIPPET

Bumping into Eileen and Tom Emery is becoming quite regular for us. On previous occasions we have met them by chance in Grasmere, Cumbria, and in Lullingstone Park. It was, therefore, no surprise, but pleasing, to meet them leading a local walk while we were out on Martyn Berry's Outcrops Walk. Tom told us that he had just finished Chemotherapy after having an operation for Bowel Cancer. He looked in good shape and hopes to return to his normal form soon, though doubting that he will be able to enter for the Sevenoaks Circular this year. I'm sure everyone will wish him well. Pat and Bryan.

CORRIGENDUM

I am reliably informed that the photo on page 43 of the August 1997 "Strider" was of Gordon Facer NOT Pete Barnett as in the December Newsletter. Apologies to both parties. T.S.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND WALK

Tom Sinclair led the shorter walk before the meal and A.G.M. This was another excellent walk by Tom through the hills and valleys of the North Downs near Wrotham. The five of us had a coffee break, a chat with a farmer and with a chap doing clearance work, and an occasional stop "to admire the view".

The meal was good: very hot soup and bread and butter, a good salad with jacket potato and fruit malt loaf to follow. The meal ended with tea or coffee. The A.G.M. was, as usual, workmanlike with important decisions made. Pat and Bryan.

NATIONAL L.D.W.A. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As you probably know the proposal in "Strider" to turn the LDWA into a Company Limited by Guarantee and the Memorandum and Articles of Association in particular provoked much discussion at our A.G.M. and in other places. More of that anon.

ST. MARY'S NORTH DOWNS CHALLENGE

This is not an LDWA event but it is being organised by Mike Cursons, who is a former member and well-known to many of us, with help from some Group members in the area. It is being held on Saturday 30th May with 4 distances available as follows:-

Mileage	Start Time	Time allowed	Entry Fee	under 18
20	8.15 - 9a.m.	9 hours	£5	£3.50
15	9.15 - 10a.m.	8 hours	"	"
10	11a.m. - 12noon	6 hours	"	"
5 1/2	12.15-2.30p.m.	3 1/2 hours	£1.50	£1.50

The closing date for entries is 23rd May and there is an additional charge for entries on the day of £2 (50p for the shortest distance). There will be refreshments at the finish and at checkpoints on the three longer distances. Mike is hoping to stimulate interest in walking and at the same time raise funds for St. Mary's Church, Kensing. For an entry form send an S.A.E. to: M. Cursons, [REDACTED]

VOLUNTEERS!

As Paul mentioned at the A.G.M. the job of the Checkpoint Staff Organiser on any event is made much easier if people ring in and offer to help rather than waiting to be asked. Neal O'Rourke, who has good reason to feel strongly on this subject, has sent me the following heartfelt plea:-

"As the person responsible for organising the helpers on last year's White Cliffs Challenge may I first thank all those willing Kent Group volunteers for their sterling work that was done on the day. Unfortunately I had a short illness that weekend and was unable to attend. Judging by the glowing letters and comments received, the event went very smoothly as far as the participants were concerned. However, behind the scenes a different story was being told as one problem succeeded another due to lack of staff on checkpoints etc.

"Fortunately we had offers of help from members of other groups, including Ron Brown, Sybil Davies, Linda Michell, Edith and Lilian Sykes and Janet Weller and not forgetting Roy and Win Warman, all supporting participants. Without their invaluable assistance the situation would have been considerably worse.

"A number of marshals were about for 26 hours PLUS. With a group membership of nearly 140 it seems very unfair that, to date, more of you have not come forward to offer your services."

The Wealden Waters Marshals' Walk on 5/6 September, and the main event on 10/11 October, will both need helpers although many more for the latter. Neal has VOLUNTEERED to organise the marshals for both events. Follow his excellent example by 'phoning [REDACTED] NOW to offer help. Give him your name and 'phone number and he will contact you nearer the time to tell you when to go where and possibly even why to do so!

GUIDES TO LONG DISTANCE PATHS IN KENT

Jim Oddy has copies of the K.C.C. guides to the Medway Valley, Greensand Way and Darent Valley Walks. They do not give detailed route descriptions but the routes are fairly easy to follow with the aid of the appropriate O.S. Maps. If you would like to borrow any of them 'phone Jim on [REDACTED] to check availability and make mutually convenient arrangements - NO charge for this service. If you have guides, maps, etc. which you are willing to lend to other group members give Jim the details for him to pass on to enquirers and, if you don't object, publication here. T.S.

FAME AT LAST!

The Sevenoaks Chronicle of 5th March contained the following:-

"The Kent Group of the Long Distance Walkers' Association is holding its annual Sevenoaks Circular walk on Sunday, March 15. Starting at Knole Park the walk, which is not a race, passes through Otford, Eynsford, Knatts Valley, the North Downs, Wrotham, St. Mary's Platt, Borough Green, Ightham, Ightham Common and Godden Green before finishing back at Knole Park.

"Last year the event attracted more than 300 entrants each paying £3 for the 20-mile route and £4 for the 30-mile route.

"Those wishing to pay on the day are asked to pay £5. Described as a Challenge Walk by the Kent Group the funds help to pay for the marshalling arrangements and provide refreshments en route.

"Further details and entry forms from Brian Bullifant on [REDACTED]"

Thanks to James Cruikshank, the Chronicle's correspondent for Wrotham, Fairseat and Stanstead, for giving us that write-up after a brief telephone conversation with the Secretary who later bought a copy of the paper for the Editor. I am reliably informed that the said paper showed a marked lack of interest in the Invicta Hundred back in 1992. I am also informed by another reliable source that the same paper told its correspondent that he had written too much for the 5th March issue. Plus ça change!

THE VIEW FROM THE PATIO

A ring on the doorbell at about 11.15 a.m. on 1st March heralded the arrival on our doorstep of Bob Field, Shirlie Gill and Keith Warman. An introduction to Alan Bradshaw, Landlord of the "Rose & Crown", was soon followed by the revelation of a water tap available for our use on the pub's patio where we were to set up Checkpoint 3 for the Sevenoaks Circular Marshals' Walk. Shirlie's delicious provender was laid out on the tables, the cold drinks were mixed and we were sipping tea/coffee when the 3 twenty-milers, Philip Betts, Bryan Clarke and Hilary Thornburgh, hove in sight. The sun shone between brief hail showers but they moved on soon, suitably refreshed, down St. Mary's Road.

We had time for a warm-up in Bank House before the first of the 30-milers came in just after 1 o'clock. I do remember who they were but I can't be sure of remembering all the others in the correct order so suffice it to say that all 23 came through in the space of an hour (pretty good at 19 miles, I reckon) and all looked capable of walking the remaining 11. Pete Barnett appeared uncertain as to whether my offer to fetch him a glass of red wine from my cellar was serious. There was absolutely NO doubt about Maurice's reaction when I mentioned a pint of Shepherd Neame's "Spitfire" ale.

When we had cleared up Bob Field and I each departed with a supply of sausage and tomato sandwiches and Shirlie later reported that Keith and she were growing tired of the egg and cress in brown bread (knitted by Shirlie according to Keith) even in the stir-fried form. I hope the main event (190 entries when I last heard) will have gone as well by the time you read this.

P.S. Jim Oddy, on behalf of all the participants, wishes to thank all checkpoints, but especially those who provided the excellent FOOD! i.e. Shirlie Gill and Judy Rickwood with assistance from Keith Warman and Ian Needham respectively.

WHAT IS A SENIOR CITIZEN?

Perhaps Paul was trying to hint at something when he handed me a photocopy of an article under the above heading. He couldn't tell me where it came from and although I had seen something similar I couldn't remember where. Any infringement of copyright which may result from reproducing it is thus unintentional.

"A Senior Citizen is one who was here before,
the pill, television, frozen foods,
contact lenses, credit cards,
...and before man walked on the moon.
For us "Time Sharing" meant togetherness,
not holiday homes, and a "chip" meant a piece of wood.

"Hardware" meant nuts and bolts
and "Software" wasn't even a word.
We got married first, then lived together.
and thought "cleavage" was something butchers did.

A "stud" was something that fastened
a collar to a shirt, and "going all the way" meant
staying on a double decker to the bus depot.

We thought "fast food" was what you ate in Lent,
a "Big Mac" was an oversized raincoat
and "crumpet" we had for tea.

In our day "grass" was mown,
"pot" was something you cooked in,
"coke" was kept in the coalhouse and
a "joint" was cooked on Sundays.

We are today's Senior Citizens. A hardy bunch
when you think how the world has changed!"

(Acknowledgements to the author whomsoever he/she may be)

LLANWRTYD WELLS

This small town in mid-Wales was the venue for the 1998 National A.G.M. By 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday Shirlie and Keith were on their way to Wales, pausing briefly in Wrotham to deposit Sevenoaks Circular badges and certificates for Brenda and Brian to collect and take to Bryan Clarke later that day.

By 9.45 a.m. on Friday my desk had received a much needed tidying, this edition was almost ready for putting to bed and packing was complete when Paul and Mary called to take me to the A.G.M. Paul did the driving while Mary and I took it in turns to snooze and navigate - in my case from a 1/4 " map which had cost 7/- and was thus a bit out of date. The journey was uneventful and we found the hotel without difficulty. I was soon unpacking, enjoying a cup of tea and watching "Countdown" in my room - where I was later joined by Jack Taylor of Nidderdale Group. Next I went downstairs to "mingle" and distribute letters to Group Secretaries about our Wealden Waters and the Millennium Hundred for which we have now received 5 offers to run checkpoints.

The evening passed pleasantly with new Kent Group member, Les Maple, joining us for the Buffet (some confusion and delay over the puddings) but, unlike someone, not joining in the singing, to accordion accompaniment, afterwards.

On the Saturday, after breakfast, Paul & Mary and Keith & Shirlie went off on the 20-mile walk (there may not be enough time/space to include Keith's promised report on that) while I set off 1/2 an hour later on the 13-mile variation on the same theme with 24 others including Les Maple and Reg Chapman. The day began overcast but dry and in between stretches of woodland wide clearings afforded lovely views up the valley as we walked. In the village hall at Abergwesyn the local W.I. served tea and biccuits to go with the self-service packed lunch provided by the hotel.

In the afternoon we strolled down the lane towards Llanwrttyd but there was very little traffic and we twice left the tarmac: once to cross a spur of hillside where we paused to soak up sarsaparilla (or other liquid), sunshine and surrounding scenery; later to meander through the woods beside the lovely Afon Irfon - we had not thought it so lovely when paddling across it earlier. After inspecting the building which housed the well which gave the town its suffix we regained the town and retraced our morning steps to the station, over the railway and back to tea and a hot bath. A companionable walk with time to watch red kites. Thanks Les & Reg.

We were first back, of course, so there was plenty of time for more chat, including discussions about the proposed change to a Company Limited by Guarantee, before a good meal, washed down with wine and followed by a talk, with slides, on Red Kites, Ken Falconer's customary barn dancing and MORE chat.

After a good breakfast it was soon time for the A.G.M. (yes, at last, folks) at which the following people were elected:-
Chairman: Roger Michell, Secretary: Les Maple, Treasurer: Tony Willey, Editor: Richard Bradbury, Membership Secretary: Janet Chapman (Geoff Saunders did not seek re-election). Committee Members: Tim Glenn, Graham Hemsley, Ted Marsh*, Bernie Pearson, Geoff Saunders, John Sparshatt* and Avril Stapleton.
* = new member.

Although nothing is known officially, it seems likely that John Sparshatt, whom some will remember as the organiser of the Yorkshire Dales Hundred, will become Events Secretary and Ted Marsh take on Publicity with the existing members retaining their present roles (see inside cover of "Strider").

Brian Smith did not stand for re-election to the Committee but will continue to work (as does Keith Warman) on Long Distance Paths. A new handbook of L.D.P.s is due out in May.

After an interesting and well-conducted debate the motion:-
"To establish the Long Distance Walkers' Association (L.D.W.A.) as a Company Limited by Guarantee and Not Having a Share Capital and for the National Committee of the LDWA to take all necessary actions" was adopted by a large majority - much more than the necessary two thirds majority. This may come as a surprise to many but we found out a lot more about the background reasons and were re-assured to discover that the impact on the way we run our own group would be negligible. We should not have to change our constitution - indeed it might form the basis for the "Model" - and the capitation powers are there only so that they can be used should the need ever arise. Perhaps the most important thing to emerge from the discussion was the instruction from the A.G.M. to the National Committee to look into Postal Voting.

The National Committee was authorised to appoint an Auditor because, under Companies Acts' Regulations, Shirley Hume, who was heartily thanked for her services since 1988, is ineligible. Various other people were thanked by Barbara Blatchford in a good closing speech and after coffee - frothy black stuff, anyway, and farewells we were soon on our way. A well-organised weekend with something for everyone - thanks to Reg and Janet Chapman.

KENT GROUP PROGRAMME - LATE ENTRY

SAT JULY 4 Channel Cliffs Challenge - 38.5 miles between Dover & Folkestone and Boulogne & Calais - using SeaCat and Hovercraft. Meet at Dover Hoverport at 4.30 a.m. (parking £4 for the day). Crossing times are: 0800 Folkestone-Boulogne and 23.15 Calais to Dover. The cost of the round trip is £5 - reservations on 0900-240-241 or through your travel agent. Further details of the Channel Cliffs Challenge from Graham Smith on [REDACTED] P.T.O. for the Caption Competition. That's yer lot, Tom.

