



LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION

Kent Group

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

NEWSLETTER



WHO, WHEN AND WHERE?

Number 49

August 1999

LDWA KENT GROUP PROGRAMME AUGUST 1999 - JANUARY 2000

MON AUG 2 THE PROVENDER, ULCOMBE, GR 853486, 8 p.m.

SUN AUG 8 HEART OF THE WEALD WALK
The 3rd walk in the second cycle of High Weald Walks. Start from Commemoration Hall, Wadhurst, GR641318, at 8.30 a.m. (10 a.m. Runners). Entries Secretary and Organiser: Ernie Bishop, [REDACTED]. Entry £3.50 (£5 on the day).

SUN AUG 22 LES TROIS CHATEAUX
34ml. Meet for a PROMPT 7.30 a.m. start at Cranbrook cp. near Windmill, GR776359. UNSUPPORTED walk linking Scotney, Bodiam and Sissinghurst Castles. ONLY for those able to complete the distance. Pub stop. Leader: Maurice Faircloth, [REDACTED]

SAT/SUN SEPT 4/5 WEALDEN WATERS MARSHALS' WALK
62.5 or 45 miles. Entry forms from and offers of help to: Hilary Thornburgh, [REDACTED]

MON SEPT 6 THE ROSE AND CROWN, WROTHAM, GR612592, 8 p.m.

SUN SEPT 19 ST. RADIGUND'S RAMBLE
c. 20ml. Meet Kearsney Abbey cp., GR 287348, for 9 a.m. start. Pub Stop. Leader: Pat Clay, [REDACTED]

MON OCT 4 THE PROVENDER, ULCOMBE, GR853486, 8 p.m.

SAT/SUN OCT 9/10 WEALDEN WATERS WALK
Hilary Thornburgh writes: "Thank you very much indeed to the 55 members (and Roy and Win Warman) who will be helping at the walk. A tremendous response".

SUN OCT 31 A KENTISH KANTER
c. 20ml. Start 8.30 to 9a.m Meet at Wye c.p. , GR052468, from 8.00 a.m. onwards, to collect list of nine checkpoint locations from Paul and Mary Hatcher who will be at Wye c.p. from 2.30 to 5.30 p.m. to greet you on your return and may appear with drinks and biscuits at some checkpoints. Bring OWN FOOD, MUG, PENCIL AND PAPER and OS Explorer Map 137 OR Pathfinder Maps 1211 and 1231. 'Phone Paul and Mary the week before so that they can work out quantities of instructions and provisions needed. A social Kanter, devised by Paul and Mary with help from Keith Warman and Shirlie Gill, with clues to be answered at each checkpoint, to be visited in whatever order you choose and fewer than nine may be visited if desired.

MON NOV 1 THE ROSE AND CROWN, WROTHAM, GR612592, 8 p.m.

SUN NOV 14 ANOTHER JOLLY JIM JAUNT
c. 18 miles. Meet Longfield Station c.p., OS Landranger Map 177, GR601689. for 9 a.m. start. Leader: Jim Oddy, [REDACTED]

SUN NOV 21

ANNUAL FAMILY FEAST

Full details and booking form enclosed. Please return to Hilary by Friday 15th October.
AT THE LATEST.

MON DEC 6

THE PROVENDER, ULCOMBE, GR853486, 8 p.m.

FRI JAN 7 2000

WAGHORN'S WINTER WANDER

c. 21 miles. Night Walk on North Downs Way. Meet 9.30 p.m. for 10.30 p.m. start at
Rose & Crown, Wrotham, GR612592. Leader: Ivan Waghorn, [REDACTED]

SUN JAN30 2000

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Put the date in your diary (it probably has a page at the back for such things) **NOW**
N.B. If more than 530 entries for the Millennium Hundred have been received by 22nd
January 2000 the draw will be held at the AGM.

COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN.....PAUL HATCHER [REDACTED]
SECRETARY.....TOM SINCLAIR [REDACTED]
TREASURER.....NEIL HIGHAM [REDACTED]

MEMBERS

ANDREW BOULDEN [REDACTED] TOM BOWMAN ([REDACTED] BRIAN
BUTTIFASNT [REDACTED] KEN HEATH ([REDACTED] HILARY & ROGER
THORNBURGH ([REDACTED] JIM ODDY (co-opted) [REDACTED]

Dear Fellow Kent Group Members,

I am putting fingers to computer keyboard (to adapt Laurie's phrase in his article on Lady Anne's Way) on 24th July, i.e. long after my own deadline, hoping and praying that this issue will be ready to be "put to bed", printed, collated, etc., etc. by 1st August. Many thanks, as always to all contributors but particularly, this time, to Bryan Clarke whose experiments with his computer scanner have produced the picture on the cover. Longer-standing members may be more likely to be able to answer Bryan's questions: the answers to his puzzles in the April issue appear on page 5.

Just after the April issue was printed the sad news of the death of **TOM EMERY** reached me. Our sympathies have been conveyed to Eileen who approved the short tribute which appears on the next page before it was sent off to "Strider". News of other members' sufferings, trials, ailments, etc. have come to my ears but not always directly and in any case a) there may be others I don't know of and b) they may prefer to remain anonymous. In any case, good wishes to you all, including those in fine fettle.

Contributions for the December issue by 1ST NOVEMBER 1999 to:;
Tom Sinclair, [REDACTED]

TOM EMERY 1925-1999

Regulars on the Sevenoaks Circular, the Seven Sisters Marathon and the Wealden Waters Walk will be saddened to learn of Tom's death from Cancer on 26th March. There was a good sprinkling of Kent Group members amongst over a hundred friends (two of whom had travelled up from Cornwall) who attended the funeral service. It was standing room only in the chapel and entrance porch at Eltham Crematorium where Tom's two nephews spoke movingly about their uncle. (Eileen, his widow, later told me that one of them had said that Uncle Tom was the only person with whom he could be totally himself and that, as she said, revealed a lot about Tom's generosity of spirit).

The boys mentioned Tom's completion of 14 "Seven Sisters" and 10 "Sevenoaks" but above all his unfailing sense of humour - he was renowned for "one-liners". The order of service included the hymn "For those in peril on the sea", reflecting Tom's early career in the Merchant Navy and contained an illustration of Scafell Pike on whose summit he had celebrated his 50th birthday with champagne - how delightfully typical of him!

He was a lovely fellow to walk with - I particularly remember the 1992 Sevenoaks Circular - and will be sorely missed by his many friends in LDWA Kent Group and further afield. Our sympathies go to Eileen, who for many years did an early drinks stop, with Tom, on the old Wealden Waters route, and the family.

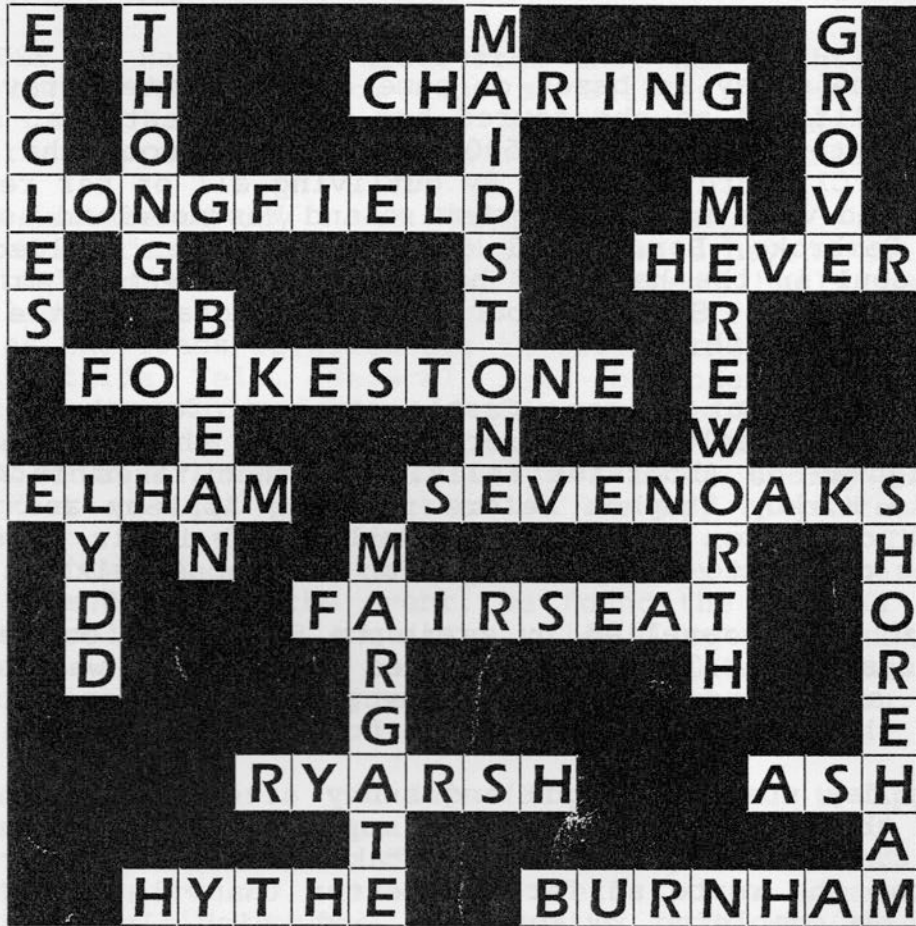
EQUIPMENT

Some time ago (less than a year, the lists appeared in issue 47, December 1998, Ed.) a rationalisation of the Group's equipment was instigated in that various people became responsible for storing and looking after certain types of gear. By now persons holding items of equipment ought to have ensured that they have been given to the person responsible, e.g. all the gas burners and gas bottles are held by me and thus everyone in the Group knows that I am responsible for that equipment.

However, speaking to other equipment holders it would appear that some items have not been returned to their rightful keepers since the Sevenoaks Circular. Perhaps members will make a determined effort to off-load any items they are holding and ensure they are returned to their respective keepers (if in doubt ASK). This must be done before the Wealden Waters (9/10 October) so that no equipment problems are encountered over that weekend.

Trevor Blake, Equipment Officer, [REDACTED]

Answer Sheet



ASH

THONG

MEREWORTH

LYDD

SEVENOAKS

HYTHE

BURNHAM

ELHAM

RYARSH

MARGATE

CHARING

ECCLES

FOLKESTONE

BLEAN

SHOREHAM

LONGFIELD

HEVER

FAIRSEAT

MAIDSTONE

GROVE

LADY ANNE'S WAY

Laurie Lowe

In spite of having been warned off of writing offensive articles about dogs (or should that be "articles about offensive dogs"?), Tom's thumbscrews have induced me to put finger to typewriter again.

The Lady Anne's Way is based on some of the routes travelled by Lady Anne Clifford as she toured her northern estates. She was born at Skipton Castle in 1590 and was to become the last-in-line of the Clifford family. By outliving all of her relatives, she inherited vast areas of Yorkshire and Westmoreland as well as parts of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery. She "yielded up her precious soul in the hands of her merciful Redeemer" in 1676 at the age of 86. She was buried at Brougham Castle on the outskirts of Penrith.

The route starts at Skipton Castle and explores the valleys of Wharfedale and Wensleydale before traversing the high-level Lady Anne's Highway on Abbotside Fells. It then takes in the Eden Valley via Kirkby Stephen before reaching Appleby and Penrith. The total distance is around 100 miles and it is possible to break this down into 6 days of not too strenuous walking.

In mid-April we travelled by train to Skipton - our efficient Travel Department (Shirley) ensured that this was a smooth journey - and I was able to give my senior rail card its first outing of the year.

Our first day started bright and sunny after a heavy overnight frost and the clear atmosphere gave superb views of distant snow-clad hills. Tea and biscuits were taken at Barden Tower and we agreed that the route so far was better than that of the Dales Way which we completed in April 97, and which also runs through this area. However numerous stone squeeze stiles and ladder stiles slowed progress through a succession of small, stone-walled fields. At Grassington we found the B&B at Town Head Guesthouse unchanged except for the price.

It snowed overnight and the resulting light covering added to the scenic qualities without causing any hindrance to our progress to the next overnight accommodation at Buckden. Here we enjoyed a fun-packed evening meal at The Village Restaurant. Highly recommended if you are in the area!

It snowed again overnight and the large sticky flakes were still falling as we tackled the stiff climb onto Stake Moss. Fortunately here the route followed an old drove road with the remains of walls on either side of the track. The snow and the dull lighting gave near "white-out" conditions and route finding would have been difficult across open ground. We were aware of the boot prints of others ahead of us and soon a small group of walkers became visible in the gloom. They turned out to be a group of mature ladies and for some reason we got the distinct feeling that they were members of a local W.I. group. After chatting for a while I was politely asked by the leader to move on as some of her band were in need of a comfort stop! So to the scent of home made jam and the faint strains of "Jerusalem" we

parted company and made our way down past the dramatic form of Addleborough to enjoy another dose of tea and biscuits in the pub in Bainbridge. The final section of the day's route into Hawes was through fields with surprisingly few stiles to hinder our progress.

In the B&B in Hawes Jean discovered that her nightie was still hanging behind the bathroom door at Buckden. She rejected my offer to cut a hole for her head in my survival bag as emergency nightwear and presumably made her own alternative arrangements.

The main feature of day 4 was "Lady Anne's Highway" a high level route from Cotterdale all the way to the road beyond Mallerstang. The initial climb to gain height has been badly damaged by motorcyclists but the effects of their activities became less obvious as the track levelled out to follow the limestone terrace along Abbotside Fell. Several long-abandoned farm buildings conveyed an air of desolation to parts of the Highway. Those who completed the Dales 100 in 1985 may recall this section before the climb onto Wild Boar Fell during a dark, stormy night. We were luckier and did this section of the Way in perfect weather conditions. The guide book states that at 'The Thrang' "a welcome awaits all walkers and cyclists, even when the cafe sign states 'Closed'". In the event, we found the 'Closed' sign but not withstanding polite enquiries, the alleged welcome was not forthcoming. We made up for this disappointment later at the excellent "Jolly Farmers" guest house in Kirkby Stephen. Friendly people, a small bar and good grub.

The route for the final two days (Kirkby Stephen to Appleby and then on to Penrith) was at a lower level and therefore something of an anticlimax. However, the weather stayed fine and we always had distant views of snow-capped fells. We passed several outcrops of the distinctive red Penrith sandstone which is the predominant building material in the area. At Flitholme we came across a forlorn looking Connex South Eastern railway carriage standing all alone at the end of the rails of a disused line. Are Connex aware that it has gone missing? How did it get there? Is it one that SE train spotters are searching for? Or did we imagine it?

Our final B&B was at "The Friarage" in Penrith - an old building of some character. We did not find much of character in Penrith on a cold Monday evening when we went out in search of a meal to celebrate our completion of the walk. The only thing of note was the local man, of whom we asked the way to a particular restaurant (closed on Mondays!) His parting remark was "It's nice to see a father taking his two daughters out for an evening meal". We finished up with a mediocre meal in a very mediocre pub. It served them right for laughing!

MILLENNIUM HUNDRED

The many members of the Millennium Hundred Committee who visited "The Land of the Prince Bishops" in May for the Durham Dales Hundred picked up a number of useful tips, particularly on the organisation and methods front. Before and after that work has been progressing on route planning and checking, booking halls for checkpoints, planning menus, staffing checkpoints, checking equipment available and needed, getting estimates for hire of transport, etc., etc.

At its meeting on 12th June the National Committee reconstituted its "Hundreds" sub-committee with a particular brief to ensure that information and experience is conveyed from the organising committee of each year's "Hundred" to the next so that there should be a cumulative build-up of useful knowledge.

In case you have not already made a note the dates for the main event are:-

Saturday 27th, Sunday 28th and Monday 29th May, 2000.

It will be a case of "all hands to the pump" so Kent Group members wishing to do the Millennium Hundred will be expected to enter the Marshals' Walk on 28th, 29th April and 1st May 2000 and, having done so, to be prepared to help at any time and place over the weekend of the main event, i.e. from 6.00 a.m. on Saturday 27th to 12 noon on Monday 29th May 2000. Members of Groups who have offered to run checkpoints and perform other tasks on the main event have already asked for entries to the Marshals' Walk so you are advised to ask Neal O'Rourke, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for an entry from as soon as they are out, i.e. 1st August.

The closing date for entries for the Marshals' Walk is **31st DECEMBER 1999**.

As it is some time since the Millennium Committee was formed (November 1997) it may be worth printing a reminder of members and their responsibilities:-

Chairman/Organiser & Catering, Paul Hatcher, Deputy Organiser & Merchandise, Kevin Puttock, Minutes Secretary & Route Editor, Keith Warman, Treasurer, Neil Higham, Entries Secretary, Pam Prince [REDACTED], HQ Controller, Tom Bowman, Marshals' Walk Organiser, Neal O'Rourke, Printing & Results, Bryan and Pat Clarke, Checkpoint Staffing, David Sheldrake and Tom Sinclair, Communications & Liaison, Brian Buttifant, Safety & First Aid, Ernie Bishop, Transport & Equipment, Trevor Blake and Jim Oddy, Booklet, Roger Thornburgh, Admin. & Sponsorship, Andrew Boulden, Badges & Certificates, Nick Dockree. Our link person with the National Committee is Avril Stapleton.

GROUP PHOTO ALBUMS

These interesting tomes which have been kept for many years by Laurie Lowe. If you have any photos of Kent Group members on events, social walks, at checkpoints etc. Please let Laurie have them and he will give me (Tom S.) the albums to be brought to our monthly pub gatherings by myself or A.N. Other.

A KENT KANTER

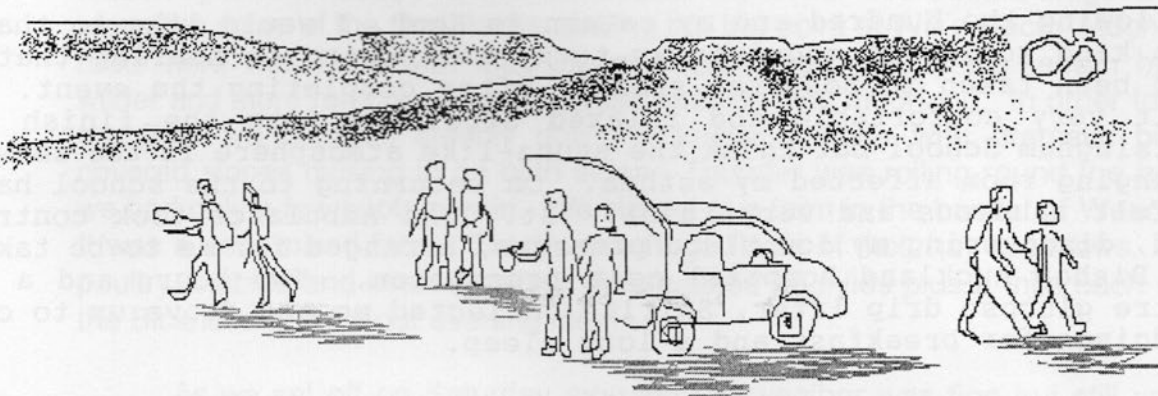
Laurie Lowe

The Kanter took place - as mentioned TWICE in the April newsletter - on June 6th. It started from the FREE car park in WYE and was supported by ONLY TEN members of the Kent Group.

The route of about 20 miles was through some of the best parts of the Kent countryside on paths and tracks which were easy to find and pleasant to walk. All that you had to do was to plot 9 grid references on your Explorer map and link them with a route of your own choice. What could be easier? I soon realised that all of the grid references located churches - so you did not have to be too accurate, just find the church and circle it. At each church there was a question to answer to prove that you had visited the location. The questions were really difficult, such as - "What is the name of the church?" or "How many weather vanes are there on the tower?" - real brain teasers. To combat mental and physical exhaustion, Mary and Paul met us half way round with the usual selection of refreshments. My arrival was timed to coincide with a crash of thunder and a hailstorm. They really had thought of everything!

Paul and Mary (ably assisted by Keith and Shirlie) had obviously put a lot of time and effort into organising this new event for us and I thought it was a great pity that it was not supported by more members. Four organisers to ten participants seems to me a pretty poor ratio.

Paul hopes to repeat the event next year* - presumably with EASIER questions to be answered. So WYE not treat yourself to Explorer map number 137, Ashford, learn how to plot a grid reference (instructions come with the map) and take part in this novel type of event?



One of Keith's suggested captions was:- "No.....it's this way". Alternative suggestions welcome.*As you will probably have deduced from the programme Paul was persuaded to put on another Kanter on 31st October but he wouldn't let me call it "Hatcher's Halloween Happening"

TS.

The Langley Home for Exhausted
Challenge Walkers

10/6/99

Dear Tom,

During my current absence from work, I now have had time to fully read the Group's April Newsletter. I thought you might like a few "titbits" for the August issue.....

THE DURHAM DALES HUNDRED

1. Comment heard from our Group Chairman following his successful completion of the Marshals' Walk...

"There's a lot of it in the open".

2. Comment heard by me inside Eggleston Village Hall (checkpoint 2 at 12 miles) from a fellow walker just leaving...

"Thanks a lot Checkpoint - see you Tuesday week".

(I was hoping to be finished within 48 hours).

3. I am sure I speak for all Kent Group walkers in the Durham Dales Hundred in offering my sincere thanks to our fellow members, spouses and friends who made the long journey north to support and encourage us. Sadly, not all of us who started were able to finish but hopefully the good scenery, kind weather and sight of familiar faces were enjoyed by all. I would also like to thank each Group member (together with the staff and pupils of Wheldon School, Nottingham) who assisted in the running of the ultimate checkpoint at Frosterley (at 96 miles) and who performed admirably in somewhat less than ideal conditions for the 30 hours duration of opening. A sterling effort indeed.
4. Following the Hundred and my return to Kent, I would like to thank the kind souls who enquired as to my well-being on hearing that I had been taken to hospital shortly after completing the event. I felt very comfortable and relaxed strolling into the finish at Wolsingham School but think the sauna-like atmosphere in the shower changing room affected my asthma. On returning to the school hall I felt nauseous and very faint. St. John Ambulance took control and, discovering my low blood pressure, arranged for me to be taken to Bishop Auckland hospital as a precaution. Two hours and a 1-litre glucose drip later, Shirly collected me and drove us to our lodgings for breakfast and a long sleep.

APRIL NEWSLETTER - SUNDRY SUMMITS

I read the list of County tops with interest, but was alarmed to see that one Shirly and I had attained over Easter was not there! Pilsdon Pen, Dorset, 909' and on the Wessex Ridgeway route; an 8-acre Iron Age hill fort with a short-cropped grass plateau summit in the care of The National Trust with, given a clear day, fine all-round views of patchwork fields and woodland clumps.

Kenton

A West Country Weekend

Shirley Higgs

When my twin brother, Hugh, moved to Somerset recently he expressed a desire to explore the Quantock Hills. A few months ago I discovered a booklet written by John Merrill describing a route through the Quantock and Brendon Hills from Taunton to Minehead. We decided to spend a long weekend at the beginning of July walking in the area. We based our route on John's walk with several diversions, some planned and some unplanned!

I met Hugh at Paddington and we caught a train to Taunton. It was not a good start to our expedition, as the train, the Cornish Express, was very crowded and the air conditioning system was not working. We disembarked at Taunton gasping for air and made our way to our B&B in the Staplegrove area. We stayed at a 16th century farmhouse accurately described in the brochure as "an oasis of peace and tranquillity". It was situated in the middle of a modern housing development near to an industrial estate, but there was a lovely secluded garden surrounded by mature chestnut trees. We enjoyed an excellent meal at the local pub where we were entertained by Morris Dancers.

Friday morning was humid and overcast as we set off through Staplegrove passing many large houses. The first few miles were across farmland and progress was slow due to the large number of stiles and the uncut hay meadows. We went through the unspoilt village of Kingston St. Mary where all the gardens were overflowing with bright summer flowers. Next came a steep climb up a narrow lane between high hedges with nothing to look at except the buzzards circling overhead. A little later we squelched along a seemingly endless muddy bridleway through woodland. The mud was red which made a change from the Kentish variety! Another steep ascent on a lane took us to Lydeard Hill where we stopped for our picnic lunch. The sun was out by now but the distant views were hidden by a heat haze. From here the route improved. We walked on good tracks along the spine of the Quantocks, visiting the trig point at Will's Neck. Much of the route here was lined with magnificent beech trees. Soon the terrain became wilder and more remote as we traversed heather clad moorland. In order to reach our B&B we plunged steeply down Bicknoller Combe with dramatic bracken covered slopes closing in on both sides. Thunder was rolling round the hills but we had only a few spots of rain. We stayed at a farm in the hamlet of Weacombe. It was a very mixed farm. There were huge fields of flax, hay meadows, sheep, poultry, stables and even a cattery. We walked 16 miles plus a mile each way to the Bicknoller Inn for our evening meal.

As we set off on Saturday morning the weather was fine but still very hot and humid. The first problem of the day occurred when we found the village shop in Bicknoller closed. We needed food for our lunch and there would be no other shops on the route. The only pub would be at Monksilver after 5 miles. Too early we thought. As it turned out progress was even slower than the previous morning. The waymarking was poor, the paths were not marked across crops and the stiles and footbridges were buried under stinging nettles and brambles. It took us 3 hours to cover the 5 miles to Monksilver and the pub was just opening when we

arrived. We drank home-made elderflower cordial while the staff kindly prepared some baguettes for us to take away. The next part of the walk was hilly and we had problems crossing a vast area of parkland with no features except electric fences! Some of the little lanes were delightful, with ferns growing on the banks. Others were bright with foxgloves and rosebay willow herb. We found an idyllic spot for our picnic at the hamlet of Leighland Chapel, but we didn't stop long as we were seriously behind schedule. Later we went astray in a large forest where there were numerous tracks on the ground but only a few shown on the map. We crawled into Dunster at 7.45pm, having walked for almost 11 hours and having covered 18 miles instead of the planned 16! There was one final ascent as our room was at the top of the hotel! My son and his wife, Paul and Stella, and their dog, Charlie, joined us at Dunster. We had a relaxed meal together and tried to forget our aches and pains after a long tiring day.

On Sunday morning we spent an hour strolling round Dunster, a touristy but attractive place, famous for the Yarn Market and for the impressive castle set on a hill above the village. We drove to Selworthy and indulged in a "tea shop crawl". After coffee and cakes at Selworthy Green we walked gently up to the beacon, then along the coast path and down to Bossington for crumpets, toasted teacakes and a huge pot of tea. We chose a low level wooded path back to Selworthy where we had time for another pot of tea before being driven to Minehead where we spent the night.

The day of our return journey started with a very enjoyable experience – a ride on the steam train along the West Somerset Railway. The line runs by the coast from Minehead to Watchet, then turns inland and goes between the Brendon Hills and the Quantocks to Bishops Lydeard. There are ten stations altogether, all lovingly restored. A few paid staff are employed but the railway is run mainly by enthusiastic volunteers.

My day ended badly. There were flash floods in the Maidstone area following a thunderstorm and part of the railway track was closed for a while. I had to wait at Otford station for nearly an hour and when I eventually reached West Malling there were no taxis – they were all marooned in the floods! Finally I managed to get home and found the flat roof over my kitchen leaking after the deluge.

A WELCOME TO THE NEW LDWA SECRETARY (PRO TEM)

Many of you will have heard via the grapevine of some emergency changes which have taken place on the National Committee. There will be a good many of you, on the other hand, who will not have heard of these changes. Notice of these changes will appear in the August edition of 'Strider'. However, as one of the changes has an effect on the Kent Group Secretary (and newly elected National Committee Member) - Tom Sinclair - I felt it would be appropriate to explain why these changes had to be made.

Since the beginning of the year I have been struggling with health problems. At the time of the AGM, in March, I thought I would be able to continue on for another year. However, just before Easter I encountered further problems, which virtually brought me to a standstill for two months, and I was unable to carry out the required Secretarial work. Following medical advice, at the beginning of April I wrote to the LDWA Chairman, Roger Michell, relinquishing my position as Secretary and Company Secretary but asking that I remain on the National Committee. It was a most difficult decision to make but felt, in the circumstances, that it was the correct one to take.

Having made my decision, the Chairman had to make some quick decisions himself as to who would take over the role. Rallying to the call came two stalwarts of the LDWA - (i) Ken Falconer who took over the role of Company Secretary; and (ii) Tom Sinclair, who took on the role of Secretary. I had given the Committee indications that I would be standing down at the 2000 AGM - circumstances had dictated that I relinquish the post much earlier than I had intended however. My thanks go to both Ken and Tom for taking over so quickly.

At their meeting, held on 12 June 1999, the National Committee confirmed (i) the appointment of Ken Falconer as Company Secretary, (ii) for Tom Sinclair to stand in as Secretary until the 2000 AGM, and (iii) to co-opt me (Les Maple) as a Committee member, again until the 2000 AGM.

I feel very sad and somewhat depressed about the whole affair but my major priority at the current time is to get my health problems sorted out so that I can, hopefully, get back to a position of stability and reliability. It will not be easy but I aim to try. I have every faith in both Tom and Ken in doing an excellent job and I wish them both the very best of luck.

Although my long distance walking is non-existent at present I hope that I may get the opportunity to meet up with many of you when I next visit Kent.

Les Maple

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Dear Group Secretary,

I am writing on behalf of the Surrey Summits Organising Committee. Like a number of similar events, the Surrey Summits had a reduced number of entries this year. The Committee would be interested to know:-

- 1) why our regular "Summiteers" did not enter this year's event and/or others in recent years, and
- 2) what changes people would like to see which might encourage them to enter in the future.

We are inviting comments and would appreciate it if you would extend this invitation to your group members.

Yours sincerely, Louise E. Cartwright, Surrey Summits Organising Committee,
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Hatcher and Friends,

Thank you for your donations totalling £36 donated by members of the Kent Long Distance Walkers' Association your donations are most gratefully received and will be used to help the funding of more Macmillan Nurses in Kent.

Yours sincerely, Simon Sharp, Macmillan Cancer Relief, Kent & East Sussex.

Editor's Note:- Those of you who joined Paul for his Cream Teas Walk, his tenth in successive years, will know that Mary regaled us with tea, scones with jam and cream, cream cakes, strawberries and more cream, in their garden at the finish. What we put in the "kitty" was a gesture of appreciation of Paul and Mary's efforts. Keith spoke eloquently about the ten Cream Teas Walks, most of which he had done, and Paul announced that, because of Millennium Hundred and other commitments he would not be putting on the walk next year. How about putting one on in your area next year?

"The skies are blue, the mountains are green and the wine is red."

WWW

"We are doing our best to reduce the European wine lake"

WWW

No, gentle reader, WWW does not stand for Wealden Waters Walk, let alone world wide web, on this occasion but "Wandering Wednesday Wrinklies".

Sunday 21 November, Annual Lunch and Walk

We do hope you will be able to come - if not to the walk, at least to the lunch, which will be at *The Shant*, Charlton Lane, East Sutton (south of Maidstone - GR835484).

Please see separate sheet for all details and booking form. If you would like to discuss it further please 'phone Hilary on [REDACTED] Roger and Hilary Thornburgh.

Many thanks for the entry form for the Dartmoor Perambulation; 50 arduous but enjoyable miles, with many drop outs in the slower groups. David Graham led the "A" team through the day's heat and the after-dark navigation nightmare. Potential dehydration was avoided by drinking two pints of shandy in 15 minutes at the Warren Inn. Please get more forms for next year; other Kent members should suffer too!

Don Newman.

DO KENT CHALLENGE EVENTS WARRANT A GOVERNMENT HEALTH WARNING ?

Should you even be reading this article, I ask myself. Is it an attack on Kent Challenge Events? The questions come thick and fast and I even haven't started to get down to the crux of the problem yet. I suppose I should give you a warning in preparation of what is to come. Should you feel a lump in the side of your face, please check the position of that muscular organ that resides in one's mouth - the one that is used in tasting, speaking, swallowing etc. - as you may just find it to be 'tongue in cheek'.

As many of you are aware, over the years, I have enjoyed coming to Kent to participate in a number of your Challenge Events. In the beginning all was OK - usually completing them trouble free. However, I do remember my first Wealden Waters event. A bright moonlit night it was, hardly used my torch at all. I was the last to finish. With applause fading in the background, I took off my boots and socks, only to find that my feet were in a dreadful state. I lost eight toenails as a result of that walk.

I completed the Invicta Hundred unscathed. It was hot and thirsty work, I remember it well. Little did I know that I was going to pay heavily for that success. During the Wealden Waters event (1993) I had two falls: (i) crossing a large ploughed field, in the darkness of the night, I tripped over a furrow and fell flat on my face; (ii) On leaving the meal checkpoint I remember a marshal telling me 'watch you don't fall going over the stile'. Never one to heed advice, I fell off the stile, flat on my back. Luckily the person in from had moved on otherwise I would have flattened him. No damage done.

Walking along part of the North Downs Way, on the Sevenoaks Circular (1995), I came across a section of ankle deep water in the middle of the path. I attempted to bypass it by walking along the bank. It was too steep. On turning round, to go back, my feet slipped and I ended up sitting on the bank, with my feet paddling in the water. When I tried to get up, however, I found I could not straighten up. It is the first time people had ever seen the 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' on the NDW. Gradually I managed to straighten up and made it to the next checkpoint, where a very sympathetic Neal (or was it Neal) offered me some comfort and consolation by stating that he had fallen, on the Marshal's Walk, at exactly the same spot. A week later I was to find out that I had a displaced pelvis as a result of that fall.

1996 was trouble free. I didn't do many walks due to health problems. By October 1997 I was ready to try again. It was the White Cliffs Walk which was my downfall this time. Got you. No I didn't fall this time. I struggled from the word 'go' due to weakness following a bout of influenza, which I had just before the event. Just before the 61.6km checkpoint, I pulled a muscle in my leg and consequently retired on my arrival. This made quite a change from falling over.

This brings me to October 1998. I had been asked, if I was well enough, to help a friend, Peter Saunders, navigate through the night, on the Wealden Waters Event. I was feeling pretty good and took up the challenge. My first mishap occurred, just after dark, in Ashdown Forest. I tripped over some bracken and went head first into a small sapling. 100 metres further on, as if to outdo me, another member of our small group collapsed, suffering from severe cramp. All went well until, just before the Bough Beech checkpoint, I went through a kissing gate and, in the dark, slipped off a plank footbridge into a ditch. Behind me I could hear the voice of Peter, who has sight problems, saying, 'I know you are down there somewhere - are you OK? At first I thought I was and continued on to Tonbridge School, where I collapsed on the floor. A very encouraging Brian Buttifant was standing over me expounding the fact that it was NOT the in-thing for a National Committee member to retire. However, he suddenly realised that I was in some distress and I was allowed to retire gracefully.

Thereby my tale of woe comes to an end, and the question raised in the title of this article comes to the fore - 'Do Kent Challenge Events warrant a Government Health Warning? Perhaps they do when the name 'Maple' appears on the list of entrants. Just in case Tom Sinclair is NOT receiving sufficient mail in his capacity as National Secretary, please convey your replies to him rather than to me. I have enough worries to think about, one of which is - After reading this, will I ever be welcomed back in Kent I wonder. I may be classified as a 'self-imposed health hazard'.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Saturday 11th September LDWA National Committee meeting
- Saturday 11th September National Trust Walk from Sandwich to Folkestone,
21 miles, Details from Shirley Spencer,, Scotney Castle,
[REDACTED]
- (The National Trust is calling this event the "White Cliffs Challenge Walk" but I dare not upset Kevin and Paul ,who devised **OUR** event, by mentioning that. Ed.)
- Saturday 20th November LDWA National Committee meeting
- Sunday 21st November Kent Group Annual Walk and Lunch
- 31st December Closing date for entries for Millennium Hundred Marshals' Walk
- 22nd January 2000 Closing date for entries for Millennium Hundred
- 22nd January 2000 LDWA National Committee meeting
- Sunday 30th January 2000 Kent Group AGM
- Sunday 5th March Sevenoaks Circular Marshals' Walk
- Sunday 19th March Sevenoaks Circular Walk

Mention of the Sevenoaks circular reminds me that a small working party comprised of Brian Buttifant, Ken Heath and Jim Oddy has been set up to be responsible for running the event and I am sure its members would welcome any ideas you might have. I hope I haven't missed anything very important and that I shall see many of you on 8th August at the Heart of the Weald Walk when D.V. this will be ready for distribution. Talking of the Heart of the Weald walk congratulations to the 14 members who completed the Marshals' Walk in the heat of Sunday 25th July. I must stop writing!

Contributions, please, by Monday 1st November, 1999.

Tom Sinclair, [REDACTED]