

Surrey Group
NEWSLETTER

February 1997

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Items for the Newsletter

Reports of past events, letters and other items should be sent to the Editor before the end of April for inclusion in the next Newsletter. Preferably they should be typed but legible manuscript will be gladly accepted.

Report : Molly's Welsh Weekend : 4/5/6 October 1996

" Meet in the car park at Abergavenny at 11am - you can't miss it" said Molly. I checked my watch, I double checked the GR but there was not a sign of a Surrey Group T-shirt. I walked round the car park twice, looking for a familiar car. Nothing! I was just about to give up, convinced I was a week too early, when around the corner appeared Janet & Co - they had been enjoying tea and scones in Linda's up the High Street! Within seconds Dan and Jean arrived. We were all set to go at the beginning of yet another Wales Weekend.

It was a dry and bright morning but the thin veil of very high clouds suggested changes to come. We headed south through the foothills of Blaenavon towards the notorious Elloreng ridge (Foxhunter was buried up here in 1964). The climb proved to be quite an endurance test as we battled through thick bracken to find the path. For a while the party disintegrated - at one stage all we could see and hear of Gillian were waving fronds and cries of "Wait for me" - but we soon regrouped to complete the walk. It had been a good start to the weekend.

The next day was dry and breezy, ideal conditions for the long ridge walk which started from the car park in the Taf Fechan forest and followed the classic Brecon horseshoe : Corn Du, Pen-y-Fan, Cribin, and then down the Waterfalls Valley; a distance of some 14 miles with spectacular views from start to finish.

Sunday was just as enjoyable. We climbed up from the car park at Post Cadwyn to traverse the Black mountains ranges in the vicinity of Capel-y-dlin and return through the Priory gardens at Llanthony - another 13 miles for those interested in distances.

At the end I reflected that although there is some truth in the rumour that the Wales Weekend is a gourmet's delight it is even more true that, thanks to Dan, it is an opportunity to do some first class ridge walking. Several times he demonstrated his fitness but he always waited for us to catch up and then encouraged us with the words that "Jean had probably just put the kettle on". We had good company, good food and wonderful memories.

John Loy

Report : Christmas Dinner Walk : Saturday 7 December 1996

A little 'dicky bird' had informed me of the interest and variety Mervyn Harvey provided on his Christmas walk. This was to be my third outing, with the Surrey Group, on this annual event. Sadly I missed one year when I got lost on the way to Dunsfold and arrived at the village hall ten minutes after the party had set off - I never did find them on that occasion. This year I made sure of getting there early.

A party of 19 set off from Dunsfold Village Hall, most intent on building up an appetite for the evening meal, and all wondering what surprises Mervyn had up his sleeve for this year. Making our way through woodland, our first port of call was the tea-room in Chiddingfold. An army of long distance walkers, most clad with a colourful array of paper bag footwear, trooped in for morning tea, coffee and snacks. Apart from one complaint of an overdone tea cake, it was a very pleasant interlude. Mervyn has a reputation for finding very interesting pubs/ Inns on these walks and he came up trumps again when he led us in to the colourfully decorated 'The Dog and Pheasant' at Brook. Those with insatiable appetites tucked in to a substantial lunch, some even indulging in having a pudding to 'boot'. We set off on the afternoon session of our walk, with members reminiscing on 'this used to be part of the old Punchbowl or Surrey Summits route'. Another feature of Mervyn's walk is the afternoon tea stop. Liz had once again positioned herself, and her car, at a convenient point along the route where we stopped for tea, coffee and her renowned lemon cake.

The last part of the walk turned out to be the most interesting. Mervyn, even unknown to himself, planned an unexpected orienteering exercise in the woods, and in the dark at that. Everybody had so enjoyed Liz's lemon cake that, I think, he was trying to get us back for a second helping. Having teased us long enough he got us back on route, and we arrived at the Village Hall at 15.30, leaving us with ample time to get ready for Christmas dinner in the Sun Inn. Twenty three members and guests sat down for an enjoyable meal. Keith Chesterton, in his speech, thanked all members of the Surrey Group, even those who were absent, for the work they had contributed towards making 1996 another successful year for the Group. I would like to add my thanks to Mervyn, and Liz, for another entertaining and enjoyable day. I hope to be back again next year. To all my friends and colleagues in the Surrey Group, I wish you a healthy and enjoyable 1997, with lots of good walking.

Les Maple

PROGR

Sunday 16 February

Not the SDW

About 19 miles. Start 9.00am from car park at NW tip of Burton Mill Pond, GR 978 180 50197. Lunch stop at 'The Fox'.
Leader : Elaine Edwards, Tel. 01243 262475.

Thursday 20 February

Social Walk

About 20 miles. Start in open space near Witley Church; GR 946 396 at 9.30am. Pub stop for lunch. Leader : Harry Bishop, tel : 0181 891 2210.

Sunday 23 March

Social Walk

About 21 miles. Follows route of the Guildford Boundary classic. Start at 9.00am at Newlands Corner on A25, GR 043 492. Pub stop for lunch.
Leader : Molly Grounds, tel : 01483 762843.

Thursday 10 April

Ashdown Amble

About 15 miles. Start 9.30am from Broadstone Picnic Area, GR TQ435 323, one mile east of Wych Cross and 300m east of the Ashdown Forest Visitor Centre. Lunch on village green or in Foresters Arms in Fairwarp.
Leader : Tony Youngs, tel : 01737 778615.

Sunday 13 April

The Peper Harrow Harrow

About 18 miles. Start 9.00am in car park at the Tarn on Pottenham Common, GR 912 457. Pub stop for lunch. Leader : Peter Bull, tel. : 01344 842508.

Sat/Sun 2/4 May

Downman Marshals Walk.

Contact Roger Moss for more details, tel. 01252 659553.

Thursday 8 May

Planning Meeting

Start 7.30 for 8.00pm in Prince of Wales, Shere. Slide show to follow.

AMME

Saturday 17 May

The Thames Trek

24 miles. Start 9.05am from Henley-on-Thames station to Eton along Thames Path. Park (50p) at Slough station for 8.30am train (8.07 ex-Paddington) to Twyford, then shuttle to Henley. Pub stop for lunch.

Leader : Richard Ineson, tel : 01344 777444.

Saturday/Sunday 24/25 May

Downsman 100

The Surrey Group Check Point at Garder Down (CP1) will open at 11.20am. Further details will be sent to those who have volunteered to help.

Thursday 12 June

New Alresford Amble

About 15 miles. Start on North carriageway of A31 in layby at GR 564321. Pub stop for lunch. Leader : Joan Wrenn, tel : 01483 38685.

Wednesday 25 June

Midsummer Walk.

Evening walk led by Barbara Blanchford, tel : 0181 390 5557. Start at 7.00pm from 49 Minstrel Gardens, Surbiton, GR 189 681. Please advise Barbara if you intend to take part.

Sunday August 10

Linchmere Loop

About 20 miles. Start at 9.00am from car park on south side of Haslemere railway station, GR 898 330. Pub stop for lunch.

Leader : John Lay, tel : 01932 346596.

Sunday 28 September

Dunsfold Kanier

12 or 20 miles from the Village Hall in Dunsfold. Start 9.15am. SAE for details to Brian Haigh, 17 Lower Edgeborough Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2DX.

Fri/Sat/Sun 10/11/12 October

Wales Weekend

The plan is to travel early on Friday and walk on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. More details from Molly Groundsell, tel : 01483 762843.

II Different Coast - to - Coast

The previous year I'd walked the Kangileoden in Lapland and fancied a change. This year it would be the Trans-Pennine Trail. My friends said "But haven't you done the Pennine Way already?". "No, No", I said. "This is different - it goes across England from Liverpool to Hull, via Widnes, Warrington, Manchester ...". They looked at me in pity. I felt unsure, too, when I looked at the Barnsley SO map and saw all the collieries and tips - how could there be a decent walk there?

I thought a week should be long enough for easy paths in flat country so off I went to find the start at remote Aintree station. Then, through the trackless wastes, to the Liverpool loop line. Nine miles of tarmac on this did my feet no good at all, tho' it was a pleasant end at Hale. A beautiful view across the Mersey estuary, but the pub had no food and the dog at my B&B wouldn't let me out in the morning.

Sunday started with a good stretch by the estuary, then a two mile diversion through the Widnes industrial estate to demonstrate why the chemical industry has such a bad environmental reputation, and along busy roads to reach a decent stretch by the river. Some good walking on the towpaths of the St. Helens and Bridgewater canals - tho' marred with years of uncleared rubbish scattered on the banks at the end - brought me to Sale and a realisation that I'd made my daily mileages on the long side!

But now the walk started to confound my sceptics. A green way through Manchester by the Mersey and the beautiful Etherow valley ended in a rural B&B with a nocturnal view from my bed of the lights of Marple. Tuesday was more parkland, an old rail line then over the Pennines on a rough moorland path to Penistone which would make a good overnight stop. Unfortunately, too many others had got there before me and I had to go back four miles to the Flocch Inn. They couldn't do B&B, but could do an evening meal and bed for a very reasonable price. Thankful, I left the deserted bar to have a shower and change and came down to a packed pub - full of customers who all looked over 80. A coach party on a mystery tour had pulled in. I remembered these from my youth but didn't know they still ran! They soon left and I examined the menu. It had Yorkshire Pudding sandwiches on it - a dish I had never seen before. I stuck to traditional roast beef and Yorkshire, and very good it was. For the morning, the landlord kindly loaned me an industrial sized toaster, so I could leave before he was up.

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I left at 7.30, walked to Pinstone and had a second breakfast there. The Dove Valley trail and other disused lines took me around Barnsley on a good country route but I then had to find the footpath through the remains of the Marston Main colliery. Faced with giant earthmovers in the way I decided not to insist on my rights. I also decided not to wade through a little stream which looked as if it contained more effluent than water. After a long detour on roads I reached my B&B near Barnburgh. This was one of the pit villages my local Labour Party had supported during the Miners' Strike. It was so quiet compared to then.

Thursday brought an attractive stretch by the River Dearne, and by the Don to another old rail line and intricate field paths to bring me to Carlton for my overnight stop. I didn't feel like following the official route to Gole as it looked both artificial and uninteresting, so followed the Aire to meet the Ouse at Boothferry. It was a good route with good views. There was then a long stretch by the Ouse, with wide views, only spoilt by the pubs not being open when I passed. I drank water from a churchyard tap instead.

The junction with the Humber was fascinating and there were more good views along the Humber. After a night in Brough, I continued along the Humber, past the junction with the Wolds Way (walked by me previously), to pass under the Humber bridge and on to the Hull foreshore. An unusual stretch over the old docks brought me back to modern Britain, to a shiny new pub and the first poor food of the week.

With a few exceptions, where more work needs to be done, it had made an excellent week's walk and had beaten my expectations. On my return, I urged my friends to try it.

Kevin Chesterton

Successful Year for Group

The AGM held on 16 January 1997 was told that 1996 had been another good year for the Group. There had been the usual varied programme of walks and good progress had been made towards organising the Downsman Hundred in May 1997. Financially there was a surplus of just over £500 which will be donated to various projects including the new camping barn on Putterham Common. The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary were all re-elected for another year. Reg Chapman agreed to continue as the Membership Secretary.

Report : The Inaugural Mid-week Social Walk : 28 November 1996

Our leader, Brian Haigh, accompanied by Molly Groundsell, Gillian Bull, Dave Challenger and the writer set out in misty conditions from the car park at Milton Heath on various muddy ways through the lovely Surrey country side of brown bracken, green bushes and trees with still plenty of leaves on them; the paths winding and zig-zagging through the splendiferous vegetation. I do like the Surrey Countryside at this time of year, summer gone, autumn still unfolding, refusing to give in to dreary winter. No rain today though and after a while we came upon the mist enshrouded cricket pitch at Coldharbour. Stopped and had a morning cuppa until called to proceed by the Captain. Steadfastly we climbed to the Tower on Leith Hill and ruminated, no one about so we carried on and after a further delightful stroll through woods we arrived at the Steven Langton pub at Friday Street. The pub was busy we soon got our victuals and beer and had an enjoyable stay in front of a log fire. Brian had a very tasty Game Casserole, something I am going to try myself next time. Just as my dazing time started our leader decided to continue the walk. Somewhat taken aback to be shunted out of this delightful hostelry I pulled on my boots and was led away.

The walk had been shortened from its advertised 18 miles to something near 15 but this was about right. We didn't have to worry about torches and were able to stroll through the rest of the afternoon without a care, admiring the North Downs, the tip of the spire of Ranmore Church and the various streams and waters we passed on our way back. The mist dispersed and we travelled now under blue skies and sun. A glorious little walk and day out for the collection of old timers (respectfully meant) who had dared to come out and challenge the ways of early winter on a sortie of some serendipity in a serene and sublime Surrey landscape.

Harry Bishop

Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996

The regulations, which have been introduced after the tragic incident in Lyme Bay, concern young persons under 18 who wish to take part in Challenge events. If the event meets the definition of an "Adventure Activity" then 18 year olds can only participate if they are accompanied at all times by their parent/guardian. Although "Adventure Activities" include "trekking" it is unlikely that any Surrey Group events will be affected. If in doubt you should contact the Secretary.