



Surrey Group Newsletter.

June 2001

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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 September for inclusion in the next Newsletter. Preferably they should be typed but legible manuscript will be gladly accepted.

Last year, I hoped you would be able to enjoy the good views that this walk has, but I'm afraid you will have to wait until 2002. At least I don't think the weather could be worse next year.

Indeed I have been given the **Herbert Gatliff Award** for, as the citation states "This year's event offered conditions underfoot that almost defied comprehension. Never has so much mud, let alone free cascading water been witnessed. Furthermore, never have atrocious circumstances been provided with such unremitting thoroughness, mile after mile."

Because the conferrer, Dick Ockenden, is such an expert on mud and its nature, this is truly a great honour.

The worst conditions were on **Elstead Common** on the 30 mile route, where the paths had disappeared in a great area of surface water, some walkers went straight through the water half way up their thighs, some took the advertised alternative and others got to the road early and used that.

Just to make you all jealous, the marshal's walk was held with a blue sky all day and the ground frozen for most of the way, causing some problems for joints with the hard lumps of clay. Five did the 25 mile walk: Ashley Saunders in 9hrs 5mins, John Lay in 9hrs 10mins, Ann Sayer, Molly Groundsell and Elizabeth Bryan in 9hrs 13mins. I walked to **Gibbet Hill** and then back to **Haslemere**.

Amazingly, considering the conditions, 73 entered on the day, and almost everyone said they'd enjoyed the challenge and hoped to be back next year. Can I offer my sincere congratulations to everyone who took part in the event, whether they completed either the 25 or the 30 mile routes or called it a day after a lesser distance. As would be expected, times were slower than last year with the first home, Chris Fanning, taking an hour longer than last year! Because of the difficulties, we kept the finish open longer than normal and gave certificates accordingly.

216 (211 in '00) entered the event (73 on the day), 29 failed to start and 36 did not finish either route, giving 151 finishers, 89 doing 30 miles and 62 doing 25 miles, as the damp conditions made some check cards difficult to read, there may have been a few mistakes, although these have been triple checked, YOU know what you have done.

I would once again like to thank all the marshals, who made it all run smoothly.... the plunge into darkness during the check-in was caused by one entrant ignoring three instructions NOT to use the electric toaster before the sockets had been sorted out!

Dave and Pat Challenger, Gillian Bull, Derek Bowdell, Brenda Ryan, and Phyllis Facer looked after **Downfold**.

John Lay, Les Maple, Louise and Tony Cartwright, and Ann Sayer did **Graywood**.

Brian Haigh, Caroline and Ashley Saunders, Ray Jolley, and Tom Sinclair did **Elstead**, I'm sorry that the number who tackled 30 miles gave you little to do!

John Westcott was on his own on **Gibbet Hill**, as a checker and a provider of 25 mile route descriptions.

At **Witley**, Lesley Nighingale and Don Turner did the entries and logged in the finishers, putting in another very long day. Ann Sayer also did entries and Jeff Ellingham and John Westcott also helped at the start. The kitchen was looked after by Derek Bowdell, Brenda Ryan, Phyllis Facer, Peter Edwards, Ken Styan, Janet Chapman, Cynthia McLeod and Jon Moore, Jon also looked after the parking at the start before doing the event himself! Jeff Ellingham booked the hall and helped at the start and finish, Reg Chapman provided most of the equipment and closed all the checkpoints, Ann Sayer was entry secretary, checked half of the route and helped at the start as well as at the **Graywood** checkpoint. Brian Haigh checked the other half of the route.

After the event had finished, Harry Wickens produced the usual comprehensive results. My grateful thanks to you all and my apologies to anyone who I may have missed. After lowering the entry fee six years ago it now looks as if rising costs will make Surrey Group raise the entry fee next year, but I still think that it will be the cheapest one around. Next year I will also make the cut-off time at Gibbet Hill, when entrants have to do the 25 mile route earlier, a number of people left themselves too little time for the last ten miles of the 30.

Kerith Chesterton
Thursday 25 January

Hoe Stream Hap

On Thursday 25 January sixteen walkers (nine men and seven women) left Woking Leisure Centre for a sixteen mile circular walk. The leaders were Molly Groundsell and Elizabeth Bryan, both of whom clearly knew the area very well indeed.

We went in an easterly direction along the Hoe Stream which looked more like a river due to the excessive rain this winter. The morning stop was at Wisley Church, then we continued to the Black Swan at Ockham, via the Semaphore Tower, being midweek the pub was quite empty and it was a pleasure to order food and have plenty of room to sit down.

The going was soft throughout but in the morning the sun shone and we thought how lucky we were. While at lunch, however, the weather changed and by the time we reached the RHS Garden Centre on our return, we had heavy rain, two lightning strikes each followed closely by a clap of thunder, a rainbow, and finally, a superb sunset.

We made our way back along the Wey Navigational Canal and saw many signs of flooding in adjacent fields. Altogether a typical and excellent winter walk. Thank you Surrey for putting regular midweek walks on your programme.

Frank Kirkbride (London Group)

MABAC Running League

This running club was founded in the sixties by Alan Blatchford who also founded the LDWA together with Chris Steer. Any member of Surrey LDWA who may occasionally feel like breaking into a kanter would be made very welcome by their organiser Ralph Herley Tel:01784 252104. The running programme can be seen on their website - www.mabac.org.uk. The Windsor Winter Wander details are also given elsewhere in this newsletter.

Membership Renewal Forum

In this day and age two pounds a year is still incredibly good value when you consider what you get in return - a thorough drenching, the usual experience, Misters, countless stiles to climb, a healthy thirst, and most importantly, the opportunity to make many new friends. Because membership renewals were not sent out with the last newsletter, members are respectfully requested to send their subs to Reg Chapman at their earliest convenience.

Friday/Monday, 12/15 October

October Three-Day Event.

This year the walking programme will take place in the area around Dunsdale and will be based at Newton House, an hotel near Addlestone in the Peak District

More information from the organiser - Molly Groundsill Tel: 01483 762843

Sunday 21 October

Founders Challenge

26 miles Start: 9.00am (10.30 am runners) from Peaslake Memorial Hall

Explorer 145 GR 085446

More information from organiser - Bill Thompson Tel: 020 8992 0991

Saturday 27 October

East Surrey Group of Tugs

19 miles Start: 9.00am from Botley Hill CP. Pub stop for lunch

Explorer 146 GR 358555. This is the second of a series of walks to climb all 41 tugs over 150m in Surrey (seven today)

Leader Keith Chesterton Tel: 01483 563392

Saturday 18 November

Look Out and About

16 miles Start: 9.00am from the Look Out CP, Bracknell. Pub stop for lunch

Explorer 160 GR 876661

Leader - Richard Ineson Tel: 01344 777444

Thursday 22 November

Bull Walk in the Park

16 miles Start: 9.00am from Savill Gardens CP. Pub stop for lunch

Explorer 160 GR 977206

Leader - Gillian Bull Tel: 01344 842508

Saturday 8 December

Christmas Walk and Dinner

15 miles Start: 8.45am from Village Hall CP, Thaxfield

Explorer 134 GR 007365. Dinner at 7.00pm at the Sun Inn, Thaxfield

Leader - Mervyn Harvey Tel: 01798 344309

Please book early with Mervyn

Thursday 27 December

Windsor Winter Wander

12 miles Start: 9.00am walkers, 10.00am runners from RAF Memorial CP, Coopers Hill Lane

Englefield Green. Landranger 175 GR 996748. Small charge for route description.

Organiser Ralph Henley (MAHAC Running League) Tel: 01784 252004

Tuesday 1 January

Surrey Inns Kanteer

20 or 12 miles Start 9.00/11.00am from St. Catharines Village Hall, Goddard

Explorer 145 GR 992485 To finish by 4.30pm

More information from organiser - John Lay Tel: 01932 146596

Sunday 13 January

Winter Tamers Silver Jubilee

30 or 20 miles in 13 hrs. Start 7.30/9.30am from Leatherhead Municipal CP.

Explorer 146 GR 164566

More information from organiser - John Westcott Tel: 01276 856672

Friday/Monday, 12/15 October

October Three Day Event.

This year the walking programme will take place in the area around Dunsdale and will be based at Newton House, an hotel near Ashbourne in the Peak District

More information from the organiser - Molly Groundsell Tel: 01483 762843

Sunday 21 October

Founders Challenge

26 miles Start: 9.00am (10.30 am runners) from Peatcliffe Memorial Hall

Explorer 145 GR 085446

More information from organiser - Bill Thompson Tel: 020 8992 0991

Saturday 27 October

East Surrey Group of Taps

19 miles Start: 9.00am from Botley Hill CP. Pub stop for lunch

Explorer 146 GR 398555. This is the second of a series of walks to climb all 41 taps over 150m in Surrey (seven today)

Leader Keith Chesterton Tel: 01483 363392

Saturday 10 November

Look Out and About

16 miles Start: 9.00am from the Look Out CP, Bracknell. Pub stop for lunch

Explorer 160 GR 876661

Leader: Richard Ineson Tel: 01344 777466

Thursday 22 November

Ball Walk in the Park

16 miles Start: 9.00am from Savill Gardens CP. Pub stop for lunch

Explorer 160 GR 977706

Leader: Gillian Bell Tel: 01344 842508

Saturday 8 December

Christmas Walk and Dinner

15 miles Start: 8.45am from Village Hall CP, Thunfield

Explorer 134 GR 007365 Dinner at 7.00pm at the Sun Inn, Thunfield

Leader: Mervyn Harvey Tel: 01798 344399

Please book early with Mervyn

Thursday 27 December

Windsor Winter Wander

17 miles Start: 9.00am walkers, 10.00am runners from RAF Memorial CP, Coopers Hill Lane

Englefield Green, Lambourne 175 GR 996748. Small charge for route description

Organiser Ralph Hoxley (MAHAC Running League) Tel: 01784 252104

Tuesday 1 January

Surrey Inns Kuster

26 or 32 miles Start 9.00/11.00am from St. Catharines Village Hall, Goddard

Explorer 145 GR 992485. To finish by 4.30pm

More information from organiser - John Lay Tel: 01932 346596

Sunday 13 January

Winter Tanners Silver Jubilee

20 or 20 miles in 13 hrs. Start 7.30/9.30am from Leatherhead Municipal CP

Explorer 146 GR 364566

More information from organiser - John Westcott Tel: 01276 856672

Winter Tanners

Sunday 14 January 2001

Well! What a day? After the gloom of the autumn weather which caused some events in the South East to be cancelled it was gratifying to have the Winter Tanners held in the middle of a period when high pressure was hovering over Britain. The result was a perfect winter day, bright sunshine nearly all day showing off the Surrey hills to good effect but very cold which meant the ground stayed hard as the frost persisted to suppress the lurking mud.

The good weather forecast and the introduction of shorter route alternatives attracted a bigger entry on the day than expected and I had not prepared enough route descriptions to cope with all those who turned up, it seems most want to see what the weather was like before they parted with their money. Thanks to all those arriving after 8.30am who cooperated to alleviate the crisis by sharing route descriptions and a big thank you to Hilary Walker who arrived with extra photocopies to help expand the meagre rations.

My start point for devising the 30 mile route this year was to use the footpath between **Ford Farm and Blackheath Lane**, also, I have always thought the footpath between **Pastford Farm and Lockner Lodge** has a much better outlook than the much used tracks through **Blackheath Forest**. This combination meant going to **St. Marthas** and touching **Newlands Corner**, and so, ever looking for new ideas, I decided to take the route into the hitherto uncharted Tanners area of **Merraw and the Clansons**.

The 20 mile route short cut between **Gomshall and Rammore Common** mainly using the **North Downs Way**. Originally I had a more imaginative route in mind which rejoined the 30 mile route at **Hookwood Farm**, but when I walked out the fenced bridleway from **Combe Lane** to the farm in December I was up to my knees in mud and I thought I could not take even LDWA walkers through that.

The 28 mile route was also a December afterthought in that with all the rain we had had I was expecting muddy conditions and felt there may be some who would not wish to do 32 miles when they were expecting to do 30. As it turned out the view of **north west Surrey** on the descent into **West Clanson** was splendid (surprising even me) and compensating for not seeing the main feature of the 30.

Many of you have asked me to extend your thanks to my helpers on the day and I too would like to thank all involved for their help and cooperation. Although all did sterling service I would like particularly to mention 8 year old **Edward Ireson** who made and served the tea at checkpoint 3. (Tanners YH Jand kept the fire going.

The appeal for the National Trust realised £69.99 This donation will be put towards the Surrey Hills Appeal which is used to help maintain and improve footpaths and open spaces owned by the National Trust, much of which the Tanners routes go over. Many thanks to all those who contributed.

For those of you who got lost, take heart from an extract from Alan Blatchford's 1977 report "I think that the party I was "leading" must have wondered who devised the course, on at least two occasions we were quite lost for several minutes and only a bit of trial and error navigation got us back on route". Alan was the welly shod organiser. I do not wish to tell you too much about the past at this stage because 13th January, 2002 is the day for The Winter Tanners Silver Jubilee and I hope to do a review in conjunction with that milestone. I hope to see you then.

G.

John Westcott.

Since early February, due to the force of circumstances, we were left thinking hard about what alternatives were available and where to go for a good walk. Therefore it was with much relief and anticipation that we made our way by train, bus, and chauffeured car to the rendezvous with Richard Ineson, the leader for the day at Chalfont rail station and the beginning of a 25 mile 'stroll' upstream towards the City and all points beyond.

We started downhill to reach the towpath at the **Thames Flood Barrier** where the gates with their stainless steel cowls were shining in the brilliant early morning sunshine, there were no other pedestrians about at this hour, hardly surprising, considering the area, the fact that it was blowing quite a gale from the East and, after all, it was a bank holiday!

There were seventeen of us altogether including friends from Thames Valley, London, and Kent groups as we set off with enthusiasm towards the first obvious landmark to be seen around the first bend, (the first of many) of the river: the **Dome**, deserted now apart from a few drowsing buses waiting outside the glittering new tube station.

As we continued on our way along the meandering south bank of the Thames, the developments of **Canary Wharf** on the opposite side became very apparent with two new office block towers going up alongside the original, also, as we progressed further westwards towards the City, all the north bank, which, not so long ago consisted mainly of deserted wharves and rusting derricks, has now been replaced with six figure pent houses and apartment blocks with their 'stunning river views etc etc.' to quote the usual estate agent jargon.

The **Royal Observatory** could be seen up on the hill in **Greenwich Park** as we passed swiftly by to meet up with two more walkers: Tim and Karin Dawe who had come up from Horsham to join us at the **Catty Sark** jolly. By now the breeze had dropped and we were all warming up as Richard maintained a steady 3.5mph onwards along **Shad Thames** passing **Charlie Chaplin's** seat, whom, had he been alive on this day, would have been celebrating his 112th birthday.

The newly published 'Lonely Planet' guide tells us that the cost of visiting London has become 'horrendous'. This is not very apparent today. As we approach **Tower Bridge** we are faced with a whole new dimension for long distance walkers..... bodies, lots of them, all coming in the opposite direction, and all out to enjoy themselves in the vast choice of cafes, restaurants, bars, and bistros that line our route along the **Southwark** bank.

Now it is lunchtime and we are all needing to be fed and watered! Richard knows this and leads us swiftly down **Borough High Street** to the **George Inn**, this is the only surviving galleried pub left in London, here we enjoy an excellent pub menu at very reasonable prices. After a quick photo session in the ancient courtyard we set off again through **Borough Market**, passing **Southwark Cathedral**, and out along **Bankside** to the new and very popular **Tate Gallery Building** which is absolutely teeming with sightseers just having a good time. Meanwhile, near by, the new **Millennium Bridge** sits, deserted and sulking.

Continuing on along **Gabriel's Wharf**, a little plaza with shops, craft stalls and more eating houses, we pass the uninspiring concrete castle which is the **National Theatre**, with no time to browse through the open air bookstalls under **Waterloo Bridge** we then jostled by the far more friendly facade which is the **Festival Hall** and then on through the milling crowds that thronged the **London Eye**, hugely popular on this spring afternoon.

By now our numbers were beginning to dwindle as some of us opted for the train home from Waterloo. The pace began to get back to normal now as we left the sightseers behind us after Westminster Bridge, passing Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament on the opposite bank. The pavement stretched out ahead of us passing first Lambeth Bridge and then Vauxhall Bridge so that it was with some relief that we entered the greenery of Battersea Park where we were able to walk over soft grass, the first for about fifteen miles.

Here we stopped for a very welcome cup of tea and to admire the views across the ornamental lake before retracing our steps through the Festival Pleasure Gardens to rejoin the towpath at the London Peace Pagoda, a resplendent monument standing an impressive 100 ft high with its gilded statues of Buddha on each corner along with wind bells and detailed ornamentation.

Continuing further upstream we now had to make a detour away from the river for a short distance through the streets and lanes around Wandsworth Bridge before entering, through a small decorative arch the pleasant environment of Wandsworth Gardens following the avenue of plane trees and azaleas and, thankfully, more grassy stretches.

Another half mile and we reached Putney High Street, here yet more of the party decide that it was time to find a train home. The remainder of us headed for Putney Bridge and the towpath to walk off upstream towards Hammersmith, in just a few yards the start point for the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race was passed and also the famous rowing clubs that line the Putney Embankment.

About a mile farther on and we could here a lot of noise coming across the water from the opposite bank where Fulham Football Club seemed to be having a good day at Craven Cottage. Of all the bridges we have passed during the course of this walk, Hammersmith must surely be the most ornate, bomb repairs aside. Yet one more of our number decided to call it a day and head for Hammersmith Tube, and so we continued, passing underneath the bridge and following the path along the side of St Pauls School playing fields, yet further on passing the old 18th century cottages on Barnes Terrace until we reached Barnes Bridge, the twenty mile point.

Here the writer of this little dispatch decided, along with others, that he'd better head off home and so bid farewell to the remaining six hardy souls who were left from the original nineteen as they continued westwards towards a glorious sunset and Kew Bridge to complete the 25 miles.

Thank you Richard for dreaming up this "Surrey Hills Alternative", I'm sure I speak for all that came when I say it was certainly different and very exhilarating! Watch this space for the next Thames Path Walk Part Two.

Ed

Planning Meeting and Supper

By popular demand arrangements have now been made with the people at our new venue, The Drummond Arms, Albury for an evening meal to be served AFTER the usual planning meeting which need not take more than ninety minutes to wrap up. *

Orders are taken until 9.30pm and so, providing we finish planning by 9.00pm, this will allow them plenty of time to cater for all our needs. Menus will be circulated to those members who express an interest two weeks beforehand.

Please come along and give support to your local LIPWA group, for some time now comments have been made that we do not socialise enough, the Christmas Walk and Dinner being about the only time. Here's the opportunity! Speak to John Lay for more details.

B.