**Courses for Horses, Sunday 15th May 2016**

12 walkers, 24 miles – leader Peter Jull

A cosmopolitan dozen from London, Kent, Sussex & Surrey, Colombian, South African, Scottish, English even, set off to walk Courses for Horses. Recce had revealed too many of the paths in this part of Kent are poorly maintained; stiles wobbly, broken, overgrown, just generally difficult; arable fields too rarely reinstated and then misaligned; waymarks missing, electric fences; so the route was now to be 24 miles to avoid the worst blockages. With vegetation growing at full spurt the first nettles were soon stinging and crops needing wading. Two Limousin bulls weren't scary but scurried of scared as we struggled across their huge hoof marked field now ankle challengingly drying. After elevenses silage on the stem was thigh high as a fresh path was trampled. Even a small rotavator rally had set up across the path at one point for us to dodge. The Drum at Stanford, which is hosting 2018 100 committee meetings, hosted us for lunch where sitting outside was just too chilly though it was close to ideal for walking. Just after lunch the first horse course was reached, the recently retired Folkestone. Where thoroughbreds had thundered walkers now wandered. Farmers and other seem to conspire to discourage access the next course, Aldington point to point, but we made it to the jumps for photo posing. Still mostly on the level (less than 1200ft ascent all day) time was marching away as we marched on. Just before the end we'd missed the last race by 42 years with only the stable block left of Wye racecourse. Pushing on past overgrown hedging hurrying just caught the 7.20 heading for Victoria.

Photographs by Peter Jull