

## LDWA London Walks 2009

### **Sun 27 Dec 2009 Peter Saw's Christmas Walk c18ml.**

Start Norbiton stn 8.43. Depart London Waterloo 8.18. Finish Richmond stn. Lunch in National Trust Morden Hall Park. A walk including 3 rivers, beautiful parkland and of course a windmill after lunch. This should be a great opportunity to shed the Christmas flab and get away from the in-laws. Hope to finish in the light but bring a torch just in case. Ldr Susanne Waldschmidt

*Summary: c.18 miles. Ldr Susanne Waldschmidt*

*Cold but very sunny weather. 6 walkers. A walk including 3 rivers, beautiful parkland and of course a windmill after lunch in Morden Hall Park. A welcome send off from Peter and Hilary Saw with warm mince pies. A very enjoyable and sociable walk. Susanne*

### **Sun 20 Dec 2009 Farnham Circular 18ml. Start Farnham stn 9:15.**

Depart London Waterloo 8:07. Lakes and hills to The Ciderhouse at Shackleford for lunch and tea at Seale. Return trains at 34 and 59 past the hour. Free car park at Farnham stn. Map Exp 145. Ldr Nicole Carbonara will replace Roger Moss. Joint walk with Surrey Walking Club

*Summary: 18 miles. Nicole Carbonara replaced Roger Moss*

*By the brightest and most crisp day of the year, 20 walkers set off in snow and ice for this beautiful walk designed by Roger Moss. Lots of new members, who were doing their first walk with LDWA, proved to be strong and fast walkers. We were able to complete the walk in daylight on one of the shortest days of the year without losing anyone, thanks to Steve, our very efficient backmarker, who kept the large group together without needing to use his legendary virtual whip. Yes, I know, the 21st of December is the shortest day of the year, not the 20th, but only by 5 seconds... In more than 10 years that I have been in this country it was the first time the sky didn't show a single trace of cloud all day long. The morning walk was mostly in deep forests with a small hill from where we could embrace a wide panorama while the (lengthy) orders of food were telephoned to the pub. We passed large and completely frozen lakes. Despite the fact that the pub was very busy preparing and serving their Christmas meals and had trouble coping with 16 hungry walkers, we managed to stop for less than one hour. The first part of the afternoon, before the tea stop, was in fields covered with snow, then more forests and great views from the North Downs Way. We enjoyed a leisurely tea in the in Seale, lovely tearoom with wonderful cakes. Then the last part of the walk was in a sumptuous sunset and we finished under a poetic moon crescent. We reached Farnham station at 4:45, in time for the 5 o'clock train to London. Nicole*

### **Sat 12 Dec 2009 North London Safari plus Panto 18ml.**

Start Golders Green (Northern Line) 9:00. Finish Hackney Empire. Credit crunch. Can't afford the Serengeti. Try Islington! You will be astonished by the big game to be seen (oh yes you will). The walk will mainly follow parks and canals, finishing at Hackney Empire (nice bar) for an early performance of Aladdin followed by an evening meal. Lunch on the Farm. Ldr Susanne Waldschmidt (for panto/meal tickets see social events).

*Summary: 16 miles. Ldr Susanne Waldschmidt*

*An enjoyable walk for 14 walkers in good weather from Golders Green to Hackney Empire through parks and along canals, including hidden corners of Islington and Hackney.*

*Lunch at Freightliners Farm. Highlight of the walk was seeing several hundred Father (and Mother) Christmases at Camden Lock. Great performance of Aladdin to finish up with. Susanne*

**Sat 5 Dec 2009 Linear Ashurst and the Weald 23ml.**

Start Ashurst stn 8:57. Depart London Bridge 8:08. Via Medway Valley and Ashdown Forest. Pub stop at Poundgate. Finish Buxted stn. Train users buy returns to Buxted. Please bring headtorches just in case we finish slightly late. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

*Summary: 23 miles. Ldr Mike Ratcliff*

*Our first walk of December saw nine of us walkers meet at Ashurst Station for a linear walk south over the High Weald to Buxted via sections of no fewer than five long distance paths. Starting in Kent we very soon crossed the border into East Sussex, following the River Medway upstream towards its source in the weald near Forest Row. A gloriously mild and sunny day was a welcome bonus although it was truly difficult to imagine more testing conditions underfoot with a tremendous amount of standing water and clawing mud paying testament to the recent heavy rains. We soon past Henry VIII's Hunting Lodge of Bolebrook Castle and then climbed to a beautiful promontory on an area of high ground near Coomb Wood where we were treated to spectacular sweeping views over the hills of the mid weald to the south where we were heading. Picking up the old dismantled railway near Hartfield we swung back eastwards to take the Wealdway south towards our long climb up through woodland onto the open, barren expanses of Ashdown Forest with its distinctive scrub and heather strewn terrain. By this time in the year, winter always somehow seems to have its talons through our landscape with the trees now looking bare and beautiful and the daylight hours seeming so brief and precious. Finally reaching Poundgate after fifteen miles we were welcomed by a very comfy and warm pub, The Crow and Gate, which had a delightful log fire going and a beautiful rustic atmosphere, especially welcome now as the weather was by this time turning against us with a heavy grey sheet of cloud sweeping in on the strong south westerly winds. With two thirds of the walk complete, we left our lunch stop well rested but although it was still only early afternoon there was no mistaking the strong sense of night already setting in. Under a menacing sky and with rain now starting to fall we took a south easterly course towards Hadlow Down through some steeply undulating fields, ploughing our way through sopping wet grass and leafy undergrowth that felt at times like it was floating on a subterranean sea. However, determination was clearly in abundance as we made our final push south west down a very long, winding bridleway that was clearly a very ancient track, forming a deep and well trod gash in the rural landscape. With head torches now on, our procession of bobbing lights finally made our north westerly ascent into Buxted where another pub, The Griffin Inn, made a very pleasing resting place for us to wind down while we waited for our train to carry us back through the night to London. Mike*

**Sun 29 Nov 2009 Darenth Valley Circular 19ml.**

Start Eynsford stn 9:18. Depart London Cannon Street 8:23 to Swanley from where there is a replacement bus service for the 15 min trip to Eynsford. Early lunch booked for 12:30 at the Crown in Otford. (It is open day in Otford so will be busy with Morris dancing promised). Ldr Lonica Vanclay

*Summary: ....otherwise known as the golf courses traverse!*

*19 miles. Ldr Lonica Vanclay*

*10 walkers gamely followed as I set off from Eynsford railway station just before 9.30. The morning was not as wet as had been predicted and steadily and cheerfully we walked*

*past the Roman Villa (where as a child Paul had watched the mosaics being uncovered); the first golf course; then through woods to the information centre - where we hoped to meet Nick and Judith (who had gone home to get Nick's boots as he had mistakenly brought Judith's!). Unfortunately they weren't there so we continued on along the river past the lavender and hop field, then up the hill and along the low ridge and down to Otford.....where to Dave's great delight we were given free mince pies complete with morris dancers .....open day in Otford! I get a few brownie points for that he says! And happily we met up with Nick and Judith...(who had detoured via the Bird of Prey centre!). Lunch was good and the roaring fire was very welcome for those who had eaten sandwiches outside. Marita enjoyed the free coffee in the village hall - another open day delight! So an hour later we were off again and now we were 12 walkers plus leader - though only for 5 minutes as Susanne was not well and took the train from Otford. By now the rain set in and was steady - but undaunted we scampered up to the North Downs Way and followed it along for an hour or so before turning down to Knatts Valley - via another golf course. Fortunately the rain was so heavy the driving range we had to cross was completely empty. Up the stairs and past the weekenders to Romney Street, then down through another golf course to the valley bottom. As dusk came, the rain stopped and the full moon meant we didn't need torches as we followed the small road back to Eynsford passing - yes you guessed! - another golf course. Lonica*

### **Sat 21 Nov 2009 Linear Wadhurst to the Rother 23ml.**

Start Wadhurst stn 9:21. Depart London Charing Cross 8:15. Via Bewl Water and Rother Valley. Pub stop at The Moor. Finish Robertsbridge stn. Train users buy returns to Robertsbridge. Please bring headtorches just in case we finish slightly late. Joint walk with LDWA Kent. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

*Summary: 23 miles. Ldr Mike Ratcliff*

*Exactly one month before the shortest day of the year saw our group of walkers setting off from Wadhurst station on a typically autumnal day with most of the leaves now underfoot and the few remaining on their branches glowing with fiery hues typical of late November foliage. Heading east from Sussex we soon passed into Kent and down to Bewl Water where the scrawly rain clouds that had threatened us from the start now gradually began to dissipate, allowing a surprisingly warm and crisp blue sky to break through. As we traversed the main dam of the reservoir on its northern shore we were treated to a spectacular glare of shimmering light as the low winter sun reflected off the water below us with the Bewl Valley meandering its way north east through the haze when looking the other way. The Sussex Border Path served as our route for much of the days' walking with a notable variety of landscapes changing along the way, passing through golden deciduous woodland round the eastern shore of Bewl; some beautiful coniferous woods near Union Street and many farms with large, gracefully undulating fields both pastoral and arable, creating a patchwork of colours and textures for a travellers eye. One particularly striking feature of the walk were the ubiquitous oast houses that dotted our path of so many styles and ages that are so common around the Kent and Sussex border. Finally reaching The Moor for our lunch stop, most of us were feeling well due for a rest as we had by then completed over fourteen miles of our walk. The Eight Bells looked after us very nicely with a warm and comforting village pub atmosphere that rendered us jovial but almost too relaxed as by now the world was cooling down and the clouds were looking darker and heavier as we headed south east towards the Rother Valley. Standing for six hundred and twenty four years, Bodium Castle announced itself to us with no shortage of medieval drama and awe inspiring magnificence as we ascended the crest of the hill at Court Lodge Farm and found ourselves staring down upon this exquisite ruin with its fairytale castellated defences and impressive moat and*

grounds. We finished our walk by pushing on in a westerly direction towards Robertsbridge with the River Rother snaking its way at the bottom of its valley to our left. Under the dim glow of an early evening sun, passing through some lovely orchards with their soft floors of decaying fruit and leaves allowed us our last glimmers of daylight as dusk fell with the grand tower of the church at Salehurst creating an austere but pleasing silhouette on the gloomy western horizon. Finally the lights of Robertsbridge greeted us with some enticing smells wafting from the restaurants and shops on the high street as we crossed for our final climb up to the station and our walking complete. Mike. Mike's reputation as a leader has travelled so far from London that a member came all the way from Yorkshire to walk with us. Nic

### **Sat 14 Nov 2009 Linear walk East Croydon to Crayford c. 22ml.**

On the London Loop. Meet at the main entrance of East Croydon stn at 8:30. We will catch the Croydon tramlink to Coombe road stn. Anyone who wants, can go directly to Coombe road tram stn. We will start walking from there at 8:45 The South East section of the London Loop over Addington Hills, West Wickham, Keston with pub or picnic lunch at Farnborough. Then Petts wood and the Cray valley finishing at Bexley station. Bring torch just in case. Ldr Jerome Ripp

*Summary: c. 22 miles. Ldr Jerome Ripp*

*"No one will come, go back to bed" said my wife as we stared out of the Stygian 6.30 gloom into rain, high winds, hail and the odd rumble of thunder. Worst storm of the year said the forecast. "Better just check" I said and sure enough there were 8 other nutters, I mean determined walkers ready for anything that the weather could throw at us. By the time we had crossed the Addington hills for the first mile we were very wet but the old adage says "Rain before 7, fine before 11", and when we passed near Susan's house in Spring Park, the rain had gone and the strong winds soon dried us out. We even managed a short break at Keston Ponds and then on to lunch at Farnborough. Things went downhill rapidly after that with some torrential driving rain which led to our first retirement and then the leader decided that since we were on the London Loop, the walk needed another loop and managed to walk about a mile to almost return to the lunch stop. Dave Williams would have been proud of me. However it was a short crisis, the path was resumed, the sky cleared and it was a pleasant bracing afternoon with even a glimpse of the sun for a few seconds. Through parks, woods and then the Cray valley. 6 of us made it to the end at Bexley, having covered about 21 miles in 7 and a half hours. Jerome*

### **Sat 7 Nov 2009 Linear Berrylands to East Croydon 21ml.**

On the London Loop. Start Berrylands stn 8:30. Depart London Waterloo 8:06. Coffee shop for lunch. Ldr Jerome Ripp

*Summary: 21 miles. Ldr Jerome Ripp*

*17 of us gathered at Berrylands station for what turned out to be a glorious autumn day, lots of sunshine, bright crisp and clear. We were following the South West section of the London Loop and despite the proximity of urban sprawl, we spent most of the day in lovely countryside; woodlands, downs, riverside paths. Some muddy sections but generally the ground conditions were very good. Along the Hogsmill river, over the A3, passing a Go Kart track and soon down to the duck ponds at West Ewell for a break. A lovely trail in Nonsuch Park and after a road section, another fine stretch over Banstead Down, through woods with lots of photo opportunities to capture the autumn colours. Lunch at noon in the Craft Centre Cafe in Oaks park which the participants thought was*

excellent food at reasonable prices. Over lavender fields and then a tricky road negotiation through Coulsdon but once through we were rewarded with a superb loop over Farthing Down, by now some of us feeling quite suntanned and then Happy Valley with its plethora of lovely trails. Now swinging North East over Coulsdon and Kenley commons to cross the A22 and a short detour from the London Loop enabled us to climb the side of a chalk quarry on a very steep and rough track. The day was fast fading as we crossed to Hamsey Green and then joined the Vanguard Way on the edges of Croydon. There was still another lovely stretch through Selsdon Wood and finally we had to use Paul Lawrence's super gadget phone to negotiate some roads to reach the Coombe road tram stop which was the end of the walk. 21 miles it was not, maybe 23 or even 24, but what a lovely day. Jerome

### **Sat 31 Oct 2009 Linear The South Downs and Seven Sisters 23ml.**

Start Glynde Stn 9:14. Depart London Victoria 7:47. Change at Lewes for Glynde. Finish Eastbourne Stn. Train users buy returns to Eastbourne. Regular direct trains back to London from Eastbourne. A coastal walk via the Sussex Downs, Seaford Head and the Seven Sisters. Pub stop at Seaford. Ldr Mike

*Summary: 23 miles. Ldr Mike Ratcliff*

*I had high hopes for our walk on the Sussex Downs on Halloween this year after walking the route out in full on the previous Tuesday and having a truly lovely day with plenty of warmth and sunshine. The forecast for the Saturday of the actual walk however was not so positive and so it turned out to be with heavy wind and rain lashing my car on the drive down to the south coast. Noticing I was the only driver who had turned up with only minutes to go before the train from London was due to arrive, I began to have doubts as to whether many people at all would drag themselves all the way from the city to the South Downs on such a wet and wild day. However, I was delighted to see fourteen walkers grouped together on mass appear from the train just as the weather started to ease. We began the walk from Glynde Station by crossing the A27 and ascending the long but gradual climb up Beddingham Hill to reach the South Downs Way on the main ridge in that area which was on that morning engulfed in a thick fog. That undulating ridge over Firlie Beacon and on to Bostal Hill is on most days a walk leaders dream as the trail is so clear and consistent along the brow of the ridge with the route clearly visible far into the distance but unfortunately we had no such privilege this time with most of the morning walking in visibility of just a few metres. Because of this however, the atmosphere was quite dramatic and rather mysterious. We made our way east along the local peaks and then along a very well trod bridleway that took us south towards Bishopstone and Seaford. By around eleven o'clock the fog was dispersing and as we descended from the hills a beautiful panorama opened up of the English Channel and the port of Newhaven beneath us. Meeting the sea at the far western end of the town of Seaford allowed us a lovely stroll along the front to the martello tower at the base of Seaford Head where the Wellington Pub awaited us, though many people stopped to have a packed lunch by the beach. The variety of blues and greens of the sea that day were beautiful and very unusual, seemingly arranged in bars of vivid colour. After lunch we still had the majority of the distance to complete as well as the more brutal climbs of the day, starting with of course Seaford Head itself. After we had warmed back up with this climb the open expanse of the Cuckmere Valley lay in front of us with what must be one of the most iconic views in England - that of the Seven Sisters glowing their way into the distance. Almost pure brilliant white as always! The ghostly silhouette of the Belle Tout Lighthouse was already visible away on the horizon. Several hours later and with some hard miles completed we finally reached the brow of Beachy Head with the still warming sun beginning to set behind us amongst some dramatic cloud formations that*

*seemed to add to the enjoyment. As we began to swing round the headland to a more north easterly direction, the lights of Eastbourne suddenly came into view and the dark of night took hold. We were treated to quite a clear waxing moon that was very nearly full. A brisk night walk along the promenade and on to the glittering pier and the buzz of the town centre completed our twenty three miles in a very traditional and lively manner.*  
Mike

**Sun 25 Oct 2009 Petersfield to Rowlands Castle 19ml.**

Start Petersfield stn 9:39. Depart London Waterloo 8:00, Clapham Junction 8:08. Pub lunch probably at Hooksway. Ldr Peter Buchwald

*Summary: 18 miles. Ldr Peter Buchwald  
OSE 120, 133. 11 people and one dog.*

*It was a fine autumn day as I switched on my GPS  
And set off through sunny streets of Petersfield  
Chatting and laughing with my ten Companions  
Past a large supermarket and down a lane.*

*We crossed grassy fields in bright cool sunlight  
Passed through a village of quaint bungalows  
Into the open country through pretty Buriton  
Up and down hills along the South Downs Way.*

*We trod carefully down slippery chalk paths  
Rapidly neared our pub which we found closed!  
We walked another hour and half through woods  
Until we came to Stoughton where we ate and drank.*

*We talked about King Charles the Second and his  
Flight to France along the Monarch's way  
We walked the avenue away from Stansted House  
And finished in a pub with near an hour to spare.*

Peter

**Sun 18 Oct 2009 13th Founders Challenge 26ml**

**Sat 10 Oct 2009 Circular Edenbridge and Chiddingstone 22ml.**

Start Edenbridge Town Stn 8:45 (Not Edenbridge Stn). Depart London Bridge 8:08. A walk through west Kent via Chiddingstone Castle and Bough Beech Reservoir. Pub stop at Hoath Corner. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

*Summary: 22 miles. Ldr Mike Ratcliff  
Our walk from Edenbridge saw us cover some very differing terrain from the flat, Low Weald countryside around Edenbridge up to the hills of the High Weald north of Cowden in the afternoon. Sixteen of us walkers made the start from Edenbridge Town Station at ten to nine under a distinctly overcast and rain heavy sky. Although not raining at the time, the showers that had dampened the area overnight were clearly evident in the soggy ground that awaited us. Thankfully this was not to continue for long as a*

wonderfully strong sun rapidly broke through at about a quarter distance of the route. Walking north-east from Edenbridge we soon skirted the northern banks of Bough Beech Reservoir to continue east heading towards Tonbridge. We soon made our way south however, passing through the delightful village of Chiddingstone and eventually reaching our lunch stop at The Rock Inn at Hoath Corner, a remote spot that proved pleasantly tranquil and by this time very warm under a strong mid-day sun. Continuing south over the High Weald we were greeted with some beautiful views of the Ashdown Forest area stretching out in front of us and eventually descending down to lower ground where we joined the Sussex Border Path. We now made our way west with the long distance path, passing into East Sussex for just a few hundred yards and then starting our climb up to Cowden and back into Kent. Our final ascent of the day saw us climb our way north from Cowden up to our highest point on the walk up at the ancient site of Dry Hill Fort where we joined the Vanguard Way. The views that awaited us looking east towards Tunbridge Wells and north to the greensand ridge and North Downs were just terrific. A gradual descent down some extremely rutted tracks took us back down to Edenbridge, where we made our way back into town following the meandering River Eden where many old, decaying and ghostly pillboxes still stood sentry guarding the town. The sun at the final stage was casting long shadows of us all as it glowed low but warm in the sky behind us.  
Mike

### **Sat 3 Oct 2009 Witley Circular 24ml with 1200m ascent.**

Start Witley stn 9:09. Depart London Waterloo 8:15. By Gibbet Hill, Hindhead (Celtic Cross) and the Temple of the Winds, Black Down. Pub lunch The Red Lion (Menu) in Fernhurst or picnic. Possible tea at the Crown Inn in Chiddingfold. Return trains at 9 or 45 min past the hour. Free car park at Witley stn. Map OS Exp 133. Ldr Nicole Carbonara

*Summary: 24 miles. Ldr Nicole Carbonara*

*16 walkers joined me at Witley station on a perfect day for walking: dry, cool and breezy. I appointed a backmarker because I wanted to avoid losing people, as it happened last time and Ian kindly volunteered. Thanks to him, we didn't lose anyone despite the fact that we didn't crawl too much, as we completed the 24ml walk with 1200m ascent in 7h at an average pace of 3.5ml/h. LDWA and other groups from the South East of England were well represented: there were members from LDWA Kent, Surrey, Thames Valley, Wessex plus Surrey Walking Club and Ramblers. The morning was hilly and varied with forests and ponds and lovely views from Gibbet Hill. We arrived early for lunch at the pub. I had ordered all the meals by phone and called them again later to let them know that we were early so everything was ready and we were all ready to start walking again after just over half an hour. In the afternoon we climbed to the Temple of the Winds from where we enjoyed other lovely views and took photographs. The second part of the afternoon was less hilly and in a more open landscape with more ponds and more great views. We stopped for a leisurely tea in a comfortable pub but we had tea and cakes on their tables outside. We reached the station at 5:15pm. nic*

### **Sun 27 Sep 2009 Linear Seaford to Eastbourne 20ml.**

Start Seaford stn 10:21. Depart London Victoria 8:487 (change at Lewes for Seaford). Hikers may wish to visit [www.southernrailway.com/downlander](http://www.southernrailway.com/downlander) for a £12.50 All Network Downlander ticket to Seaford and back from Eastbourne, but have to book it on the Internet two days in advance. Seaford Head, the Vanguard Way, Cuckmere River, Litlington, Winchester's Pond, Friston Forest, Snap Hill, Westdean and Exceat. Suggest lunch stop here for 45 minutes. After lunch, Seven Sister Country Park, Seven Sisters Cliffs, Birling Gap, Beachy Head and Eastbourne. Map OS Exp 123. Ldr Patrick Tso

*Summary: 20 miles. Ldr Patrick Tso*

*Today's walk from Seaford to Eastbourne via the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head was great with initially 14 participants, but then two dropped out just after an hour at Exceat. The weather was beautiful, blue sky and clam seas. We have a brief stop when we descent the Seaford Head for members to take photos of the Seven Sisters Cliffs. The total distance was as predicted 19.8 miles, we did it in 5 hours and 30 minutes, and the overall walking speed was 3.6 miles/hrs. Not really bad for some new comers who never walk with LDWA and for 20 miles, considering the ups and downs. We had a 45 minutes lunch break at the Visitor Centre in Exceat and 20 minutes at Birling Gap for drinks after the Seven Sisters. All the participants enjoyed the walk. We had a small drink gathering with 8 participants at the Wetherspoon Pub in Victoria and one Russian girl actually brought with her Vodka to celebrate her finishing of the 20 miles as well as conquering the Seven Sisters and Beach Head.*

*As I will be posted back to Hong Kong on 17/10/2009, this was my last walk in London as well as leading it. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank LDWA London for giving me the chance to lead this walk and for me to meet so many nice and friendly people.  
Patrick*

*Thank you, Patrick, for joining us and leading this superb walk and best of luck in Hong Kong. nic*

### **Sun 20 Sep 2009 Guildford Circular 22ml.**

Start Guildford stn 9:10. Depart London Waterloo 8:30. Route is along River Wey, then along Downs Link then Greensand Way to the Happy Harriers in Hambledon for lunch. Afternoon is over Hydons Ball, through Juniper Valley and Witley Arboretum across The Rides and down to Farncombe Boathouse for tea. Back along the river to Guildford. Maps OS Exp 145 & 133. Return trains 19 & 46 mins hourly. Joint walk with Surrey Walking Club. Ldr. Don Bolton

*Summary: 22 miles. Ldr Don Bolton*

*30 walkers assembled at Guildford Station for a joint London & SWC walk of 21 miles. It was good to meet so many people that I had not seen for many, many months and to meet a few new people. The first 6 miles were along the River Wey and then along the Downs Link path, quite flat with few gates so walked very fast. Then we followed the Green Sand Way to Hascombe and then to the Merry Harriers pub at Hambledon for lunch. 12 walkers had opted for a cooked lunch and I had phoned their order to the pub about an hour before we got there at 1pm. We had not used this pub before but the food and the service was excellent and we were all out at 2pm. Then climbed up to Hydons Ball viewpoint, down and then through Juniper Valley to Winkworth Arboretum. Descended the steep hill and then through The Rides and down to Hascombe for tea at the very attractive boathouse. We were served tea and cakes very efficiently by the couple serving who were completely unfazed by so many walkers turning up unannounced. Then back along the river to Guildford but at St. Catherines Lock I asked how many would like to do an extra 3+ miles with a long hill to climb but would be rewarded with fantastic views. To my surprise 11 people opted for the extra miles and the remainder walked back along the river to Guildford Station. We 11 went west past the Police HQ, then past Loseley House, down a long track to Polsted Manor then north and uphill to the ridge walk that gives great views over Guildford to Canary Wharf and across London to Heathrow. Eventually steeply downhill to Guildford Station. A good long day in good weather with good companions. My thanks especially to John Elrick and Steve Garnsey for aiding me by looking after those at the back and ensuring no one got lost or feeling that they had been left alone. Don*

### **Sat 12 Sep 2009 Lea Valley Walk 20ml.**

Start Harpenden stn 9:05. Depart St Pancras 8:34 (train leaves from First Capital Connect platforms on ground level. If unfamiliar with new St Pancras allow extra time to find platform). The walk includes the last 13 miles of the Lea Valley Walk from Wheathampstead to Leagrave. Pub lunch at Bright Star, Peters Green. Frequent return trains from Leagrave (3 stops from Harpenden) to St Pancras. Ldr Rob Myers

*Summary: 22.5 miles. Ldr Rob Myers*

*9 of us turned up in sunny conditions in Harpenden ready to travel to the source of the River Lea. Having only the last 12 miles of the Lea Valley Walk to cover we first had an enjoyable morning walk in the Hertfordshire countryside, involving sections of the Hertfordshire Way and Chiltern Way. We had a drinks stop in Wheathampstead churchyard before arriving at our lunch stop at the "Bright Star", Peters Green. This was an excellent pub which was not only "walker friendly" but also "horse friendly" as they had their own tethering bar and water trough. It also sold McMullen's ales and reasonably cheap food. Definitely recommended for future walks. The afternoon began with a visit to the ruins of Someries Castle which was the oldest brick building in Bedfordshire. We skirted around Luton Airport and then walked through the centre of Luton (am I the first LDWA leader ever to do this?). After a couple of miles streets gave way to parkland and then fields and we stopped off for a drink in the "Old Moat House". This was a pub in the oldest secular building in Bedfordshire with a thatched roof and lots of large carp swimming in the moat. Fully refreshed we then visited the source of the River Lea. This was the third of a series of walks, the first from Limehouse to Broxbourne took place on a freezing January day, the second from Broxbourne to Harpenden was on a beautiful spring day in April. In total we covered the full 52 miles of the Lea Valley Walk. Congratulations to Corinne for doing all 3 walks. Rob*

### **Sat 5 Sep 2009 Cobham and the Downs Circular 23ml.**

Start Higham stn 9:22. Depart London Charing Cross 8:20. Via North Kent estuary and North Downs . Pub stop at Harvel. Ldr Mike Radcliff

*Summary: 23 miles. Ldr Mike Ratcliff*

*This was my first walk leading for LDWA London Group so slightly nervous at the start, especially knowing that I'd probably have a massively bigger group than I've ever lead before with Kent Group. And so it was; but this was a great challenge with twenty one people eventually making it to Higham Station in north Kent for a typically Kentish walk - very undulating, open and agricultural with the majority of the walk on hard chalk downland along the North Downs ridge near my home. The early stages of the walk moved us south over the downs into Kent where we got some great views of the Medway Valley and down towards Aylesford and Maidstone. We took lunch at the village of Harvel after traversing the brutally steep but thankfully not too long climb back over the chalk ridge. After this we made our way north along stretches of the Wealdway via Luddesdown and Cobham back towards the estuary just west of where the Medway and the Thames meet. Again we had some super views but of a totally different kind with the bleak north Kent marshes (of Dickens fame) laying open beneath us and the densely industrial coast of south Essex clearly visible on the horizon. We finally made it back to Higham around half past six, later than planned but with a good twenty four and a bit miles in our legs and hopefully some more happy walking memories for those who were there. Thoughts go to Lou Shepherd who had to abandon the walk at Harvel after twisting her ankle on a stile. Thankfully she made it back to London in good time via taxi*

*and train and the injury doesn't seem too serious! Mike.*

**Sat 29 Aug 2009 Linear Robertsbridge to the sea c.20ml.**

Start Robertsbridge stn 9:12. Depart London Charing Cross 7:00. Finish at Hastings. Buy a return ticket to Hastings. Car drivers park at start and take train back. Maybe pub but bring a picnic lunch. Chips and beer at the end. Via the 1066 route. Ldr Jerome Ripp

*Summary: 20 miles. Ldr Jerome Ripp*

*With engineering works on the line, I wondered if anyone would show up but London group are a hardy lot and by various methods 15 lined up at Robertsbridge to be shepherded to the sea. Weather was good all day with some warm sunny spells as well as some strong winds which buffeted us but some of the female members seemed to enjoy this. Due to the late start, the morning was short but lively as we met a frisky filly (or was it a charging stallion) and after 7 miles we were having lunch in the centre of Battle and admiring the diverse architecture. Then we followed the 1066 Country Walk through a lovely reverie of woodland and fields with the odd detour but we were rescued by the good sense of other group members and once by a local aged resident when the leader decided to follow a young redhead rather than the path! We slowly circled round Hastings and were rewarded with some glorious views including a Victorian folly, a wind farm and a stretch of coast from Dungeness to Beachy Head. The glens of Hastings cliff tops provided a rousing finish, then into the old town where the lure of live football removed 2 of the group but the rest charged on to the station led by a demure young lady who said she was "good on concrete". It seemed to be 23 miles in total and for a few of us the adventures continued with a tortuous train journey back, the leader did not return home till 10pm. A just reward some might feel! Jerome*

**Wed 26 Aug to Tue 1 Sep 2009 Summer Bank Holiday in the Alps.**

Climb 5 10,000ft Alpine summits in 5 days Ldr Nicole Carbonara

*Summary: Ldr Nicole Carbonara*

*No, we didn't climb five 10,000ft summits in 5 days as planned but, as the group was exceptionally strong and fit, instead we climbed 7 summits in 4 days. On our day off we enjoyed a rather technical via ferrata in the morning, an easy climb in the afternoon and an outstanding homemade dinner, prepared by an Englishman, in the evening. The weather was absolutely gorgeous all week. nic*

*We would like to thank Nicole for our superb and exciting high-level walking holiday on the 3,000m peaks above Val d'Isere (1,850m). Even the sun shone on the team. It must rank amongst the best short breaks ever. Steve & Peter*

**Sun 23 Aug 2009 Thames Path Circular from Westminster via Greenwich 17ml.**

Meet Westminster Station (Jubilee, District and Circle Lines, Zone 1) outside exit 4 at 10:00. Circular following the Thames Path along the South bank of the river to Greenwich, crossing via the Foot Tunnel and returning along the North bank. The route passes many interesting buildings and other features. Lunch stop at Greenwich. Choice of pubs and restaurants. Map OS Exp 173/161, London A-Z. Pace fast. Ldr Patrick Tso. Joint walk with Hampstead Ramblers.

**Sat 15 Aug 2009 Colne Valley circular including part of London Loop 20ml.**

Start Stanmore stn (Jubilee line) 10:00. Via Aldenham, Elstree, Otterspool, Watford,

Bushey. Pub lunch at Round Bush Aldenham or Three Horseshoes Letchworth Heath. Although the Stanmore end of the Jubilee line is supposed to be running as normal, the Jubilee will be closed from Stratford to Green Park and the entire Victoria line will be closed as well as bits of other lines further out. Please check TfL. Ldr Julian Mason

**Sun 9 Aug 2009 Lewes circular 20ml. Start Lewes stn 9:50.**

Depart London Victoria 08:17. Very hilly route, similar to last year but counter clockwise. Lunch in Newhaven (3 pubs, 1 bakery + 1 cafe). Map OS Exp 122. Return trains 30 min past the hour. Ldr Don Bolton

**Sat 1 Aug 2009 Berrylands to Guildford 20+ml.**

Start Berrylands stn 9:00. Depart London Waterloo 8:36. A linear walk through the rural Surrey countryside with lunch at Claygate with a possible teastop in Cobham. Ldr Dave Williams

**Sat 25 Jul 2009 Greensand Way Linear Walk Part 3. 24ml.**

Start Dorking stn 09:15 Depart London Waterloo 08:24. Return trains from Oxted to Victoria every half hour. The walk starts at Dorking main station. There are 3 stations in Dorking but if you get the above train you can't go wrong. There will be a pub stop for an afternoon drink but they don't do food so bring a picnic lunch. Ldr Susanne Waldschmidt. This is the third of a series of walks Susanne will lead over the next few years covering the entire Greensand Way

**Sun 19 Jul 2009 Amberley Circular c24ml.**

Start Amberley stn 9:21. Depart London Victoria 8:02. Circular route over South Downs and Angmering Park. Pub lunch or bring a picnic. Joint walk with Surrey Walking Club. Ldr Margaret Romanski

**Sun 12 Jul 2009 East from Sevenoaks 21ml.**

Start Sevenoaks stn 09:34. Depart London Charing Cross 09:00 or London Bridge 9:08. Frequent return trains. Pub (around 1:30pm) The Swan in West Peckham has its own microbrewery and a lovely village green so you may wish to bring your own sandwiches and picnic. Meals there are £12-15 for a main; £5 soup, £9 ploughmans and rolls at £6. Map: OS 188. Ldr: Lonica Vanclay

**Sun 5 Jul 2009 Sussex Linear Polegate to Buxted c.20ml.**

Meet Polegate stn 10:11. Depart London Victoria 8:47. Along Vanguard and Wealdways. Pub stop likely (for drink) but yet to be determined so bring a picnic lunch. Hourly return trains from Buxted back to Victoria. Hikers may wish to visit [www.southernrailway.com/downlander](http://www.southernrailway.com/downlander) for a £12.50 Southern Railway All Network Downlander ticket to cover the journey to Polegate and back from Buxted, but have to book it on the Internet two days in advance. Ldr. Kathy LoRaso

**Sun 28 Jun 2009 Gerrards Cross c21 ml.**

Start Gerrards Cross stn 9:30. Depart 8:54 London Marylebone. Pub lunch Blackwood

Arms, Littleworth Common. Return trains at 10, 36 and 47 past the hour. Map OS Exp 172. Ldr Steve Plested

*Summary: 21 miles. Ldr Steve Plested*

*15 people gathered at the station at 9.30 on a very bright and sunny day. The route rather fortuitously involved quite a lot of woodland hence generally avoiding the fierce sun. The walk was a series of 3 interlocking loops, the first taking in the scenic village of Hedgerley and included the sighting of a number of red kites. The second crossed Farnham common and Burnham Beeches (Robin Prince of Thieves was filmed here) to the lunch stop at Littleworth Common. The group split between 2 pubs for lunch and then rejoined to pass through a duck farm and circumnavigate Odds Farm, a local tourist attraction for families. More woods eventually took us back to Hedgerley where we briefly visited a local nature reserve. Finally after negotiating a rather muddy and smelly tunnel under the M40 open fields took us back to the outskirts of Gerrards Cross.*

### **Sat 20 Jun 2009 Historic Colchester and surrounding villages. 20 ml.**

Start Colchester stn 09:00. Depart Liverpool Street 08:00. Pub lunch at the Albion, Rowhedge. Baguettes available order at start of walk. Ldr Rob Myers

*Summary: 23 miles. Ldr Rob Myers*

*After promising to lead a walk in my home town of Colchester for the past ten years I finally did. It felt strange not to have to get up at the crack of dawn in order to make a London walk but instead to have everybody make a long journey to visit me. At the due departure time of 9am 9 walkers had gathered, however, after a half hour delay 13 walkers set out. The walk commenced with a stroll through Highwoods Country Park where the group got an excellent view of the town. Shortly afterwards the route joined the Camuplodunum which is a 25 mile circular route surrounding Colchester that had been devised 25 years ago by long time LDWA member Derek Keeble. The route passed through Crockleford Heath and Salary Brook before reaching the ancient port of Hythe. There was at this point an attractive amble along the banks of the meandering River Colne to Fingringhoe. Half way along this river walk was lunch at the Albion pub in the pretty village of Rowhedge. Simon the landlord of the Albion made us very welcome. The pub was a freehouse serving an excellent selection of Real Ale and pre-ordered substantial baguettes at £3.75. After Fingringhoe the walk passed through Friday Woods where the group were surprised to find a river crossing where a perfectly good bridge lay on the bank and the crossing was via an ill assorted collection of unstable logs. I was quite impressed that only Laura managed to get her feet wet. After the pretty Roman River Valley Nature Reserve we left the Camuplodunum to go to Gosbecks Archaeological Park where the outline of a Roman Theatre and Temple was carefully laid out on the grass field. Here I gave a brief talk on the history of Colchester. After leaving Gosbecks we headed via Grymes Dyke and Hilly Fields into the centre of town. The walk ended with a brief tour of the historic highlights of the town including the Balcerne Gate, St Mary's Church, Victorian Water Tower, our beautiful Victorian Town Hall, and of course our jewel in the crown Colchester Castle. Rob*

### **Sat 13 Jun 2009 Petersfield to the Sea 24.5ml.**

Route over the South Downs to the coast then follows coastal path around Thorney Island. Excellent views of Chichester harbour. Start 9:01 Petersfield stn. Depart Waterloo 8:00. Return from Southbourne. Those travelling by train should buy a return ticket valid by any route or via Petersfield/Havant to Southbourne. Return from Southbourne via Petersfield for drivers. Pub lunch at West Marden. Ldr Margaret Romanski

**Sat 6 Jun 2009 Summer hills 22ml.**

Start Brighton stn 9:00. Depart London Victoria 8:06. Pub or picnic lunch. A long day in the hills with maybe a swim or a fish supper to finish! Map OS Exp 122. Ldr Jerome Ripp

*Summary: 22 miles. Ldr Jerome Ripp*

*It was raining in London but as 18 of us set off from Brighton station at 9, it was dry, breezy and cool, ideal conditions for a fast paced walk on the exposed South Downs. Through the town via Queens Park with its impressive gates and slowly climbing into the hills passing the race course. Over Falmer Hill and into the village for a rest on the village green. A long steady climb to the ridge and the route of the long distance South Downs Way which we followed all the way to lunch at the Newmarket Inn on the A27. Good food and a much needed rest as our pace was about 3.4 miles per hour. However the leader soon whipped the group up for a return to the ridge and a great view over the top and down to Kingston. This gave us the opportunity to climb back up again by a very steep path with an optional illegal extra but from here it was mainly downhill. Through a series of Bottoms and down to the Rottingdean windmill on Beacon Hill. A final stretch took us along the coast to the Marina where the party fragmented. It was too cold for a swim but some decided to stay for fish and beer while the rest had a race between the walkers and the bus users which seemed to be a dead heat at the station where we collapsed into the train after a 9 hour walk. About 24 miles and loads of contour lines crossed. Also I was told to mention the glorious poppies which adorned many of the fields near the ridge. Jerome*

**Sun 31 May 2009 Linear walk Grinstead to Oxted c.18ml.**

Meet East Grinstead stn 10:20. Depart London Victoria 9:25 (Clapham Junction 9:31). A walk to Oxted with lunch probably at Marsh Green. Ldr Peter Buchwald  
*c 18 miles. Ldr Peter Buchwald*

*17 people. We left East Grinstead on a beautiful sunny day and walked through the town, up a high street, then a short path, and were soon into the countryside. After a cool wood, we were in a field and frightened some sheep and lambs in the distance, who ran from us into an adjacent field as we approached. Over some stiles, we met some inquisitive horses in the next field, who followed us across and looked at us wistfully as we walked away through some more woods. Then a succession of country paths, fields littered with millions of buttercups and healthy cooling woods. At one high point, we could see the North Downs on the horizon: just past where we were going to end. We reached the Wheatsheaf at 12:35 and we spent just over an hour having a good lunch, which for some of us meant lots of (albeit not exceptional) food, many beers and some delicious chocolate puddings with ice cream. We left the pub at 13:40 and continued past a church, keeping the River Eden to our right, eventually crossing it at a wooden bridge. At one point we were confronted with a pack of friendly mastiffs and muzzled bulldogs who followed us some way barking excitedly until either one of our number repulsed them or their owner called them back. We crossed the river again, then through a golf course and some fields, where the farmer seemed to have stretched a narrow string across all the footpaths. We found our way again after trying to avoid the string, and met some curious Llamas, one of which peered right into my camera lens (but the close-up photo I took of just two enormous front teeth was blurred and has been deleted). By this time, there was a nice cool breeze and we continued over a railway line, to a church, then another railway line and some very wealthy looking houses which some of us envied, and finally along the Greensand Way past an old watermill back to Oxted. Peter*

### **Sat 23 May 2009 Circular walk from Alton c 20ml.**

Meet 9:10 Alton stn and cheer on the 100 competitors. Depart London Waterloo 8:00, change at Woking. Walk follows 100 route for first section, circling back to Alton with overnight B&B for anyone volunteering to help on checkpoint 15 (Upper Wield) from early Sunday morning. Please bring picnic lunch. Ldr Paula Buckton

*Summary: c 20miles. Ldr Paula Buckton*

*The weekend started well when we realised the train many of us had boarded at Woking, having alighted a train out of Waterloo, had actually come from Waterloo at around the same time - bizarre - but thank you Dave for sussing that one! So having made it to Alton without losing anyone, we set off in traditional LDWA crocodile up the high st to arrive at Eggers School in plenty of time to chat to the 100 competitors. The London contingent (Don B, Don N, Margret, Chris D, Adrian and Tarra) all seemed in good shape and as the whole mass of 480 walkers attempted to funnel through a tiny gap in the school hedge onto a narrow foot path, we prepared for our walk, rounding up the car drivers as we went, and finally tracking down Paul L who took an age to change into his shorts! We were 23 in total - what a good turnout for my first venture into leading. Following the 100 route for the first 4 or 5 miles through the village of Hollybourne, across lovely fresh green and yellow fields and through cool woods, we enjoyed the sunshine and caught up with the gossip. With not a wrong turn (or even a peak at the map) we arrived in the village of Chawton (home of Jane Austen) where several of the party thought we had come across the first 100 checkpoint (it was actually a village plant sale) Some of us ordered toasties from the teashop, others basked in the sun with their sandwiches and a few called in to the pub for a quick one. Then we were off again to enjoy the cooling effects of Chawton Park Woods with its tall pines and wide paths, eventually making our way down rutted paths and bridleways to arrive at Upper Wield village Hall, which would be transformed into checkpoint 15 by early morning, manned by London Group for 24hrs. After collecting the key (thanks everyone for the many reminders) and gobbling down homemade flapjacks and cherry cake, we set off again across the fields, now following the final 7.5 miles of the 100 route. As we struggled with the rutted paths and a particularly long stretch of tarmac, we wondered how the 100 competitors would be coping with the hard ground and the heat. But finally we arrived back at Eggers, clocking just over 22 miles. Here the train goes hot-footed across the field, the B&Bers departed in search of comfy rooms and a few of us blagged a shower at the school before meeting at the Swan hotel for a well earned drink and a great value supper. With Nicole keen to hit the sack, the early shift (Dave, Susan, Susanne, Paula and Nicole) went back to Eggers to collect the food and were tucked into sleeping bags on the hard village hall floor at by 11pm. And so Sunday started when Dave set his alarm for 4am instead of 5 (he will pay!), but at least we had plenty of time to be set up for 5.30 as per our instructions (except that the first customer didn't arrive till 9.30! We could have stayed in bed!!) But apart from that the checkpoint went like clockwork with everyone working together to keep the walkers and runners supplied with hot and cold drinks, delicious toasted teacakes and other delicacies, all day and right through the night. The night shift (Rob, Colin, John and Gail, Paul L, Laurence and Ken who had already walked the 100 and came back to help us!!!) packed up around 5.30 and went home for a well earned sleep. For my sins, I ended up cooking breakfast at the finish where I learned that all the London contingent had finished. Mike, a Kent member and London group leader, finished in 27hrs. Well done to the finishers and many thanks to all the check-pointers (including the middle shift not yet mentioned, Corrine, Chris K, Peter R, Ted, Iain T, Paul T, Lois, Steve P, Nigel) - a great weekend all round. Paula*

### **Sat 16 & Sun 17 May 2009 Second Wessex 100 week-end away**

Please note this is NOT a led walk and there is no support en-route. Participants will be following a route description but there are no checkpoints. You must have challenge walk experience and sound navigation skills or pair up with some one who has and walk with them. Walk participants must look after each other and if someone needs to retire, someone must agree to retire with them. Saturday 16 mls Rowlands Castle to New Arelsford (Train from Waterloo dep 7.30 arr 9.21 at RC)with picnic lunch and overnight B&B at New Arelsford. Sunday 14mls to Alton for return train to London.

*Summary: 41 miles. Organiser Don Bolton*

*Three of us met on the train to Rowlands Castle for the 2 day walk to Alton. Don B, Vala W and Russell B. The weather forecast was poor for Saturday 16th but turned out to be good but windy with only one shower. The route description is very good and we made excellent time to QE2 Country Park where we stopped for tea and coffee. In bright breezy weather we climbed Butser Hill and then made the incorrect decision to go round the beautiful hilly area known locally as THE BOWL to the north. We finally joined the correct route and just as we were going into East Meon we had the only rain shower of the day. Then had lunch sitting in bright sunshine outside the pub, wonderful. Rejoined the SDW going round the beautiful area of Winchester Hill and into the village of Exton. Then up the challenging Beacon Hill. From there north through Kilmeston, Hinton Ampner and into New Alresford. 27 miles done. Two of us were in the Swan Hotel in New Alresford and the third in a B&B in Old Alresford. After an excellent dinner in the Swan Hotel we agreed to meet at 9am in the hotel. Don N. joined us for breakfast and the 4 of us set off in bright sunny weather for the 13 - 14 mile walk to Alton. Route description was again good and we made good time but the 3 of us that had walked from Rowlands Castle were a little stiff. We found the New Alresford, Upper Wield and Shaldon checkpoints without difficulty and in a heavy rain downpour made our way into Alton early in the afternoon for a celebratory drink and lunch. A very physical Saturday and a fairly casual Sunday making a great weekend. Don*

### **Sat 9 May 2009 Circular walk from Hollingbourne (Kent) 20+ml.**

Start 9:25 Hollingbourne stn. Depart London Victoria 8:18. Pub or picnic lunch. Along North Downs and Greensand way in central Kent. Ldr Jerome Ripp

*Summary: 20+ml. Ldr Jerome Ripp*

*19 of us gathered at Hollingbourne, some old, some new, Steve newly returned from China and a few yo-yos. According to Gordon it was a stylish bluebell walk, Dave Williams thought it was right at the top of the yo yo league. One young lady was very excited at the prospect of being on a walk with me and happily announced at the end "that was the first time I've done it with Jerome". However I would not wish to embarrass her by saying who it was. Anyway the walk was 20 miles on a sunny but rather cool day at times so we kept warm by striding up the North Downs 3 times and of course coming down 3 times. The Woodland Trust have done an amazing job in opening up Hucking Wood with its bluebell carpets and that was our first loop. Then on the Pilgrims Way past the new statue and then over to the Ringlestone Inn for lunch. A loop to the north and east and then back down past Harrietsham and the third up and down loop through woods and rape fields. Laura confirmed that most of the way was different to the walk that Nicole had recently done in the area which was of course good planning. A very fine area and a lovely day. Jerome*

### **Sat 2 May 2009 Linear walk Cowden to Eridge 23ml with 800m ascent.**

Meet Cowden stn 8:53. Depart London Victoria 8:02 (East Croydon 8:23). By Bolebrook Castle and Ashdown forest. Lunch in Hartfield (Winnie the Pooh), choice of pubs or picnic. Possible tea at the Half Moon, Crowborough, Wealden. Return trains at 51 past the hour. Those travelling by train should buy a return ticket to Eridge. Car drivers can leave their car at Cowden stn (free car park) and take the train back from Eridge. Maps OS Exp 135 & 147. Ldr Nicole Carbonara

*Summary: 23 miles. Ldr Nicole Carbonara*

*On a glorious spring day, 16 walkers were ready for this walk but 2 of them having not checked the website, indicating a change of departure station due to engineering work, ended up arriving one hour after we had started our walk. They walked straight to Hartfield and joined us for the lunch stop at 1pm. Less than one hour after the start I did the first head count and found out that we had lost 2 walkers. Although they didn't have a map, they managed to join us in Hartfield, after having caught a bus. Unfortunately that morning, one of us had fallen and hurt her ankle. She decided to stop at lunch time and to take a bus from Hartfield to the closest station. After all these emotions, I asked for a voluntary back marker and Russell kindly accepted to keep everybody together so the afternoon went without further loss. We passed the Pooh Bridge, climbed to the top of Ashdown forest in the blooming gorse and walked on the ridge enjoying the wonderful clear views. Climbing down on the East slope the bluebells surrounded us everywhere and we enjoyed not only their blue mist but were especially overwhelmed by their subtle fragrance. We had a tea stop in the sun before the last push to the station. Three newcomers were trying LDWA. They said that they enjoyed the walk so we hope that they'll decide to join. The results from my GPS uploaded onto Anquet are: trip odometer 24.5ml; Height ascended 920m; movement time 6h52; stop time 1h33; movement average 3.4ml/h. Nicole*

### **Sat 25 Apr 2009 Walk to Bodiam Castle and beyond 20ml.**

Start Robertsbridge stn Sussex 9:05. Depart London Charing Cross 7:45. Morning stop at Bodiam castle with refreshments available. Late lunch at Sedlescombe. There is a pub but it might be closed and only a small shop so bring food. Target finish is 18:00. Only 1 train per hour. Ldr Jerome Ripp

*Summary: 20 miles. Ldr Jerome Ripp*

*A group of 11 took the long but lovely train ride to Robertsbridge for a glorious walk of 22 miles in brisk but warm sunshine. Via the Rother valley to Bodiam Castle, an impressive semi ruin stuck in an enormous moat. South through undulating countryside with lots of woodland carpeted with bluebells and lunch stop in the lovely village of Sedlescombe. A long section in the woodlands surrounding Powdermill reservoir with lots of variety and scenery that seemed more like Canada than England. North to Staplecross and a superb final stretch with an amazing view across the Rother valley. Megan said it was one of the 5 best walks she had been on. Of course the other 4 were also led by me!! A really great day. Jerome*

### **Sat 18 & Sun 19 Apr 2009 First Wessex 100 week-end away**

Ideal chance to recce parts of the route for anyone doing the 100, or just to see what it's like. Please note these are NOT led walks and there is no support en-route. Participants will be following a route description but there are no checkpoints. For the longer distances it is essential that you have previous experience of at least a 50 mile walk which has involved some night navigation. If you do not you must pair with someone who has this experience, then walk together and stay together - if one retires, both need

to retire. For all walks it is essential to have challenge walk experience and sound navigation skills or pair up with some one who has and walk with them.

Option 1 61 mls Alton to Rowlands Castle, stopping in Heyshot for pub food on Saturday evening, then self supported to Rowlands Castle overnight, arriving around 8am for return train to London.

Option 2 Saturday 22 mls Alton to Harting Down (Train from Waterloo dep 8.30 arr 9.38 in Alton) Overnight B&B in South Harting. Sunday 20mls South Harting to Slindon, plus 2 mls to Barnham (not on route desc) for return train to London.

Option 3 Saturday 29.5 mls Alton to Heyshot (train from Waterloo dep 8.30, arr 9.38 in Alton) Overnight B&B in Heyshot. Sunday 31 mls Heyshot to Rowlands Castle for return train to London.

*Summary: 61 miles. Organiser Don Bolton*

*Four of us met at Eggars School in Alton to start the 61 mile walk to Rowlands Castle following the Wessex 100 route description. A 5th person, Don N., was going to join us at Heyshot and walk through the night with us. The weather was perfect for walking, clear but not too warm. We encountered some muddy paths on the 7.7 miles to the first checkpoint in Selbourne but the next leg to Steep was appalling. The paths were thick with mud and water, progress was slow, very tiring. After Steep we arrived in Petersfield one hour later than planned and stopped to buy water and snacks. Here we had our first retirement. The 3 of us set off to Harting Down in clear sunny weather, the views on the South Downs were spectacular and the paths firm underfoot so good progress was made. We arrived in Heyshot for our evening meal 1hr 50mins later than predicted and very tired. Don N. had been there for hours, Bill T. was also there and he was going to support us throughout the night and meet us at the 4 checkpoints we pass through with drinks, sandwiches and snacks. Denise G. also came to dinner with us. We had one more retirement so 3 of us set off into the night, that was me, Tara W. and Don N. With Don N. doing the majority of navigating no errors were made and we we made terrific progress on a clear night and mainly on good footpaths and wide tracks. Bill met us at Sutton, Slindon, East Dean and Stoughton Down. At Slindon and East Dean Bill gave us mugs of hot tea which is a fantastic morale booster in the middle of the night. We finally made it into Rowlands Castle on a very clear and beautiful morning. Bill had given us bananas and sandwiches which we ate on the train back to Guildford for breakfast. This Wessex 100 route is extremely beautiful, a very attractive route and if the mud has dried up before the 23rd May it will be a great route for the 500 participants. Don B.*

### **Sat 18 Apr 2009 Lea Valley Walk 24ml.**

Start Broxbourne stn 8:44. Depart Liverpool Street 8:12. A pleasant walk along the river Lea via Rye House and Ware to Hertford. This is followed by a walk along a disused railway to Welwyn Garden City. Finally along a series of bridleways and footpaths through Wheathampstead to finish at Harpenden stn. Frequent return trains to St. Pancras. Pub lunch at the Cowpers Arms. Cole Green (light bites and main meals available) Ldr Rob Myers.

*Summary: 26.5 miles. Ldr Rob Myers*

*12 walkers including one first timer enjoyed a warm spring day for this walk that began with a stroll along the River Lea Navigation to Hertford. Breaks were taken at the Rye House Gatehouse, Amwell Reservoir and Hertford Castle. The leader gave a short talk on the Rye House plot and the history of Hertford Castle. The walk then passed Hertford Town FC and Dave was very excited to find that they were playing at home. It took a supreme effort of will for him to remain with us on the walk. After Hertford we used a disused rail track called the Cole Green Way. Half way along the track was the lunchtime*

pub. The Cowpers Arms was a real find and is highly recommended. A freehouse that served reasonably priced delicious food in relaxed surroundings. After lunch there was a boring bit around the outskirts of Welwyn Garden City before we took another break at Mill Green mill. This looked interesting and we wished we had more time to look around. Upon leaving Mill Green we passed a couple of man made lakes before wading through a stream under a bridge. Next came Lemsford Mill described by Queen Elizabeth I as the prettiest village in England and Brocket Hall, a stately home now used as a conference centre. We had a final drink stop in the attractive Wheathampstead church before pressing on to Harpenden. Everyone agreed that they had a great day's walk. Rob

### **Sun 12 Apr 2009 Dorking circular 19ml.**

Start Dorking Stn 9:31. Depart London Victoria 08:34 (Clapham Junction 08:40). Return Trains 26 & 56 mins past the hour. Lunch The Sportsman, Mogador. Tea stop. Brockham Church. Map OS Exp 146. Ldr Don Bolton

*Summary: 19 miles. Ldr Don Bolton*

*16 of us assembled at the station, a few new faces and a few that I had not seen for a long time. We crossed the River Mole by the mill and then climbed up through Oak Wood to the Western Pub, crossed Zig Zag Road then down through Boxhill Country Park and Juniper Bottom to cross the Headley Road. Then up the very steep but stepped White Hill, unfortunately the great views from the top were obscured by mist. Up Mickleham Downs, through Headley, under the M25, round Walton-on-the-Hill and to the pub at Mogador. We had walked at a very good pace because I wanted to get to the pub for lunch around 12:30 and we were only just after this time. The Sportsman pub has been brilliantly well rebuilt, the food and service was excellent. We restarted at 1:40 and I told the group that we could have a more relaxed pace but they did not want it so we made very good time down Colley Hill, round the windmill on Reigate Heath to Betchworth and on to the Church Hall at Brockham for tea. Every Sunday between April and September this hall serves very low cost tea/coffee and home made cakes in aid of different charities. Everyone agreed that this was the best tea stop ever! From there a few miles back to Dorking and an early train back to London. Don*

### **Sat 4 Apr 2009 Circular on and around the North Downs Way 22ml, 800m ascent.**

Start Bearsted Stn 8:55. Depart London Victoria 7:48. Return trains at 29 & 52 min past the hour. Pub lunch at the Ringlestone Inn in Harrietsham or picnic. Return via Leeds Castle. Map Exp 148. Ldr Nicole Carbonara

*Summary: 22 miles. Ldr Nicole Carbonara*

*Despite a gloomy weather forecast, thirteen fit, strong and fast walkers joined me for this walk on and around the North Downs. After a dry start, drizzle came in and also a bit of light rain at times but soon it was dry again and the afternoon was sunny. Weather was perfect as all the tough climbing was done in the fresh morning, except that the lovely views from the hills were misty. We stopped for just under one hour at the pub, warming ourselves around the wood fire and we enjoyed a short "tea" stop in the sun, gazing on Leeds Castle. A future new member was trying us and we hope that he'll decide to join so that we can enjoy again his company in our walks. Results from my GPS: trip odometer 21.9ml; movement time 5h56; stop time 1h09; movement average 3.4ml/h, which is not bad considering the 800m steep ascent. Nicole*

**Sun 29 Mar 2009 Digswell Circular 20ml.**

Start Welwyn North Stn 9:40. Depart 9:04 London Kings Cross to Welwyn NORTH. Welwyn North Stn is in Digswell Village (TL246154), not in Welwyn Garden City, where there is also a station, or Welwyn, where there is no station. There will be engineering works on our train line the night before the walk. As well as contacting the leader (see Strider), those coming by train might like to consult: National Rail engineering works and National Rail. If the work finishes at 08:15, as stated, there should be no problem. If it does not, the worst should be a short bus ride, which will take an extra twenty minutes. The leader needs to know if there are latecomers, so that we can wait and/or walk a modified circuit (depending on how late). The route will be: Digswell, Welwyn. Ayot St Lawrence, Codicote, Datchworth, Watton at Stone, Bulls Green, Digswell. Picnic lunch. Car drivers can park in the village (TL247150) to avoid paying £1.50 in the Stn car park. Ldr Denis Smith

*Summary: 20 miles. Ldr Denis Smith*

*We had a cloudy but dry day. We started off with 29, went through Digswell Woods, Welwyn, Ayot St Peter, the disused Hertford-Luton railway, and had a stop at Ayot St Lawrence by the Paladin Church. One Herts member found the pace (5.2km/hr) faster than she expected and decided to take a taxi to her home (about 7km). We crossed the Mimram again at Kimpton Mill, and made our way through the edge of Codicote to Rabley Heath, a village comprising about 20 large houses and one pub, the Robin Hood and Little John, where we lunched. We made our way by Woolmer Green and Datchworth Church to Watton-at-Stone, where another walker had to drop out with blisters; she and her sister took the train from there back to London. We stopped again on Datchworth Green and the remaining 26 continued along permissive paths back to Digswell. We had walked almost 35km and Hertfordshires gently rolling hills had given us over 400 metres of ascent. Denis*

**Sun 22 Mar 2009 Leatherhead Loop 24ml.**

Start Leatherhead Stn 9:30. Depart London Waterloo 08:32 or Victoria 08:36. Lunch at Holmbury St Mary. Please bring a picnic. No pub. Return trains at 15 and 45 past the hour. Ldr Chris Dent

**Sun 15 Mar 2009 Witley to Haslemere 20ml.**

Start Witley Stn 10:04. Depart London Waterloo 9:00 (Clapham Junction 9:09). Lunch probably at Grayswood, via Black Down in the afternoon. Joint walk with Surrey Walking Club. Ldr Peter Buchwald.

*Summary: 19 miles. Ldr Peter Buchwald*

*Joint Stroll SWC-London LDWA*

*We met at Witley station at 10:09 on a warm, sunny Spring morning where I was amazed at the crowd which alighted from the train. I counted about 33 people and another person later confirmed that number. We started along the Greensand Way between houses and were soon walking through woods. The ground had dried up a bit from the previous week but was still muddy and we passed rivers and streams as we meandered through the trees to the Wheatsheaf Hotel at Grayswood where I had reserved a table for about half the group. After a hearty meal we started on the walk uphill out of Grayswood, going away from Haslemere in a long loop. Through more woods and a steep hill to the top of Black Down and the Temple of the Winds which was a bit busy that afternoon, being occupied by us and a group of volunteers who were clearing vegetation. It was still early and we had time to return along the bottom of a small,*

*muddy stream to Fernhurst where we had some afternoon refreshments. From there on, the last part of the walk was messy, and we made slow progress past a horse, through a field where we seemed to be sinking into a mixture of horse manure, urine and mud, and several people were electrocuted by some white wires on a fence. There was a last hill into Haslemere and then down to the station. Some of us ran the last kilometre or so of the walk to comfortably catch the 18:17 train back to London. One of the group overheard whispers in the train, about the strong smell of horse manure which seemed to accompany us. Thanks to Janette and Glenys for indicating the way from Temple of the Winds to Fernhurst and Fernhurst to Haslemere which I had mapped out on my GPS, but which I hadn't had the time to walk beforehand. Peter*

**Sat 7 Mar 2009 Medway Towns circuit along North Downs and Medway. 20 ml.**  
Start Rochester Stn 8:45. Depart London Victoria 8:02. Pub or picnic lunch. Ldr Jerome Ripp

*Summary: 20 miles. Ldr Jerome Ripp*

*A group of 12 enjoyed lovely weather and good company in our 19 mile circuit of the Medway towns. Starting early from Rochester station we strolled along the High Street admiring the varied architecture and the numerous reminders that this is a town strongly associated with Dickens. A brisk and breezy stretch along the river Medway and then a long slow climb onto the North Downs where we spent the next few hours passing several megalithic remains on the way; Kits Coty House and the White Stone. A late lunch but much enjoyed at the Bell in Bredhurst and then a quick return across a country park with lake and a final urban stretch through Chatham. Jerome*

**Sat 28 Feb 2009 Hassocks, circular walk in the South Downs. c23ml.**

Start Hassocks Stn 9:02. Depart London Bridge 8:12 direct or London Victoria 8:02 change at East Croydon (8:24 to Hassocks). Lunch at The Swan Inn, Falmer. Joint walk with LDWA Sussex. Ldr Margaret Romanski

**Sun 22 Feb 2009 Tring Circular 21 ml.**

Start Tring Stn 9:30. Depart London Euston 8:53. Lunch at the Shoulder of Mutton in Wendover. Return trains at 15 and 35 mins past the hour. Ldr Steve Plested

*Summary: 21 miles. Ldr Steve Plested*

*At Tring station initially only 6 people were in attendance but arrival of the train boosted number to 19. The weather then changed from bright and sunny to overcast and remained so for most of the day. We set off North along the Grand Union Canal with a deviation to circumnavigate the 3 famous Tring Reservoirs (Startops, Tringford and Wiltstone), well known havens for ornithologists and piscators. More canal towpath took us to the outskirts of Wendover Woods and the first real ascent of the day. After viewing some brave souls on wires and ropes above our heads ("Go Ape") there followed a steep descent into Wendover for lunch. The Shoulder of Mutton did us proud and we were soon off along the Ridgeway through more woodland, a brief sunny interval lit up the woods and was most welcome as we climbed up and over the second major hill of the day. Open countryside and a few lanes then led us to the canal south of Tring which we followed back to the start with a few minutes to spare before the arrival of the train. If I correctly interpreted the comments at the end, a good time was apparently had by all. Steve*

**Sun 15 Feb 2009 Two Castles Walk: Hever (Kent) - Sevenoaks. c.18ml.**

Start Hever Stn 9:31. Depart London Bridge or Victoria to East Croydon then 9:05 to Hever. Frequent trains back from Sevenoaks. Lunch at the Fleur-De-Lis, Leigh with mainly a selection of roasts available. This is also a smaller pub The Bat and Ball close by which only does rolls. Both pubs have a good selection of beers. Ldr Dave Williams

*Summary: c.18 miles. Ldr Dave Williams*

*22 or was it 23 mostly well-behaved souls turned up on a spring-like day at Hever. Conditions underfoot were needless to say rather muddy and boggy. The highlight of the morning for many was the short diversion to see the Chidingstone where in older days nagging wives were taken to be chastised! Because of the saturated ground we were forced to divert along the road & arrived at the pub in Leigh earlier than anticipated. Despite being rather slow to take the orders the service turned out much better than expected and we departed pretty much on time. The afternoon passed relatively uneventfully and we arrived back in Sevenoaks soon after 4.30 pm. Surprisingly I had one complaint that there wasn't enough mud -it just goes to show that there's no pleasing some people!! Incidentally this must be the first walk in LDWA history where the leader never actually made it to the front at any point!!! Dave*

**Sat 7 Feb 2009 Linear Walk Alton to Farnham 18ml.**

Start Alton Stn 9:38. Depart London Waterloo 8:23. Return trains every half hour. Pub lunch at Blue Bell Inn in Docketfield or picnic. Map LR 186. Ldr Lonica Vanclay

*Summary: 18 miles. Ldr Lonica Vanclay*

*7 intrepid walkers joined me for what turned out to be a glorious and unusual walk....clear sunny weather with the terrain for the whole distance covered in several inches of clean white snow - not often we are able to walk in such conditions in southern England. The snow was firm and we were could still keep up a fast pace and complete the walk in excellent time. The views were superb. Frensham Pond was frozen - a contrast to the last time I was there in summer when people were sunbathing and swimming in it! Lonica*

**Sun 1 Feb 2009 Around Liphook c22ml.**

Later start due to engineering works. Start Liphook Stn 10:03. Depart London Waterloo 8:30. Change at Guildford for replacement bus service 9:20. Return services not affected. Direct trains at 36mins past the hour. Lunch at the Kings Arms, Fernhurst or bring a picnic. Pub food available but there will be a short lunch stop due to late start. Pls bring a torch. Ldr Margaret Romanski.

*Summary: c22 miles. Ldr Margaret Romanski*

*I was delighted that 18 people turned up for the walk despite the engineering works. The weather was mostly clear and cold and the route varied - part wooded and part hilly with some fantastic views. We headed east from Liphook to the Temple of the Winds then dropped to Fernhurst for a pre-ordered lunch at the Kings Arms. I rather foolishly announced to the group that there were no hills in the afternoon only to be faced with the steepest climb of the day straight after lunch. I think the nick-name 'no hills Margaret' may stick for a while. In the afternoon we crossed Telegraph hill and stopped at the view point on Woolbeding common to return to Liphook very soon after dark. All in all a great day. Margaret*

**Sun 25 Jan 2009 Coulsdon South Circular 17-18 ml.**

Meet Coulsdon South Stn 9:04. Depart London Victoria 8:34. Pub: the Hare and Hounds in Godstone. Ldr Kathy LoRaso

*Summary: 17-18 miles. Ldr Kathy LoRaso*

*As the rain fell steadily, I hoped that no one would show up so that I could go back home (this did happen to me once on a Surrey Walking Club walk that I lead a few years ago). But no such luck. At Victoria, on the train and Coulsdon car park there were many smiling faces.*

**Sun 18 Jan 2009 A Venison and Ham wrap 18-19ml.**

Meet Wimbledon Stn, BR and District Line, (main ticket hall) 9:00. Walk via Wimbledon Common, Thames Path, Richmond Park and Wimbledon Common. Pub stop in Richmond. Ldr Andy Shoesmith

*Summary: 18 miles. Ldr Andy Shoesmith*

*25 walkers, including new and recent members, ignored forecasts of rain and gale force winds and enjoyed a mostly bright, sunny and clement walk. We headed up to Wimbledon Common, down to Robin Hood gate and entered Richmond Park. Going West, we passed a large herd of deer, on the way to Ham gate, then on to Ham and Teddington lock. We followed the Thames Path to Richmond, arriving at the Roebuck pub on Richmond Hill at midday, just in time for an excellent pub lunch. Others sat outside with a wonderful view over the river, and into the distance. For the afternoon, we re-entered Richmond Park at Richmond gate, meandering through varied scenery, with views to the City, passing Sheen and Roehampton gates, then following Beverley Brook back to Robin Hood gate. Back into Wimbledon Common, we headed North West to Putney Vale and then South to the Windmill, where we had a brief tea stop. The final stage took us back into the Common, across a few fairways of the golf course, then to Wimbledon village and down the hill to the station, arriving at 4 o'clock. All in all a great day; no rain, lots of sun and chat and no-one got lost! Andy*

**Sat 10 Jan 2009 Lea Valley Walk 19ml.**

Start Limehouse Stn 9:00. 4 min journey from Fenchurch Street and on DLR. Coffee stop 11.30 at Stonebridge Lock Cafe. Lunch stop Waltham Abbey 13.35 where there is a choice of pubs and tea shops and a chance to explore the famous Abbey Church where King Harold is buried. Finish Broxbourne Station. Frequent return trains to Liverpool Street. Pub lunch. Ldr Rob Myers.

*Summary: 19miles. Ldr Rob Myers*

*13 walkers including 1 first timer braved arctic conditions for a very pleasant walk along the frozen canals and River Lea Navigation. It was amusing at times to see the ducks and swans attempts to walk on the ice. The walk started at the Limehouse basin and passed through Regents Canal, Victoria Park, Hackney Marshes and Walthamstow Marshes before a welcome cup of tea at Stonebridge Lock Café. Following that the walk progressed through Ponders End, Enfield Lock and Ramney Marsh before reaching our very late lunch stop at Waltham Abbey. Some walkers spent the lunch break exploring the Abbey Church built in 1050 by King Harold whilst others went to the pub. Following lunch there was a short but enjoyable final 4 mile stage via Cheshunt to Broxbourne where the Olympic Canoeing is due to be held. Everyone agreed that it was a thoroughly enjoyable day. Rob*

**Sat 3 Jan 2009 Clapham Junction to North Downs 19ml.**

Start Clapham Junction Stn (St John's Hill Main exit) 8:30. Very frequent trains from Victoria. Return from East Croydon. If you catch the 08:06, 08:13 or 08:17 train from Victoria you should arrive at Clapham Junction in plenty of time. Lunch will be in a very cheep and cheerful place near Crystal Palace station. There is a pub nearby though the food there is most definitely not a gastronomical highlight. You can also bring sandwiches and eat them in the park. I hope to finish around 4 pm. If necessary I may shorten the walk by a mile or so by using the Croydon Tramlink rather than endure a boring trudge to East Croydon in the dark. You will need an Oyster (90p) or Freedom Pass for this. The pace of the walk will be moderate. Ldr Susanne Waldschmidt

*Summary: 19miles. Ldr Susanne Waldschmidt*

*14 walkers for a very quirky walk in brilliant, cold but very sunny weather through the open spaces of South London, including Clapham Common, Dulwich Park and Woods, Crystal Palace Park, Norwood Country Park etc. Highlights were Brixton prison and windmill, the manor in Brockwell Park, where we warmed up with a morning coffee, the dinosaurs, Addington Hill, with the sunset over London and the tram ride to East Croydon. Arins café turned out to be a real find. Excellent, cheap food with friendly and efficient service. I think the few, who went to the pub rather regretted the micro-waved pizzas and Fawlty Towers service. They had been warned. We managed to complete the walk comfortably before sunset. Lots of new faces but I think most enjoyed the walk, the company and above all the weather. Susanne*