



LONG DISTANCE WALKERS ASSOCIATION
AIM: TO FURTHER THE INTERESTS OF THOSE
WHO ENJOY LONG DISTANCE WALKING

BEDS, BUCKS & NORTHANTS GROUP

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017



DAVE NORRIS
27/1/52-15/1/2017

Dave has passed away tragically in an air crash.

The twin Comanche he was flying was the plane he loved, having done so many flights over the last 20 years not only in UK but abroad. Dave was an experienced pilot with thousands of hours of flying over 40 years of his life. Although I met Dave as a parent to Gareth and Becky in 1995, I did not know until we started dating in 2007 that he was a pilot –but not just a pilot, an examiner and instructor and a brilliant one too following all the feedback that we have had.

Dave and I were in a very dark place when we met having marriage breakup to cope with. In the early days we would walk the terrier and talk and talk. And then Cupid took out his arrow and as they say the rest is history.

As many will know, Dave was a motor engineer who serviced cars and did a great job and real good value. He also served on the Newton Longville Parish Council for over 25 years and was Chair for most of this time. He saw the building of Longueville Hall, numerous fights against new housing at Salden Chase and the unending battle to have the village's transport problems sorted. More recently, the day before we moved house, he was at a meeting about Broadband for the village. He cared for and loved the village and the people who live there. His passion was addictive and also all-consuming. He never did things by halves and his levels of energy to keep two jobs, the management of home life and the demands of parish council were strenuous. He could be short/abrupt but he worked long hours and cared so much for the frail and elderly, for the ill and those treated unfairly.

Originally from a Council Estate in Wendover and youngest of five, he considered family and friends as the all-important things of life. He was old-fashioned in his principles and could be quick to anger if he saw injustice or waste.

I had the most privileged position of having seen him as a parent and then a friend and as soulmate he was so deep in his thoughts and faith. Although not a regular church goer he was deeply religious and we did debate faith a fair bit. You never had time to be bored with Dave about.

Close friends can also comment on his culinary skills – cooking was one of his passions as was rugby and he was able to chill in front of the television falling asleep and protesting somewhat when told to go to bed.



*May 2013
30th Anniversary
Brewery Walk*

Dave and I first started walking over the fields from Cow Pasture Farm towards Mursley and Drayton Parslow on a cold January morning (about the 15th!) - very muddy it was. He never moaned which was very stoic as, according to his son Gareth, Dave always moaned about walking in the wrong conditions.

Many BBN walkers will remember his first arrival on a canal walk with Dexter, the German Shepherd (which terrified me). Both Dave and Dexter were deadbeat - but stoic about every muscle aching. Of course I never saw the state he collapsed in at Hollybush Farm!!

Dave led one walk for BBN – Brickhill Tea and Biscuits from his site which I often used for the car parking toilet facilities. We could have renamed it the "drowned rats walk" and I will never forget the pleading look in Gordon's eyes when Dave suggested we cut the walk short. I have the photos Norman took as proofmorale improved with the hot drinks and biscuits.

The walk we both enjoyed best ever was the Long Mynd weekend with Gareth (for Dave's 60th). Over the last few years Dave walked far less as there were always so many other pressing things to do but in 2017 we were going to get the boots back on!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the overwhelming words of support, cards and flowers which have given me and Dave's family strength at this awful time.

Sylvie

NEW MEMBERS

A very warm welcome to our new members:

Rob Bishop, Higham Ferrers	Trevor Chandler, Princes Risborough
Penny Everitt, Leighton Buzzard	Katy Fornazarcic, Bedford
Frank Hodgson, Holcot	Lynne Bywater/Paul Kitson, Oakham
Dave Ribbans, Stotfold	David Richardson, Flitwick
Valerie Von Arx, Westoning	

and welcome back:- Carole Lydon, Harlington

Chairman's Chatter

All our concerns about our hobby and matters in the outside world were put into perspective when we received the shocking and very sad news of the death of Sylvie Eames's husband Dave Norris on the 15th January. Several of our members have contacted Sylvie to offer their support at this traumatic time. The only thing I can say is that our thoughts and prayers are with her in her darkest hour.

Changing track entirely, Santa paid his annual visit to BBN in December and there was much carolling and ho-ho-ing but the walk did take longer than expected and it was dark as we finished. This enabled Steve Clark to show off once again his photographic skills with some stunning sunset shots. These really would have been fit for an LDWA calendar, but alas that is no more.

As a tumultuous year ended (hopefully nothing will Trump 2016 in its upheaval) Steve and Pearl Smith started 2017 off with a walk round Little Paxton reservoir near St Neots. We were joined on this by new members Carolien along with Wahid and his partner Esin. Wahid showed off his range of photography skills which I must admit rivalled Clarkey. A bit of competition does everyone good. This was followed by an excellent pub lunch at The Anchor Inn (another one....) and all in all it was a good way to start the walking year.

We have two major events on the horizon. From Friday 10th to Sunday 12th March BBN are hosting the LDWA National AGM. On Saturday 11th we are

leading a series of 4 walks (2 linear) in the local area. If anyone is interested in taking part in the walks but does not wish to stay at the hotel then please contact Peter with your choice of walk (further information on pages 6/7/8). However the highlight of the weekend is bound to be Steve Smith revealing all.....well not quite on the Friday night quiz. So please do think about attending.

The weekend before, on Sunday 5th March, the Chiltern Kanter offers a choice of routes from Pitstone Memorial Hall to Little Gaddesden and Wigginton and incorporates a stroll up to the top of Ivinghoe Beacon.... So far we have 130 entries. Thanks to all those who have offered to marshal on the event. It's just as much fun the other side of the desk!

Continuing with the AGM theme the BBN group AGM was held in November and for the first time in years Gill was unable to attend due to work on her mother's house. Some people have no commitment! The latest version of the Group Constitution with amendments was approved and will be sent on to the National LDWA.

After some discussion about group branded merchandise the purchase of 50 BBN buffs was approved. These have now arrived and will be coming to a social walk or challenge event near you! The meeting was not so keen on the proposed BBN mugs but, with 2018 being our 35th anniversary, please watch this space....

Peter provided quite a few updates from the Local Group Reps meeting he attended in November and something that does vex us is how to publicise the Association. With 160 plus members in BBN and 8,000 plus nationally we must be doing something right but not quite sure how.....

We have a surplus of funds and Lynn has very wisely suggested that we spend some of this on kissing gates to replace stiles which will help all of us as we get older! If you can think of ways of spending our hard-earned money then please let us know..... (A new back four at LFC wouldn't go amiss...)

DFH also half jokingly mentioned to Peter Engledow about becoming a replacement Treasurer for Ian Sage and Peter has happily agreed. If anyone is interested in replacing me as Chairman I would be very grateful as I am also stepping down in November.

A week prior to the group AGM we held the ever popular Steppingley Step which attracted over 250 starters and was well organised by Merrian and Lynn's group of helpers. Thanks for all who helped on that.

Ref other BBN matters procedural, we held our first committee meeting of the year on Thursday 19th January and we welcomed Roy Carter who was elected in absentia at the November AGM. He has already submitted some ideas about footpath improvements in Bedfordshire. I know that his contacts with the Beds Walking Festival and the Ramblers Association will stand us in great stead.

That's all I've got to say for now so, as I said in my last column, please remember that when you're out with BBN friends on a national trail, social walk or Challenge Event that you might walk on but YNWA....



Good Walking!

Norman Corrin

LDWA NATIONAL AGM 2017

Well it's nearly here. For those of us who've not attended a National AGM I hope you enjoy it. Even if you don't turn up for any of the walks but just attend the AGM on the Sunday morning it will be a chance to put a face to the name, hear them speak and offer your opinion or ask a question. It's our Association after all.

Just to reiterate what's on offer. This has been copied from the National AGM section of the main LDWA website: <https://www.ldwa.org.uk/agm/agm.php>
All walks and the coach trip are on Saturday 11th March.

A Walk – 23 Miles - Leaves at 8.00 am – Led by David Findel-Hawkins and Merrian Lancaster *Leave Horwood House by coach to Little Gaddesden. Return via Ivinghoe Beacon (visiting the BBN Founders' Memorial Bench); Horton Wharf and then towards Mentmore Towers, to Wing Village Hall for lunch; Cublington; Dunton; Mursely and back to Horwood House.*

B Walk – 18.2 Miles - Leaves at 8.30 am – Led by Teresa Brown

Depending upon the size of the group this may be split into 2 sections with the second party leaving later. *From Horwood House to Mursley; Dunton; Cublington. Wing Village Hall for lunch; Mentmore Towers; Horton Wharf; Ivinghoe (visiting the BBN Founders' Memorial Bench); Pitstone Memorial Hall – collected by coach.*

The catering for the A and B walkers at Wing Village Hall will be provided by BBN and will consist of a ham or cheese ploughmans and pudding.

C Walk – 15 Miles - Leaves at 9.00 am – Led by Sylvie Eames with assistance from Norman Smith *Leave Horwood House to Addington; Verney Junction; Winslow (first Wellington crash); Swanbourne; Mursley (second Wellington crash); Horwood House (third Wellington crash). Lunch will be at The Bell Hotel, Winslow. Norman Smith from BBN has been helping Sylvie recce the walk. He was a pilot in Sudan mostly doing agricultural flying and was an obsessive glider. That explains why there are a lot of Wellington crashes **Please note change of pub.***

D Walk –10 Miles - Leaves at 9.30 am – Led by Frances Craven

*Leave Horwood House to Winslow, Swanbourne and Mursley. Lunch will be at The Green Man, Mursley. **Please note change of pub.***

E Coach Trip – Departs 10.00 am – Led by Dianne Sutton

Our route will be visiting Woodhill Prison and the (in)famous concrete cows, the Peace Pagoda on Willen Lake – a Buddhist monument to World Peace. We will then reach our main destination – Bletchley Park. History was made at Bletchley Park with the work of Alan Turing and the code breakers whose work it is said shortened World War II by 2 years. The park will provide a really interesting day out. There are Cafes on site where lunch can be obtained. Entry to the Park will cost approximately £14 per person.

Please note that as a coach is being used for Walks A and B and the Trip, we will be asking members for a payment towards the cost of the coach. Lunch at Wing Village Hall will be provided by BBN Group, but again a payment will be asked. Lunch will be arranged at the Public Houses we use for the other walks. If you are staying at the hotel, these payments will be taken on the Friday afternoon. Please ensure that you visit the BBN Group Table at the LDWA registration on Friday afternoon to get full details.

The charge for the coach will be £5 (walk leaders will be exempt) and the charge for lunch on A & B walks will be £5.

For those of us just doing the walks but not staying at the hotel please let Peter Simon (peterandmooi@ntlworld.com) have your choice of walk beforehand and, if you're doing the C or D walks, your menu choice. Payment to be made on the morning before the walk.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Norman Corrin

DONATIONS

As most of you know, most of our events run at a surplus and we regularly make donations to good causes.

Over the years we have donated to such causes as the Buckinghamshire Red Cross, St John's Hospice at Moggerhanger, MacMillan Nurses Appeal, funds for local Paralympians, and the various Air Ambulances which serve our three counties. We have also installed kissing gates in the Chilterns and Northants, and five benches on the Greensand Ridge.

If any member has any suggestion for future donations please speak to any committee member (see last page of the Newsletter).

Dave and Lynn Yorston have suggested that the group supports the cost of installing more hand or kissing gates on local footpaths. "None of us are getting any younger and we would find these easier than stiles!!!" they say.

This was agreed at the last committee meeting and it was decided to ask members if they had any suggestions for places where a hand or kissing gate would be a benefit. Again, if you have any ideas, please have a word with any committee member.

FROM HERE TO THERE AND BACK
Challenge Walk : Sunday 9th July 2017
Offer of help to Alan Leadbetter please
acleadbetter64@gmail.com

The marshals' walk is on Sunday 11th June 2017

WALKS PROGRAMME : SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2017

Hello All

Thank you so much for your support in putting together the walk programmes. Please see below the available dates for the Walks Programme September to December 2017. There is plenty of time to plan your walk – I won't need your walk information until May.

Thursday

Date	Leader	
Sept 7th		
Sept 21st		
Oct 5th		
Oct 19th		
Nov 2nd		
Nov 16th	Dianne Sutton	
Nov 30th		
Dec 14th		
Dec 28th		

Weekend

Date	Leader	
Sep 2/3		
Sep 10th	Roy Carter	Kingfisher Way Linear Walk
Sep 17th	Alan Leadbetter	
Sep 30/Oct 1		
Oct 14/15		
Oct 28/29		
Nov 11/12		
Nov 19		Shillington Shuffle Challenge Walk
Nov 26		BBN AGM – Cosgrove Village Hall
Dec 9/10		
Dec 23/24		

Best wishes

Mary Knight (maryknight@hotmail.co.uk)
(Walks Secretary)

THE BBN FACEBOOK PAGE IS HERE!

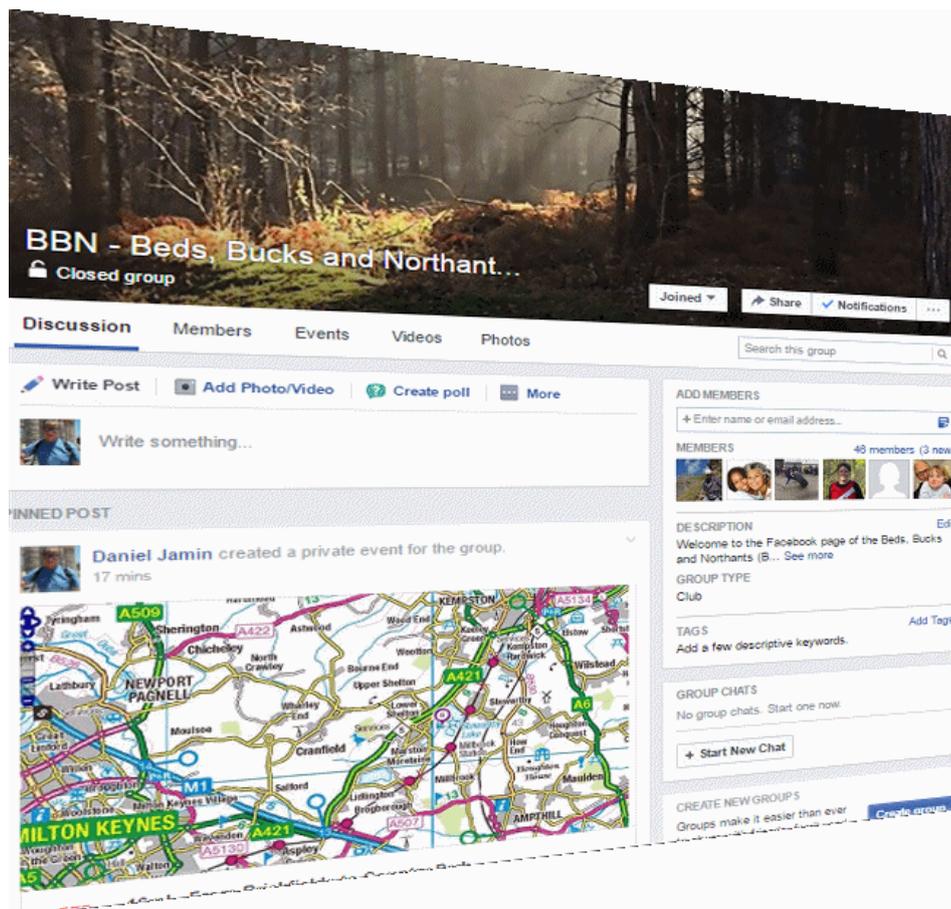
Joining the common trend in social media communications, the BBN in November created its own Facebook. So far 47 members have joined and if you have not done so yet, come to our page and join.

To do this, just visit the page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/963281023816164/> or simply find Gill's link on the BBN webpage.

Our Facebook page is private, therefore to see its contents, you will need to have a Facebook account and be logged in.

If you are not on Facebook already, creating an account is easy, follow the instructions on the first page you will be presented with.

The posts and pictures are only visible to BBN facebook members so if you want to see the fun we have, the photos we take, our forthcoming walks, and also our previous walk traces, hit the 'Join Group' button to send your request.



You do not have to be a BBN member to join the group, so if your friends and family are keen to see the contents of our page, they can request to join as well.

The page is already quite active with a number of members posting photos, traces, stories and comments. Many thanks for your contributions folks!

Any person who joins our page can add content to it so, if you have not done this yet, fingers on the keyboard and get involved...

**Facebookly yours,
The Three FBooketeers
Daniel, Norman and Gill**

Wendover Gap Anytime Challenge – 15/26 Miles

To take part in this walk, go to the Anytime Challenge tab on the BBN website <https://www.ldwa.org.uk/BedsBucksAndNorthants/W/3573/wendover-gap-anytime-challenge.html>

By downloading, printing and taking part in this self-supporting event, you will agree to abide by the Country Code and accept that the organisers cannot be held responsible for any personal property, accidental injuries or damage. Any person taking a dog along must also agree to keep it on a lead at all times and that they hold the appropriate insurance.

You **MUST** carry and be able to use a compass. You will need food and water for the day, a pen or pencil and the route description within a waterproof cover. Please wear appropriate clothing for the season. We recommend that you have a first aid kit, waterproof clothing, money, a mobile phone and a torch with you.

The 15 mile and 26 mile routes both start and finish at the public Pay & Display car park in High Street, Prestwood – GR SP872008. Nearest post code is HP16 9EU. Toilets facilities are within the car park and there is a convenience store to the left of the exit. Please ensure you pay for long enough to complete your chosen distance.

Lynn and Dave Yorston

LDWA 100 2018 - KENT - THE CINQUE PORTS 100

In 2018 Kent Group will be organising the annual LDWA 100 over the second May Bank Holiday weekend. The group has been offered Checkpoint 2 at Rye which is about 12 miles. This means it will be a very busy location.

I would like to ask for a volunteer to organise this checkpoint on behalf of the group. Merrian, Lynn and I have organised Group 100 checkpoints over the past few years but feel it would be an ideal time for someone else to come forward and take this over.

The checkpoint is still available for a while. If anyone would like to do this then the checkpoint co-ordinator to contact is Neal O'Rourke and his email address is as below: nealorourke@hotmail.co.uk

If we do not have a checkpoint and any group member wishes to help on the main event please email Neal at the above address.

Norman Corrin

NEW WALKING AGENCY IN NORTHERN SPAIN

In a previous newsletter I wrote an article about walking part of St James' Way in Northern Spain. Javier Arrue, our Spanish contact was very helpful and contributed to the success of our trip.

Javier is now setting up his own organisation in San Sebastian providing walking holidays in 4 different parts of Spain: the Basque Country, Navarra, Western Pyrenees and La Rioja. Javier will be offering all inclusive guided trips as well as self-guided options and he can design specific walking trips for groups of friends or walking club members (this could make a change to going to our usual weekends in the UK....)

Javier's website is: <http://walkingnorthspain.com> However if you have any difficulties and you want to know more I can send you the PDF document which details the trips he is offering. You can also contact Javier directly on: info@walkingnorthspain.com

Therese Jamin

The Two Moors Trail – deconstructed 22nd January 2017

Eleven of us met at the new barn on Flitton Moor (of which more on the following pages) on a very frosty morning, promising blue skies all day. After a brief walk round the plantation for the view over the sparkling pond we set off north across the A507 towards Maulden. We had a short tour round the small but very scenic (and almost unknown) Duck End nature reserve, with its four ponds and new boardwalk which crosses one of them. From Maulden church we went east where the view ahead down to the Flit valley gap at Clophill was eerily magical, with a light haze rising off the frost covered trees.

A tour of Maulden Woods included a ridge of recently felled conifers, now a restored heath – where the very steep sides of the ridge are now very obvious. A steep climb took us up to a clearing of benches and picnic table - the 'Luton Outdoor Multi Faith Centre' - for our morning break. We left the wood via the Greensand Ridge Walk and followed this, with some minor diversions, into Clophill. After a peek at the mill we crossed the Flit on 'the Causeway' and the A507 into Warren Wood. A walk along an old green lane led us to the Beaumont Tree – scene of the shooting of a highwayman, who tried to hold up a coach here. The tree was said to have grown from an elm stake which pierced his heart. A short climb took us up to Wardhedges and lunch at The Jolly Coopers, where most of us partook of an excellent warming soup.

At lunch we were joined by Gordon and we now walked via Upbury moats, site of a Tudor manor house, to Rushymeade – a super reserve on a steep slope with views of the north Chilterns – where we had a brief afternoon stop. We then turned north down to the Flit again (back on the Heritage Trail) and along the river to Flitwick Mill. This is being restored by its new owners, from its sorry state with water rushing through it, to a working mill generating electricity, which they will then live in. For info look at website: <http://www.flitwickmill.co.uk/>

Following parts of the Two Moors Trail we passed through the amazing Flitwick Moor, with views through wet woodland that look like dinosaurs could still live there. Then past a newly laid hedge (thanks to Peter Simon for his help) crossing the Flit again to Ruxox Moat – site of a Medieval monastic grange (farm for Dunstable Priory) and centre of a Roman industrial site. We finished with a short tour of Flitton Moor and back to the barn. I think the day was enjoyed by all.

David Sedgley

NEW DISCOVERY CENTRE ON FLITTON MOOR THE JACK CRAWLEY MEMORIAL BARN

The course of the River Flit has been shaped by more than 100 million years of history. Through this landscape we can learn about our own history – discovering how people moved about and why they chose to make their homes here.

People have lived in the Flit Valley for nearly 10,000 years. We know this because of the stone tools they left behind. Today the Flit Valley is largely arable landscape with towns and villages surrounded by a patchwork of fields. But many important areas of wildlife habitat still survive here. Some of the most important wetlands in Bedfordshire survive along the river. There are flower-rich meadows, ancient woodlands where trees have grown since the Middle Ages, and heaths that developed on poor Greensand soils exhausted by medieval agriculture.

There is an important geological relationship between the Greensand Ridge and the wetlands in the Flit Valley, as many of those wetlands are fed by springs bubbling out under the Greensand. The Flit Valley wetlands include the Wildlife Trust's Flitwick Moor: a unique complex of peaty fen, mire, wet woodland and meadows bisected by the river and many drains and ditches, plus a string of smaller wet woodlands and meadows.

Last June Baroness Young of Old Scone – president of the Wildlife Trust covering Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire – opened a new discovery centre on Flitton Moor. The centre is named after a local artist, Jack Crawley who died two years ago aged 92. Jack worked most of his life as a technical illustrator and was regarded as one of the best in the country. He travelled the country with friends on his vintage motor bikes, doing superb water-colours. And he was also a Spitfire pilot during the 2nd World War.

The discovery centre has information on the whole of the Flit Valley, from its source near Chalton up to Shefford. The display shows a wealth of historical and geological information as well as detailing twenty wildlife sites in the valley.

Please do pay a visit to the barn. It can be accessed from Brook Lane in Flitton, or from the path which follows the river from Joe's Close and Mill Lane, in Greenfield.

For more information contact me.

David Sedgley
01525 714961

The opening of the Jack Crawley Barn, June 2016



The Opening of the Jack Crawley Memorial Barn 11/6/2016



The Opening of the Jack Crawley Memorial Barn 11/6/2016

CAMINO AND CAMINOS

What is the Camino?

Santiago de Compostela is, after Rome and Jerusalem, the third most holy site in Christendom. Located in the region of Galicia, in north-west Spain, it houses the relics of Saint James, and has been a destination of pilgrims ever since the early 9th century, when King Alfonso II of Asturias led a pilgrimage from Oviedo. Later in the Middle Ages, Santiago became a destination for pilgrims from all across Europe. They would converge on certain meeting points in their home countries and proceed to Santiago along specific routes. These routes, collectively, are known as the Camino de Santiago, or in English, the Way of Saint James.

The Camino de Santiago, therefore, is not a route from a specific point in Europe, but rather a network of routes from all over Europe that ultimately converge on Santiago. To many people, the Camino de Santiago refers to a specific path beginning at St.-Jean-Pied-de-Port on the French side of the Pyrenees. But the Camino is much more than this. There are routes starting from various points in the Iberian peninsula. Across the Pyrenees, several well-known paths begin in France and ultimately converge onto paths leading to Santiago. Still other paths lead to these starting points. I have seen signs pointing to Santiago as far afield as Strasbourg, Innsbruck and Schaffhausen (Switzerland). There must be more.

All of this is the Camino. However, the individual ways may also be called Caminos. The route from St.-Jean-Pied-de-Port, for example, is known as the Camino Francés. Other well-walked routes within Iberia include the Camino del Norte from Irún along the north coast, the Camino Primitivo along Alfonso II's original route, the Via de la Plata northwards from Sevilla, the Camino Portugués from Lisbon and Porto, the Camino Aragonés from the Somport pass in the Pyrenees. There even is an English way (Camino Inglés), starting in the Spanish ports of Ferrol and La Coruña. English pilgrims would come, before the age of air travel, by sea, mainly from Bristol.

The main pilgrim routes across France are the Voie Littorale from Bordeaux to the Spanish border opposite Irún, the Paris (Via Turonensis), Vézelay (Via Lemovicensis) and Le Puy-en-Velay (Via Podiensis) routes converging on St.-Jean-Pied-de-Port and the Arles route (Via Tolosana) leading to the Camino Aragonés. There are, moreover, established paths starting in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Lithuania and converging to one or another of the main French paths.

Our experience - so far

Some people walk a Camino route from end to end, but it takes a month, for example, to walk the Via Podiensis and another month to walk the Camino Francés. Mooi and I have walked several of these routes from end to end, though in all cases in stages averaging around 10 days at a time. Our experience is as follows:

- Via Podiensis, Le Puy to Conques, 10 days (2000)
- Via Podiensis, Conques to Moissac, 8 days (2002)
- Via Podiensis/Camino Francés, Moissac to Pamplona, 15 days (2003)
- Camino Francés, Pamplona to Frómista, 12 days (2005)
- Camino Francés, Frómista to Santiago, 14 days + 3-day extension to Fisterra (2006)
- Camino Portugués, Vilar do Pinheiro to Santiago, 10 days (2011)
- Camino del Norte, Irún to Santander, 11 days (2013)
- Camino del Norte, Santander to Oviedo, 8 days (2013)
- Camino Primitivo, Oviedo to Santiago via Lugo, 12 days (2014)
- Via Lemovicensis, Vézelay to La Châtre, 9 days (2015)
- Camino del Norte, Oviedo to Santiago via Mondoñedo. 14 days (2016)

Apart from 2000, we have walked all these routes on our own, booking flights and in some cases lodging for the first night only. Mostly we have found accommodation without booking in advance. In France, we have at times booked accommodation one day in advance through local tourist offices. We have stayed in a combination of bunkhouses (*gîtes d'étape* in France or *albergues* in Spain), small hotels and bed-and-breakfast establishments (*chambres d'hôtes* in France). On two occasions in France we had to stay at campsites for lack of alternative accommodation.

In Spain and Portugal, there are both private and municipal albergues. It is not possible to book the municipal albergues in advance. In 2016, the municipal albergues charged €5 in Asturias and €6 in Galicia, per person per night. Private albergues charged between €10 and €15. A few albergues operate on a *donativo* basis, meaning that all contributions are voluntary. Hotels charged €30-50 for a double room. Our experience suggests that accommodation is more expensive in France than in Spain or Portugal.

In Spain, many albergues are located close to restaurants or bars that charge €9-12 per person for a three-course meal. Some private albergues offer dinner and breakfast, with communal tables. Some albergues have kitchens

that permit the walker to cook his or her own meal, although pots, pans, crockery and utensils may be in short supply. There often are grocery stores in towns and villages along the route. On stages passing through empty countryside, there may be no facilities between the starting and finishing points.

Daily distances depend on the availability of accommodation. We have walked as many as 40 and as few as 13 km in a stage. We have tried to choose our lodging so as to avoid such extremes where possible. On all segments walked so far, we have averaged no more than 29 km per day, and no fewer than 24. The terrain can be flat at times and hilly at others, but even in the mountains the route normally passes through cols, avoiding summits.

Waymarking tends to be straightforward. In France, the routes are waymarked with the red and white rectangles used on most GR routes. In Portugal and Spain, one follows either yellow arrows or scallop shell waymarks. The FFRP's series of Topoguides (in French) are useful for finding one's way in France and moreover, are relatively cheap and light compared to ordinary maps. In Spain, it is hardly necessary to bring maps at all.

It is useful to bring a guidebook, if only to plan overnight stops. Cicerone publishes guides for some of the routes, as does the Confraternity of Saint James. The FFRP Topoguides are useful in France, although many French walkers prefer "Miam Miam Dodo", a series published by Les Editions du Vieux Crayon. Conrad Stein Verlag publishes the Outdoor series of German-language guides to the Camino, including routes starting from all over Western and Eastern Europe. This series also includes an English language guide to the Camino Francés.

Choosing a route

The following is my view of each of the routes that we have walked. This may help the reader to decide which route to take. Anyone allergic to crowds should avoid the Camino Francés, which attracts at least ten times (by my best guess) as many walkers as any of the other routes.

Le Puy to Conques - The beginning and end-points of the walk are important sites. The abbey of Sainte-Foy in Conques, in particular, has a special appeal. The walk itself passes through remote countryside with no large towns. The walk crosses three plateaux - the Margeride, the Gévaudan and the Aubrac - all around 1,400 m above sea level. Le Puy is accessible by train from Lyon, with a change of train at Saint-Étienne. From Conques one has to take a bus

or taxi to Rodez in order to connect with a train. It may be better to continue walking 2 more days to reach Figeac, which has a railway station.

Conques to Moissac - This stage begins with a hard climb out of Conques. On several days the walk finishes with a steep descent into the valley of the Lot or one of its main tributaries. There is a long day - around 39 km - from Limogne to Cahors. The main attractions along the route are the cathedral city of Cahors and the abbey at Moissac. Figeac, Cahors and Moissac are all integrated into the railway network. From Moissac one can take a train to Toulouse.

Moissac to Pamplona - This stage was relatively low-lying and flat until day 13, which involves the crossing of the Pyrenees into Spain. But it's not all flat. The short climb to a small village called Pimbo, made in broiling sun, lives on in my mind as one of the hardest I have undertaken. The crossing of the Pyrenees, by contrast, was made in temperatures in the low 20s and was totally glorious. From there it is downhill to Roncesvalles and eventually to Pamplona. The French side of the walk, at least up to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, attracted few walkers when we were there in 2006, but after Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port the crowds began. The eastern suburbs of Pamplona were long and unpleasant, but the city itself has a cathedral and other important sites. From Pamplona one can connect to Madrid by rail.

Pamplona to Frómista - This was an unexciting stage with one major climb across the Sierra de la Demanda. Three cathedral cities - Logroño, Santo Domingo de la Calzada and, above all, Burgos - interrupted the monotony. We finished the walk at Frómista, which has a notable octagonal mediaeval church and a good bus connection to the provincial capital of Palencia, which itself is worth a visit. There are trains from Palencia to Madrid.

Frómista to Santiago - This is the most crowded section of the Camino Francés, especially after the path enters Galicia. The Camino remains flat and boring all the way to Astorga, the monotony broken only by the city of León. The Gothic cathedral at León is my favourite of all Spanish cathedrals, with its glorious stained glass windows. After Astorga the Camino crosses the Sierra de Rabanal. Peaking at over 1,500 m above sea level, this is literally, and for me, figuratively, the high point of the Camino Francés. Another climb follows, to the mediaeval hamlet of O Cebreiro at around 1,400 m. From there, the walk continues across the rolling hills of Galicia to Santiago.

Santiago to Fisterra - We continued in 2006 along to the lighthouse at Fisterra, the westernmost point of the Spanish mainland. This three-day extension

passes through remote countryside before emerging onto the seaside resorts of Cée and Corcubión. Ten years ago this route was underdeveloped, with a few walkers jostling for beds at the only two albergues along the way. We understand that the Fisterra way has become much more popular and that private enterprise has responded with the opening of additional facilities for sleeping.

Vilar do Pinheiro to Santiago - The Camino Portugués is full of scenic and cultural interest, but one should be prepared for walking on paved roads or cobblestones. Although the Camino passes through the major city of Porto, the local tourist office suggests starting the walk at Vilar do Pinheiro, which is reached by a suburban light railway. Even so, the first 9 km pass along a busy narrow road with no footway. Conditions improve after Vilarinho and the rest of the walk, apart from the industrial estate at O Porriño in Spain, is worthwhile. Ponte de Lima, Valença, Tui and Padrón are among the charming towns along the route. The albergues were always comfortable and there were relatively few walkers.

Irún to Santander - The opening stage of the Norte requires some climbing, seemingly up and down all day long, especially before Bilbao. Inland parts of the route are remote with few facilities, but there are also more populous sections on the coast. The terrain is varied, passing through forests, farmland, clifftops and beaches, as well as the lively city and grim industrial suburbs of Bilbao. Our walk was interrupted by four estuary crossings - three by foot ferry and one by a *transbordador*, a suspended roadway crossing the Río Nervión at Portugalete. The foot ferry at Pasaia, on day one, begins in a remarkable location where Victor Hugo spent significant time. Irún can be reached by train or bus from Biarritz or Bilbao. Santander has its own airport. An alternative inland route by-passes Santander, joining the main route at Bóo de Piélagos.

Santander to Oviedo - The terrain is similar to that of the section from Bilbao to Santander. There are no big cities in between, but on day 1 the walk winds through industrial terrain. The first day's section is officially 44 km long, but most walkers choose to cut off a 9 km loop by taking a 1.5 km ride across a river by commuter train. Big mountains come close to the sea, nowhere more so than at Llanes, where the path remains close to the beach. After the sleepy port of Villaviciosa the Camino splits, one route going inland to the Asturian capital of Oviedo and the other leading to the seaport of Gijón. Walkers planning to attempt the Primitivo must take the Oviedo route. Walkers planning to stay on the Norte can take either route. Both Oviedo and Gijón are connected to the Aeropuerto de Asturias by bus.

Oviedo to Santiago (Primitivo) - This section is tough, wild and hilly. The only main town is the walled provincial capital of Lugo. The outstanding section of the walk, from Borres to Berducedo, proceeds along a ridge 1,200 m above sea level, with supposedly great views in good weather but no facilities. In bad weather a longer alternative route, with facilities, is recommended. We got caught in between - the rain, wind and fog descended on us about an hour after we committed ourselves to the ridge walk. Fortunately, there were stakes with waymark arrows every few metres. The following day's walk, a descent through forest in pouring rain to the Salime reservoir, was almost as dramatic. The Primitivo converges with the Camino Francés at Melide, two days' walk from Santiago.

Vézelay to Le Châtre - A walk through the economically depressed centre of France, with some hills north of the Loire and mostly flat terrain to the south, including two days of towpath. The main cultural highlight is the town of La Charité-sur-Loire. The route also passes through the regional capital of Nevers. There is some confusion about the best route to take. We followed the GR654, which often takes a more circuitous route than those that other walkers were taking. They had different guidebooks (in French) and followed different sets of waymarks. Transport to and from the walk is difficult. There is no train to the starting and finishing points. The bus connection from La Châtre to the nearest station is adequate but reaching Vézelay is more problematic. If someone really wants to walk this section, it is probably best to add 2 days to the walk by starting at Auxerre. Overall, we would not recommend this section.

Oviedo to Santiago (Norte) - The scenery along the Asturian coast is similar to that found between Santander and Villaviciosa, except that there are no beaches. Instead, there are innumerable descents and climbs through eucalyptus forest. After Avilés on day 1, there are no main towns. After crossing into Galicia, the route leaves the coast and climbs, eventually reaching 700 m above sea level. The main attractions along the way are the small seaport of Luarca, the small cathedral at Mondoñedo and the monastery/albergue at Sobrado. The Norte converges with the Camino Francés at Arzúa, a long day's or a short two days' walk from Santiago.

Peter Simon

BBN Walkie Talkies Merrian has the walkie talkies. If anyone wants to use them on social walks or events, please let Merrian know so she can arrange handover. merrian22@gmail.com

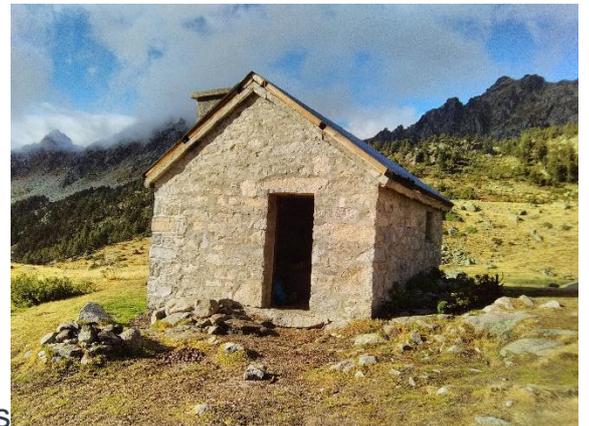
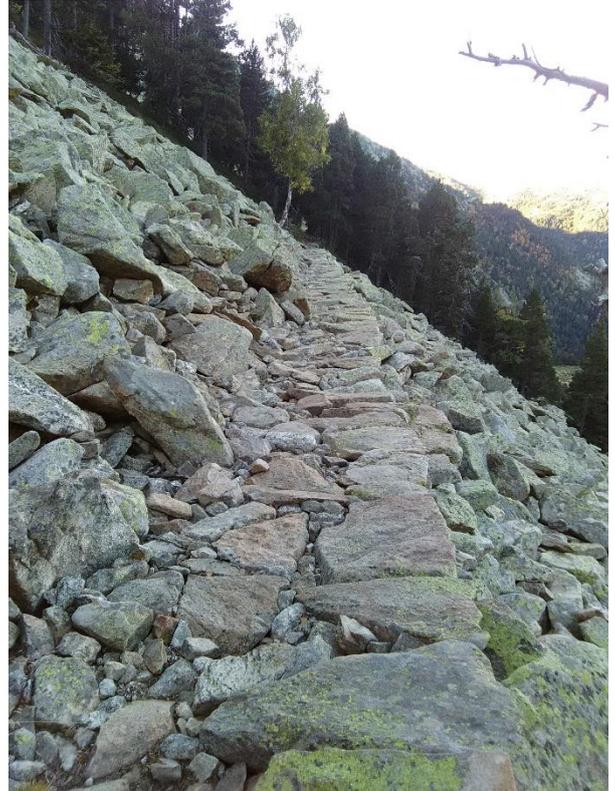
Grande Randonnee Dix (GR 10) A Walk along the French Pyrenees

In 2006, having completed a round of the Munros I chose backpacking as an alternative challenge and commenced with the Pennine Way. Over subsequent years most of the long distance paths in GB were walked and this summer a trip abroad appealed. Somewhere in my ramblings the GR 10 had been suggested as offering a challenge without need for climbing and searching the web further piqued my interest. My approach to life involves little organisation and therefore camping gear is essential to my trips. I did purchase a Cicerone Guide, the 3 FFRP Topo Guides (4th was out of print) and pre-booked rail tickets Kettering-St Pancras-Paris Gare du Nord-Paris Gare Montparnasse-Hendaye. My rucksack was loaded with the absolute minimum of gear and still managed to weigh 17kg with 2days food, 2litres of water and a fair wad of Euros. So I left home late on 31st Aug and arrived at Hendaye 1pm 1st Sept. Two hours later I threw a pebble in the Atlantic at Hendaye Plage and set out on the best walk of my life.

This initial section in the Basque country begins gently and only rises to 1,000metres on the fourth day. Day 5 ended at St Jean Pied a Port where a great many tourists set out on the Camino de Santiago. Their subsequent day involves a climb of 1,800m and the gardien of the gite d etape in which I stayed took trouble to offer advice after the evening meal.

Accommodation on GR10 is Gite d'etape (bunkhouse) (not to be confused with Gite), Chambre d'Hote(B&B) Refuge (with a gardien when meals are available or without food when no gardien), hotels in a few larger resorts, cabanes (bothies) or camping on sites or bivouac in wild. Over the tour I used all the available options. The summer season is generally regarded as June - August and as early as the beginning of Sept places begin to close. Winter sees the area catering for Skiing and winter sports and many proprietors take holidays in Sept/Oct. My camping gear was therefore essential on several occasions. Bed, breakfast and evening meal (demi pension) is the usual tariff available and ranged in price from 30 - 52 Euros. Almost invariably the food was plentiful and delicious. In gites and refuges the facilities and dorms were almost always unisex (never slept with so many women ever). You need a sleeping bag, towel and flipflops.

Weather throughout was mostly kind with only 5 thunderstorms, arising only one of which caught me out. On 2 days it rained incessantly and in one



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instance turned to snow over 2,000metres so that Col de Madamete (2,509m) had 75mm of fresh snow when I passed through. The more difficult weather was high temperatures during the early part of Sept when afternoon commonly saw 36C. On the famous Chemin de Matures which is carved into a south facing rock face the temp was 38C in the shade. Oddly on the penultimate day toward the Mediterranean the wind picked up to over 100k/hr with really chilling conditions.

The official distance for the main route from Hendaye to Banyuls sur Mer is 900km or 580miles and the total ascent is given as 49,000metres. Those who were using GPS told me that the stage details were under estimates in both distance and ascent. After a brief time I chose to depend instead upon the time figures given in both the Topo Guides and the signposts and found them remarkably correct. On 2 days I ascended over 2,000m and on many days over 1,600m. Route marking with white and red symbols is extremely good and one needs to be lacking concentration in order to deviate from the path. I managed twice. There are boulder fields to be negotiated, some easy scrambling and exposure but no climbing is involved. This is mountainous country with rugged paths and by mid distance my boots where ruined and I was forced to divert to Seix to purchase new boots.

Geology is varied along the way with limestone caverns, carsk, granite, iron ore, sandstone and with it the villages in valleys have their own architecture. Mining has been present from Roman times until quite recently and the dereliction caused by abandonment is showing in some areas. Tourism however thrives in large part and the popularity of the region is shown by the fact that any agricultural building which is even remotely accessible has been converted to holiday home. Agriculture appears to thrive in the hills with herds of horses, cattle and sheep freely grazing the mountain pastures to the texture of lawn in many areas. Oddly these animals are extremely untroubled by walkers. Only the Pyrenean mountain dogs (patous) present any difficulty and only when guarding their sheep. The advice is to walk around the flock without making any threat to the dog. Shepherds still occupy their huts throughout the summer season and often offer sheep milk cheese or honey for sale. I can say that I never saw stock in better condition anywhere. The sound of a large herd ambling along with innumerable bells of varying sizes is memorable.

Wildlife is diverse. I saw eagles, vultures, hawks, kites, buzzards, flamingos, storks and cranes. Marmots, isards, wild boar, deer, salamander, gecko, adder and even a wildcat. Brown bears were reintroduced from Slovenia recently to invigorate the native bears. Local people told me that the imports are more aggressive than the natives. It is not clear how that is ascertained and when

I heard bears growling in the woods I did not wait for a photo. Sound of tawny owls was present every nightfall whilst in the mountains. Sundays were for boar hunting and as they are flushed out by dogs and shot with high-powered rifles, when passing through woods where a hunt was in progress, I used my whistle to announce my presence.

Previously my hands-on experience of mountains was limited to the UK. The spectacular scenery and jaw-dropping majesty of the Pyrenees was quite unexpected. On many occasions the locations could have been used for "Lord of the Rings". Towns and villages in the valleys held their own charm. Churches and graveyards bore witness to active congregations. A Basque wedding with everyone in costume and reverence of a military funeral spoke to surviving culture. Newly tarmacked roads to tourist facilities even as high as 6,000ft however also showed that commerce is active.

My grasp of the French language is limited to GCE "O" Level gained 54years ago when not a word need be spoken. Rudely it was necessary for me to commence every conversation with an apology. I did endeavour to converse to the best of my ability and I was treated with the utmost respect and kindness by almost everyone. Hospitality could not have been bettered. I will long remember more than 50 French persons singing their version of Bonne Anniversaire at Refuge de Ruhle on my 71st birthday.

One gite proprietor estimated that possibly as few as 400 to 1,000 walk the GR 10 fully in any year. I met only one group of 4 men who were walking full way East to West. One extremely fit young lady was walking Haute Route Pyrenees and was on schedule to complete in 30 days. Several other walkers were following a route comprised of GR10, GR11 and HRP which they said shortened the distance and avoided some of the ascent. With the benefit of hindsight I would have split the journey at Bagneres de Luchon where there is a railway station, not because the trip was too far, but to save the joy of the return for another year. There were mixed emotions as I threw my pebble into the Mediterranean at lunchtime on 11th Oct some 41 days after starting. However I had lost 4inches from my waist despite eating ravenously throughout the trip and the prospect of "plat de jour" can overcome most emotions in a hungry man.

From Banyuls Sur Mer a train to Beziers from where Ryanair fly to Luton brought journeys end.

If I thought I was fit starting out it is certain that I was 6 weeks later. It is also certain that without the exercise that I have enjoyed by walking with LDWA over the past year I could not have done this. Thanks to all you BBN members.

Guidebook and FFRP Topo Guides are available to loan to anyone inspired to consider this walk.

Jim Robinson

See BBN's Facebook page for more great photos of Jim's walk:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LDWABBN/>

Scroll down to 31st December

FLOWER OF SUFFOLK

My favourite challenge walk in the LDWA calendar, on the coast, loads of woodland, board walking through reeds in the Walberswick nature reserve, and right next to RSPB Minsmere. I always make a weekend of it and this year I stayed at The Beach House in Lowestoft on the sea front. I travelled down early on Friday morning and because I was too early to book in at the B&B I went straight down to Havergate Is and Orford Ness on the coast approx. 30 mins drive south of Lowestoft. Orford Ness is a National Trust place, a 5min boat ride from Orford where the MOD used to test bombing runs and radar in the war. It's now a pleasant wildlife walk of about 1 to 2 hour duration, although there was nothing to be seen when I was there. Havergate Is is an RSPB reserve where you can see large flocks of Avocets, the RSPB's logo photo on their membership cards. You are not allowed to land on Havergate Is, so you have to take a £10 boat ride around the island, preferably when the tide is out so the mud flats are exposed and more waders to be seen. There was a large flock of Avocets on the mud flats and I just managed to get one decent photo of them from the boat which was not exactly a smooth ride.

Orford Ness and Havergate Is done, I headed for Lowestoft and my B&B. I arrived around 5pm and when the owner opened the door he recognised me from two years ago. He showed me to my room which was the same one as two years ago and I settled in overlooking the sea front. I never bothered going out Friday night, I had a bottle of wine and I'd already had a Chinese takeaway.

Up for breakfast on Saturday at 8am, cereal, fruit juice and a fry up I headed for Walberswick Nature reserve to see if I could spot any Bearded Tits there, but no

joy, so I headed for Minsmere, a RSPB reserve on the Suffolk coast. My goal was to photograph the Bearded Tit, a gorgeous little tit with striking markings. The problem with these little critters is that if the wind blows they stay well down in the reed beds and you don't see them, but Saturday was a calm day and the outlook was looking good.

I arrived at Minsmere, got a brew from the café then went in search of those elusive critters. I walked up towards the shingle beach, on the way there I walked in between reed beds and walked slowly through them, I did catch a glimpse of the Bearded Tits but could not manage to get a photo. I carried on along the beach then back inland towards the woods. I was heading towards the Island Mere Hide, where the little critters had been seen, passing a couple who had just been there, they said that they were all over the place, so eagerly I headed for the Island Mere Hide. I arrived at the hide and everybody said they had seen them, so I settled down and waited for them to show themselves. It was not long before they started to show themselves so, camera at the ready, I waited for a good photo. I stayed in the hide for a couple of hours and did get a lot of photos of the Bearded Tit but of all the photos I got only a couple were good enough for the website, which is where they are now at www.flickr.com/photos/stevecee then head for "BIRDS OF MINSMERE".

I was at the Island Mere Hide when one of the other bird watchers shouted "Look there's an Otter" I turned and saw my very first wild Otter in one of the shallow ponds, YIPEEEE, that made my day, not only did I get some decent photos of the Bearded Tits, I also saw my very first wild Otter. While I was at the hide it chucked it down with rain and the wind got up blowing the reeds all over the place, it lasted for about 15mins then died down again. Time was getting on so I decided to call it a day and headed back to the main reception area. Jumped in my car and headed for Lowestoft and my B&B. Tomorrow was the Flower of Suffolk. I took a trip down town Saturday night and had a beer in the local Weatherspoon's pub, well three actually, then bed ready for tomorrow.

Sunday arrived and I had asked for an early breakfast so up and ready at 7am I went down had my breakfast, paid my dues and headed for Walberswick. I registered at the desk. I decided to go for the 18ml because I had a 3hr drive after I finished the walk and after a couple of brews I headed off into the Walberswick Nature reserve at 08.40. The weather was good and I walked through the reed beds of the reserve watching out for wildlife, but there was not much of it. It was a great walk to the first cp. As I walked into the cp DFH and Merrian were just leaving and heading for cp2 at the Eels Foot Inn. A quick hello and that was it, I never saw them again that day. A cold drink and some snacks and I was away heading for cp2. The walk to cp2 went without incident and

I arrived at cp2 ready for some refreshment after walking through some great countryside and some lovely woodland. Walking towards cp2 you walk through the outskirts of Minsmere RSPB. A couple of 100 yards from the cp I walked into John and Judy on their way to the next cp, after a chat, a hug and a handshake we went our separate ways.

At cp 2 I met up with Cas whom I met about 7 years ago, when I was walking out the door at Walberswick, and an attractive woman who was leaving at the same time said "I'll follow this gentleman, he looks like he knows what he's doing". It was Cas's first walk with the LDWA and I must have done a good job selling the LDWA because Cas is now the minute secretary for the Norfolk and Suffolk group. We had a cuddle and a chinwag, telling our stories of what we had been doing since we last met up. 25 mins later I moved on after another cuddle heading for the last cp. Walking through more lovely scenery I arrived at cp 3. I stayed for about 15mins. It would have been longer but there was **NO BREW** to be had so I moved on back to Walberswick where I was going to get a meal and a brew. The route back to the start was an attractive one, nothing but boardwalks through woodland and reed beds then a short walk along the shingle beach all the way back.

The grub back at HQ was a very tasty vegetable goulash, in fact I had seconds. 45 mins later after the lovely grub and a brew I headed for my car and the 3hr drive home. I didn't have to go to work on Monday so I was looking forward to a lay in on Monday. It was a great weekend. I saw my very first wild otter and I got some nice shots of the elusive Bearded Tits, and of course a great Flower of Suffolk as usual, even though there was **NO BREW** at the cp's.

Oh yeh, I nearly forgot, two years ago I stayed in the same B&B in Lowestoft and I left my pedometer in the bedroom. A quick phone call and the owner swore he would put it in the post for me but I never received it. I mentioned this to him when I arrived and he said that he definitely put it in the post. On Sunday morning when I was having breakfast he said to me that he had a pedometer in his van that he'd had for some time, you can have it if you want, He went and got it, when I saw it I said this is mine. You said you had sent back to me. I must have sent you somebody else's then, he said ???

Stevecee xx

Photos of walk - www.flickr.com/photos/131244540@N07

Photos of birds – www.flickr.com/photos/stevecee

BBN WALKS PROGRAMME MARCH TO AUGUST 2017

Sun Mar 5 2017 Chiltern Kanter Challenge Walk
26, 18 or 13ml. From Pitstone Memorial Hall, LU7 9EY (GR SP937155). Please note this is a map reading event. Circular routes through the Chilterns.

For full details see BBN website

<https://www.ldwa.org.uk/BedsBucksAndNorthants/W/1809/chiltern-kanter.html>

Thu Mar 9 2017 Santa(s) (i)Pod – 290 days to Xmas

64 quarter miles (that's 16 miles to you). 09.30 from playing field c.p., Dychurch Lane nr junction with Harrold Road, Bozeat. Maps: LR 152 Exp 207 (GR SP911592). **C:** Nitro Man – Adrian Moody **T:** 01933 314134 (before 9pm)
M: 07786 864394 on day only.

Fri-Sun Mar 10-12 2017 BBN host the National LDWA AGM Weekend

23, 18.2, 15 or 10ml. 4 walks plus coach trip. All walks/trip on Saturday 11th March. Full details in LDWA AGM booklet with Dec Strider. See p.6/7/8 of this Newsletter. Please contact Peter Simon (bbn@ldwa.org.uk) if you intend to join one of the walks - two are linear and transport/lunches need to be pre-ordered.

C: Norman Corrin **T:** 01908 608667 **M:** 07980 378656

Thu Mar 23 2017 The Secret Elephant Walk

15ml. 09.30 From free c.p. Horsebox Parking Park on Midshires Way between Hartwell and B526. NOT c.p. closest to Hartwell by crossroads. Map: LR 152 (GR SP810508). **C:** Steve McMorro & Colin Stoneman

T: (Colin) 01327 830889 **M:** 07764 684661 on day only.

Sun Apr 2 2017 Toddington Toddle

17ml. 09.00 From Toddington village green. Please park considerately in nearby roads. Maps: LR 166 Exp 193 (GR TL010289). **C:** Gordon Shaughnessy

T: 01582 518791 **M:** 07518 364036 on day only.

Thu Apr 6 2017 The Hobbit

15ml. 09.30 From Bison Hill c.p. Map: LR 165 (GR SP999185). Pub & cafe lunch in Ivinghoe. (Roger says the first person to guess why The Hobbit he will buy them a pint or half pint). **C:** Roger Skerman **T:** 01525 405540 **M:** 07757 057440 on day only.

Thu Apr 20 2017 In Search of the Black Gelding

15ml. 09.30 From Winslow public c.p. (free). Map: Exp 192 (GR SP771278). **C:** Colin Burnett **T:** 01908 606880 **M:** 07740 656460 on day only.

Sun Apr 23 2017 Breaking the Brickhills

15ml. 09.00 From Caldecotte Arms public c.p. off A4146, Milton Keynes (MK7 8HP). Map: Exp 192 (GR SP888354). **C:** Sylvie Eames **T:** 07788 287701.

Fri May 5 2017 Dave and Lynn's Retirement Walk

12/15ml. 09.30 From 3 Lodge Lane, Prestwood HP16 0SS. Map: Exp 181 (GR SP873001). **NOTE THIS IS A FRIDAY WALK.** It will be a figure of 8, so if you

wish you can stop half way. Bring your own lunch. Lunch stop will be at a local Brewery. **C:** Dave Yorston **T:** 01494 868371 **M:** 07808 384670.

Sat May 13 2017 Loopy in Rushmere

17ml. 09.00 From Rushmere Country Park Visitor Centre, Leighton Buzzard. Map: Exp 192 (GR SP912284). 3 loops from Rushmere Visitor Centre. Ample c.p. (£2 on exit). Tea shop available at lunch stop. **SATURDAY WALK. C:** Peter Engledow **T:** 07733 323641.

Thu May 18 2017 Behold a Giant

15ml. 09.30 From Twywell Hills and Dales free c.p. (immediately N of junction 11, A14). Map: LR 141 (GR SP937774). Lunchtime pub stop. **C:** Jim Robinson **T:** 07845 909750 on day.

Thu Jun 1 2017 Trains and Boats and Planes (Perhaps)

15ml. 09.30 From c.p. between Church Brampton and Boughton (near A5199). Maps: LR 141,152 Exp 223 (GR SP737652). **C:** Bob Safford **T:** 01933 356609 **M:** 07531 837829.

Sun Jun 4 2017 Woburn, Potsgrove and Eversholt

16ml. 09.00 From Russell Street c.p., Woburn Sands, MK17 8NX. Map: Exp 192 (GR SP929358). **C:** Linda Marsh **T:** 01908 669698 **M:** 07885 181422.

Sun Jun 11 2017 From Here to There & Back Marshals' Walk

C: Alan Leadbetter **T:** 01767 449859 (after 6pm) **M:** 07775 887493.

Thu Jun 15 2017 Here 'n' There

16ml. 09.30 From Memorial Sports Field, Sywell Road, Wellingborough. Maps: Exp 223,224 (GR SP856690). **C:** Alan Leadbetter **T:** 01767 449859 (after 6pm) **M:** 07775 887493.

Thu Jun 29 2017 Travelling Again

15ml. 09.30 From Stony Stratford Nature Reserve c.p. off Queen Eleanor Street MK11. (C.p. is north of Queen Eleanor Street; shown on OS map but not signed from road). Maps: Exp 192,207 (GR SP791409). **C:** Dianne Sutton **T:** 01908 606256 (before 9pm) **M:** 07957 466487 on day only.

Sun Jul 9 2017 From Here to There & Back Challenge Event

27, 21 or 13ml. all to finish by 18.30. Hall closes 19.00. From Wellingborough Grammarians Memorial Sports Field, Sywell Road, Wellingborough NN8 6BS (GR SP856690). A walk around the Northamptonshire rolling countryside through the villages of Mears Ashby, Sywell, Overstone, Holcot, Boughton & Pytchley. Start: Walkers from 08.00, Runners and fast walkers and all short route from 09.00. Entry Limit 200. No entries OTD. No Dogs. YOU MUST DOWNLOAD & PRINT YOUR OWN ROUTE DESCRIPTION. Route description will be on website from 28th June 2017. If you are unable to do this, please include SAE size C4 with a large letter stamp with your entry marked 'route description'. We recommend you wear suitable footwear & clothing, also to have maps LR152 or Exp 223 & 224, waterproofs, your own drinking mug (no mugs will be supplied at checkpoints) & a compass. SiEntries close on Sat 1st July

2017. Postal entries must reach us by Tue 27th June 2017. Entry: £8, non LDWA £12, under 18s free (No entries OTD) incl refreshments at Cps (3 on 27ml, 2 on 18ml, 1 on 13ml), light meal at finish, cert & badge. Chqs payable to LDWA BBN Group. Entry form downloadable from event website. Online entry at: <https://www.sientries.co.uk/>. **C:** Mike Hyland, 55 Broadlands Ave., Chesham, Bucks, HP5 1AL **T:** 01494 774154. **E:** mike.hyland@ntlworld.com

W: www.ldwa.org.uk/bedsbucksandnorthants

Thu Jul 13 2017 Albino 3 (Figure of 8)

15ml. 09.30 From Ampthill Park c.p. Map: LR 153 (GR TL025382). Pub lunch in The Albion, Ampthill. **C:** Roger & Margaret Skerman **T:** 01525 405540

M: 07757 057440 on day only.

Sat Jul 15 2017 A Walk Around Corby

34ml. 08.00 From Little Oakley Village Hall. Map: Exp 224 (GR SP892856). Meet at village hall 07.30 for tea and toast. Hot meal at finish. Places limited - please book with Wayne by June 30th. **SATURDAY WAL.** **C:** Wayne Rowlett

T: 01536 460984 **M:** 07388 026676 (on day).

Sun Jul 23 2017 Wendover South West

18ml. 09.00 From Library c.p. Wendover. Maps: LR 165 Exp 181 (GR SP869078). Picnic lunch. In past years cakes were available at Ellesborough Church in the afternoon. **C:** Peter Simon **T:** 01582 513827 **M:** 07592 115090 on day only.

Thu Jul 27 2017 Thee Five Tons

17ml. 09.30 From Yardley Hastings, close to Red Lion p.h. (NN7 1ER). Map: Exp 207 (GR SP865567). Lunch in Great Houghton. **C:** Roy Carter **T:** 01234 301182 **M:** 07784 208997.

Sat Jul 29 2017 The Chairman's Cream Tea Trot

18ml. 09.00 From c.p. on minor road off B488 towards Aldbury, about 1 mile from turning off B488. (GR SP955149). **SATURDAY WALK.** Lunch at Brownlow Café near Bridgewater Monument where cream teas and other delicacies are available. **C:** Norman Corrin **T:** 01908 608667 **M:** 07980 378656 on day.

Sun Aug 6 2017 Woodnewton Wander

20ml. 09.00 From large layby 1½ miles E of Deenethorpe. Layby is off A43 on minor rd between Deenethorpe and Upper Benefield. Map: LR 141 (GR SP977909). Lunchtime pub stop. **C:** Graham Dolby **T:** 07840 300989.

Thu Aug 10 2017 Single to Grafton Regis

15ml. 09.10 From Loughton Lodge Lake c.p. Bradwell Road, off H4 Danstead Way, Milton Keynes. Map: Exp 192 (GR SP832386). **NOTE EARLIER START - LINEAR WALK USING BUS.** From c.p. a short walk to CMK Railway Station to catch bus to Grafton Regis. Lunch at Cosgrove near p.h. **C:** Mike Bowley **T:** 01908 616589 **M:** 07933 066784.

Sun Aug 20 2017 The Godmanchester Gallop

17ml. 09.00 From Mill Yard c.p. in Godmanchester. Map: LR 153 (GR TL244707). **C:** Steve Smith **T:** 01767 220307 **M:** 07817 041621.

Thu Aug 24 2017 Summer at Wetherspoons Again

15ml. 09.30 From Pegsdon (park in dead end road beside B655 Hitchin to Barton rd). Map: LR 166 (GR TL118302). Now in its 3rd year our summer visit to Hitchin Wetherspoons Secret Garden for extended lunch break. Reverse of previous route with minor variations. Not walking? Then join us for lunch.

C: Dave Findel-Hawkins **T:** 01908 216476.

DIARY DATES:**Sun Sep 10 2017 Kingfisher Way**

22ml. Linear walk with transport. Walk Baldock to Tempsford along the River Ivel. Part of the Beds Walking Festival. **C:** Roy Carter

Sun Nov 19 2017 Shillington Shuffle Challenge Walk

26, 18 or 12ml. From Barton-le-Clay Village Hall

Sun Nov 26 2017 BBN AGM 2pm Cosgrove Village Hall

BEDS BUCKS & NORTHANTS GROUP: COMMITTEE 2017

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Member: Alan Leadbetter E: acleadbetter64@gmail.com

Member: Roy Carter E: roycarter367@hotmail.com

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this Newsletter.

Please let me have items for the Summer Newsletter

by 2nd June 2017

Gill Bunker