



Surrey Group

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2007



Wood carving Longmynd Hotel Oct.2007

Items for Newsletter

The Newsletter is published three times a year, February, June and October. Reports of past events, letters, and other items should be sent to the Editor one month before the publication date of the next Newsletter. Preferably they should be sent by email or typed, but manuscript will be accepted.

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Visit the group website at www.ldwasurrey.co.uk to see more pictures of events, links to other groups and organisations, an archive of past events and lots of useful information

Editorial

The summer season is now over and the Autumn/Winter programme is packed with exciting walks. An important one for the social life of the group is the Christmas walk and dinner on Saturday 15th December. Details can be found in the two inserts in this edition.
Peter Waterhouse

Downsman revisited; part 7 Sunday 12th August

It was a beautiful sunlit morning with a perfect light breeze .A harbinger to the impending day. As early birds the ensuing crowds were still blinking behind their blinds. Devil's Dyke, a short steeply sided V shaped valley which cuts into the north face of The South Downs, is a natural geological feature formed by melt water at the end of the last Ice Age. Originally an Iron Age hill-fort, and from the top the commanding views are simply spectacular.

Obviously the walk was a popular choice as the turn out was around 20 enthusiastic participants; amongst whom were a number of celebrated 'hundred achievers'.

We set off with a definite frisson of excited anticipation; this was going to be one of those special days. After circumnavigating the A23 (yet again) the countryside unravelled before us and a sense of well being emanated from within. I have recently returned from a trip to Holland and was surprised when The Clayton Windmills appeared on the itinerary. A friendly buzz was in the air as we straddled the first hill and ingested the panoramic scene. Our first stop was Ditchling Beacon coupled with the obligatory Ice Cream Van. Alas, not alone in our quest we soon set off again for the peace of the expanding hills.

We had lunch in a well-chosen pub near Plumpton, an ideal location where our food was promptly served and relished. Myself and a chosen few splayed out, relaxing in the sun, and enjoying our picnic in a nearby field. After brushing down the crumbs we set off again to explore the lanes and backwaters of the Sussex countryside, breaking for tea at Ditchling at a superb Olde English Tea Room which offered everything from Smoked Garlic with bulbs the size of plums to exquisite wines perfected for high class palates. The flap jacks were to die for and no doubt the sweetener to conquer the undulating hills to follow. Not without intrepidity as Molly emerged from a gorge in the hillside and was duly administered first aid by our gamely leader.

In all a superb day with a feel good factor.

Maureen Oldale



Crowthorne Circular Wednesday 13 June

Thirteen humans plus one four legged animal assembled at the Look Out, Bracknell at around 9.15am. Weather was sunny and promising for the rest of the day. After welcoming Mark from Basingstoke, hopefully to become a new member, and two Thames Valley Walkers we set off at 9.35 for our 16mls circular of Crowthorne. Starting north, anticlockwise to Easthampstead Park College, south west to Ravenswood Settlement - a village for people with disabilities - and after having 'misaid' and found Elaine - we had a coffee break on the edge of East Berkshire Golf Course, where a member came to warn us of impending golf balls!

We then made our way to The Queen's Oak, Finchampstead for lunch with a very pleasant green for those with sandwiches. We were delighted John Lay had been able to join us at the pub as he is due for a hip operation on 18th June and we wish him all the best.

After lunch, with weather still good, we joined the Blackwater Valley Path via Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve where most of the group had ice-creams. We then continued going east and north, passing Broadmoor Hospital, and via the Three Castles Walk, through Bracknell Forest, back to the Look Out,

We made it by 4.50pm with just 10mins to spare before the tea shop closed at 5.0pm. A very welcome cup of tea to round off an excellent days walking with good company and many thanks to Richard Ireson and Avril Stapleton for such a pleasant well organised day.

The rain started at 7.0pm. Weren't we just lucky! -

Elizabeth Bryan

Four Downs and maybe Four Ups Thursday 21st June

Unfortunately, John Stovell, who had been due to lead the walk, had been unwell and so I stepped in to lead a walk based roughly on his planned route. However, we were all pleased that John had recovered enough to be able to join us on the walk until lunch.

The route went across Epsom Racecourse, up to Walton-on-the-Hill, down to Betchworth Station and then along to the Stepping Stones under Box Hill by way of Brockham Lime Kilns. After our Chairman had organised a photo shoot on the Stepping Stones we repaired to the Stepping Stones Pub for lunch.

On leaving the pub we encountered Erling Hansen getting some exercise on his bike. Erling has been unable to walk with us for sometime due to an ankle problem. The afternoon route took us through Norbury Park, over Mickleham Downs to Headley and then back to Epsom Downs.

I managed to fit in the four 'Downs' – Epsom, Walton, Banstead and Mickleham but the 'Ups' were short of the number promised. Strangely there were no complaints on this score and everybody said they had enjoyed the walk.

Dave Challenger

We don't know how she does it, yet! Sunday 15th July

Eight sturdy walkers and two dogs set out on Juliet's walk.

On leaving Ryka's C.P. we were amazed at the number of cyclists peddling down the hill on their way to Brighton! We were soon climbing Juniper Hill and then on to Headley Common. Sadly, we arrived too early for coffee and flapjack at the C.P. café.

It was then up hill and down dale through Buckland and on to Betchworth churchyard for a picnic lunch. After a short lunch break we were off again through Brockham. The clouds at this point were looking ominous and soon thunder roared and lightning flashed. Then the monsoon came! I didn't believe any of us had been out in such rain before. The footpath became a river in no time. Nevertheless we plodded on through Glory Wood and at last the haven of Juliet's home where we saw her fine collection of birds. Molly, the parrot, was much admired. What a bedraggled lot we were but the welcome from husband was great, and he was soon handing round mugs of piping hot tea. There was a selection of cakes including some delicious flapjack.

However, we couldn't linger as we had another 6 miles to walk. I am afraid one of our members let a wet patch on the settee! A well-satisfied band continued on through the Nower and Westcott and then up to Ranmore Common. Our route took us above Denbies Vineyard, down to West Humble and finally Ryka's C.P.

A good challenging walk: with many thanks to Juliet.

Molly Groundsell

Test Valley Trot Sunday 22nd July

Sunday 22nd July saw a rare sunny day, so to mark the occasion 18 walkers, two leaders and two dogs participated in a delightful walk of the Test Valley and surrounding water meadows. Starting from Barton Stacey, we went across the firing range, no red flags flying today. The Chilbolton Radio Telescope was in view for a short while but was soon lost when we skirted Chilbolton village, across Cow Common to a tea, coffee and flapjack stop organised by Kate and Reg. Down the Test Way of woods and mud to Longstock where, for some, lunch was taken in the local hostelry while the others had a picnic in a lovely garden area around the memorial.

Then it was up through the Longstock estate and over hill and fields passing Cottonworth and Wherwell to reach Harewood Forest, where we were directed by a "kangaroo" sitting in the upgrowth with his/her head and ears sticking up, and, low and behold, hidden out of sight was a cache of more tea/coffee and rock buns. There was no one about so can only assume that Janet has friends beyond the ken of human nature. Kanger was then transported on the shoulders of one of the stronger member of the party along the A303 for a short distance to the amusement of speeding motorist going by.

Then it was back along more footpaths to Barton Stacey for more tea, coffee, cakes, scones, you name it we had it! Finally, sitting in Kate's garden, we had a lovely end to a perfect day. Thank you Janet, Avril, Reg. and particularly Kate for all those delicious cakes etc that we had throughout the day.

Janet Whiteman.

Woking all the Way (with Ian) to the Sea Saturday 18th August
Ian in the lead



Woking all the Way (with Ian) to the Sea Saturday 18th August
A rest stop in Guildford



Woking all the way (with Ian) to the sea Saturday 18th August

I arrived well before allotted start time (9am) at Woking station, Our leader, Ian, was already there with his wife Cindy who was handing out pieces of his birthday cake, already wrapped for us. Most decided to eat it there and then rather than carry unnecessary weight in our already bulging back packs. It looked like some people had their tent and PJ's in there, others seemed to have so little: should I be worrying whether I had enough or too little? Too late to think about that now, I came out of station having used the last of the civilised facilities and found everyone had gone! I had to run up the road as they were disappearing round the corner, I could see there was going to be no hanging around today. However, I found out there was no need to panic as they were only heading to the park for photo shoot before we set off.

The weather was kind so far but I think we had all been listening to a not very favourable, to say the least, forecast. Nevertheless most of us were still in shorts and an assortment of foot wear. For five us, today would be the farthest we would have ever walked which made us slightly apprehensive but very positive.

The pace was cracking along as we set off heading towards Guildford 8 miles away, our ETA for the bridge at Guildford was 10.45, and we **were there at exactly** 10.45! Here we collected Molly and Joan who were just in time for our first tea break (10 mins. allowed). We sat on benches by the river in the sunshine taking on refreshments. Setting off again we appeared to have a break-away group: 2 were walking very briskly ahead and were soon well out of sight Our leader had a little word in their ear when we eventually caught up with them. We continued, following the river Wey but it had now started to drizzle and the jackets are coming out.

All of our stops seemed to be governed by food, drink or a bush to get rid of the drink! The next stop was at Godalming, 12 miles into walk, and with an ETA of 12.15. Again we were there spot on time, all credit to our leader as a pace maker. Here was the best fish and chip shop ever, we steamed dry whilst enjoying an early lunch of excellent food and quick service.

The scenery was lovely as we continued following the river bearing off through farmland here and there. At 17 miles we found Glynnis, just waiting patiently in the middle of the path! The weather man was correct, the steady drizzle we had endured so far turned to rain.

We came across our first blocked gateway due to Foot and Mouth firmly chained shut with a sign regarding the disease. The notice should not have still been up as the exclusion zone had already been lifted. We had to pull our gallant leader back, as he tried to climb the very tall gateway. Instead, we all had to traipse up the road to get round the obstruction, it only cut a tiny bit off the distance, and this allowed a suitable time for sweetie stop at the top of the hill whilst maps were consulted before we moved off again, now with brollies up as rain became a little more persistent. The route continued through Milford, Whitley, and then Haslemere at 23 miles. Here we stopped for yet more food at the Swan Inn. Although I did not feel particularly hungry I was told that I really should eat. It is amazing how much you can keep shovelling in, so we must have been burning it up somewhere. This stop was a great opportunity for stripping off, and hanging up very wet clothes to dry for the hour we had there, some were nursing their foot and blister issues. We did invite many strange looks and comments from locals drinking, as we dripped our way in on a Saturday evening I Mean **Who in their right mind walks from Woking to Portsmouth, in the rain, and through the night, when there was a perfectly good train service!** They did have a point though. It was now time to put any extra layers on as it was becoming slightly cooler as we continued our next leg to Liphook, At this point 4 of our fellow walkers left us telling us that it was all pre-planned. Who could doubt them!

As dusk drew in we started to use our head-lamps. This caused an issue as we started crossing some fields because the lights were attracting little night flies which flew madly around our head and faces: it was very unpleasant. My easy answer was to turn off my light and follow the person in front!

Thirty three miles brought us to the Rake and Flying Bull pub still on schedule here (21.25) were we found Bill Grace with a welcome and a big smile. Bill was going to continue the walk with us, mad fool, but he was propping up the bar with a pint in his hand. We also got a wonderful welcome from landlady and bar staff, who were quickly offering hot water and towels, they obviously thought we looked wet and cold, though I am not quite sure why she got that impression!. We got more strange looks from locals leaning against the bar late night drinking, but we had got used to this by now. Again we stoke our boilers, this time with sandwiches, as it was too late to order hot food. Time here for more repair to damaged feet and another of change of socks. We ordered more sandwiches for the night stint, our hour of rest now up and everything tucked back into our packs. With sympathetic looks from late night drinkers and cheerful words from the landlady we set off into the night and rain feeling strongly positive.

By this time most of the headlights were on display as we set off into the darkness, we tried to get people singing but they must have been feeling too self conscious: I am not sure why as no one could see who was who! The terrain was varied, some road, lots of tracks, fields and very damp underfoot as well as over head – then the WOODS, the dreaded woods, after we had done a long uphill climb from South Harting: we were now somewhere on the South Downs or may be in, and LOST

Navigating at night from a piece of paper in pouring rain in the middle of a wood, is not for the faint hearted! Hence we encountered a slight navigation error! no problem we thought we can look at the modern electronic map GPS! Having looked at that we decided it had a location problem! So we decided to go way back in time and use our own sense of direction. It worked. However, it was only after back tracking several times. No one seemed to worry unduly, and there was no point in getting worried or upset. We just stepped around the mud and fallen trees, seeing things we couldn't see in the darkness, until we eventually found ourselves again. With sighs of relief we continued on the correct track, now well behind time plan.

We arrived at Chalton and had a 30min rest under lych gate of the village church. Although it was wet our sandwiches were dry, but we were now 2 hours behind schedule due to getting lost earlier. As it was now getting light our spirits lifted and, having consistently rained all night, it was now easing off and it stopped. As we headed for Rowland's Castle we were walking along a road and were unable to avoid one section, some considerable distance long, of ankle deep, cold water; but who cared anymore, once your feet are wet they can't get any wetter!. The sun coming up over the horizon was a welcome sight and lifted everyone's spirits even more. As we set off up and over the fields the views were lovely around us, and we continued down onto a lane through little hamlets with everyone still asleep except the morning song birds. This quietness allowed us to take advantage of an outside house tap to fill up some empty water bottles! There were a few moans from some walker's feet obviously experiencing pain as they hobbled along looking a little worse for wear.

49 miles completed, Rowland's Castle station, time 6.20, but we were well behind schedule Ian had to make a decision. Do we go on to South Sea or cut the walk short here at the train station? After consultation, it is decided to catch the train to South Sea for breakfast. But when we looked at the time table we found that the next train going south was in 2 hours time! Another rethink and with a 30min wait for a train we are heading back to Woking. Most took advantage of a short nap on the train, and all were beyond caring of what other train users thought of us. However, there were not many on board at that time of day on a Sunday morning!

All I can say is my personal thanks to Ian for all the time and hard work put into the walk, I know we did not '**Go all the way**' but so what! I had a fabulous time, walking with inspirational people. Ten walkers completed 49 miles, 7 joined and left at various points over the 24 hours, but for 5 of us it was still the farthest we have ever walked and what an experience it was. I will defiantly do it again.

So look forward to the next time.

Jackie Barker

Arun Amble Saturday 28th July

An assembly point below the walls of Arundel Castle was the attractive setting for the start of this walk and twenty members from a variety of LDWA groups gathered there on a fine summer morning. We headed in a south-easterly direction with fine views of Arundel in the distance, dominated by its castle, the seat of the Duke of Norfolk. We continued east via the pretty villages of Lyminster and Poling with its very old church. Then on to Angmering for a refreshment stop, passing en-route the site of a Roman villa. The Romans seem to have taken a fancy to these parts, for there are many such sites in the area, the most prominent being at Bignor and at Fishbourne.



Angmering has the archetypal village green with many lovely old houses and cottages clustering round it. As we meandered through the arable fields it was interesting to note signs of flood damage to crops, although Sussex escaped the worst excesses of the 'summer deluge' which engulfed counties further to the north. We walked on past a riding school for the disabled, along Ferring Rife to the coast and lunch, where the weather started to turn with the tide, and we were fearful of more storms to come. However, only a persistent westerly inhibited our progress along the coastal footpath, as we set forth, sometimes over shingle, but mostly over a grassy path to Littlehampton, by way of East Preston, with its rare church stone spire and Rusting ton

Littlehampton has been extensively redeveloped over recent years with many new flats and houses bordering the sea and riverfronts, with a new marina for the associated yachts and launches. The cost of redevelopment seems to have extended to making redundant the small ferryboats that used to take passengers across to the fine west beach and dunes. Thus deprived, we were diverted to a footbridge further up river, and then set out for the final journey following the west bank of the river Arun with its many twists and turns back to Arundel.

Prior to about the year 1500 the Arun actually entered the sea ten miles to the east at Lancing, excavation and new cuts making the river more accessible, and eventually enabling Littlehampton to develop as a port for coastal shipping up to the present day. The river is popular with anglers for whom chub, pike, perch and roach are likely to be caught. Some of us walkers were also 'caught' by an unseen discarded fishing line strewn across our path. However, we survived to tell the tale!

And so back to Arundel for a cream tea to end an enjoyable day, with many thanks to Elaine who planned the whole adventure.

John Stovell