



Surrey Group

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2008



Baskerville Hall Hotel

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.

Editor: Peter Waterhouse, Lime Trees, Ottways Lane, Ashted, Surrey. KT21 2NZ
Tel. 01372 272595; email, pbwaterhouse@boltblue.com

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| Chairman: Tony Cartwright Tel. 01483 503768 | Secretary: John Lay Tel. 01932 346596 |
| Treasurer: Fiona Cameron Tel. 01483 487703 | Membership: Joan Wrenn Tel. 01483 538685 |

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

How do we see the future of our group?

As you all know, over the past few months we (I) have been searching for someone to take over as equipment officer. We have well over a 100 members and try as I might not one person has volunteered to take on this role. I have to say that this lack of response has been extremely disappointing.

If we are to survive as a group then there are certain roles that must be filled: chair, secretary, treasurer, equipment officer and Newsletter editor. If the deafening silence that followed my search for an equipment officer is indicative, then will the same response occur when other posts become vacant?

Suffice it to say that without a secretary we would not have a walks programme or a Strider listing nor would any of the background liaising work both with other groups and with the National LDWA take place. Without an editor there would be no Newsletter. Without a treasurer we would be unable to function. Without an equipment officer more load will fall on the shoulders of Challenge event organisers without whom our Challenge events would simply not happen. And let us remember that our income relies almost exclusively on our Challenge walks.

Now I am not suggesting that, other than the outgoing equipment officer, other officers are about to stand down – but rest assured one day they will. And where will that leave us if there remains a continued reluctance to ‘do your bit’ when your group needs you?

Sure we can exist as an add-hoc band of walkers who meet out on walks or in a pub somewhere to plan the next walk but that will be quite different from how we now function with the wide range of social and challenge events we offer.

So how do we see the future of our group?

If these words have pricked consciences then it’s not too late for an equipment officer (we already have the storage). And when the time comes please don’t make it too late for the group.

Tony Cartwright, Chair

STOP PRESS. Equipment & Equipment Officer. Joan Wrenn has very kindly offered us the use of her garage to store the Group’s equipment and Andy Fogel has agreed to act as Equipment Officer and keep a watching eye on it. By the time you read this, shelving will have been installed in Joan’s garage and the equipment moved from Reg’s loft to its new home in Guildford.

Very many thanks to both Joan and Andy for offering services in this way

Tony Cartwright

New members of the Surrey Group

The following members have joined the Surrey group recently.

Please welcome them on our walks

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|------------|-------|
| Richard | Crane | Hook | 27459 |
| Terry | D’Almeida | Croydon | 26987 |
| Rita | James | Aldershot | 14066 |
| Peter | McKibben | Kingston | 26996 |
| Valerie | McLaren | Crawley | 27406 |
| Gill and Andy | Morris | Godalming | 27061 |
| Sue | Nash | Woking | 27171 |
| Bobbie | Neate | Winchester | 27403 |
| Juliet | Phipps | Farnham | 27455 |
| Andy | Shoesmith | Wimbledon | 26829 |
| Pamela | Spencer-Smith | Woking | 27195 |

HORSLEY EXPERIMENT

No 2 in a series of Mini Tanners social walks

Wednesday 16th July 2008

The idea for this series came about as a spin-off from research I was doing to update and document old Winter Tanners routes for them to be used again if necessary. This walk was based on the 1977 Winter Tanners and although it was only the 2nd, it was the prelude (first walkout) to the 17th Tanners Marathon and planned on this basis. Alan Blatchford's objective in planning the Tanners routes was to use as many footpaths as possible. Having used the more popular paths on earlier Tanners, he was obviously looking for a route using lesser-used paths.

There were 10 people and one dog who presented themselves at the car park by the Holmbury Youth Hostel in plenty of time for the 9 o'clock start and two who just about made it. The weather was very kind to us with a nice sunny day. The route went down to Felday then Abinger Common, Friday Street, Logmore Lane and Westcott. A Winter Tanners invariably means a climb of the North Downs south scarp. 1977 was not one of the exceptions in fact it was climbed twice. On the first ascent, Alan had us going up directly north from Coombe Farm where in addition to coping with the steep climb, we had to bash our way through vegetation. This social walk included this part of the route but I rerouted up the scarp a little further to west where there at least was a proper path but the climb was just as severe. My compassionate nature though came to the fore in that I chose the top of the scarp to have the morning break. Mind you there was only one bench seat designed for about four people.

While the walkers were enjoying the view, I took orders for lunch. I then went to the Duke of Wellington to place the order. I was asked white or brown bread. I had to confess I had not asked this when taking the orders. The landlady looked at me and said "I expect they are elderly so I will assume it is brown bread that they will want but I will change it if anybody has any objection." Everybody concerned said they preferred brown, I must give full marks to the landlady for judgement but I am not overly keen on her reasoning!

The afternoon session began with going through the Sheepleas during which there was a short stop at a viewpoint seat. From this viewpoint you are supposed to see many of London's tall buildings. A little further on, at Hillside Manor, we had more or less the same view but being a little higher we could see over the canopy of trees that had been shielding the view of the horizon as viewed from the viewpoint seat but we still could not recognise anything of the London skyline.

The route went west to join the North Downs Way through West Hanger and then plunged back down the scarp to the Silent Pool. The walk continued south nearly to Dilton Farm where the route took the necessary easterly direction via Peaslake to get back to the venue car park.

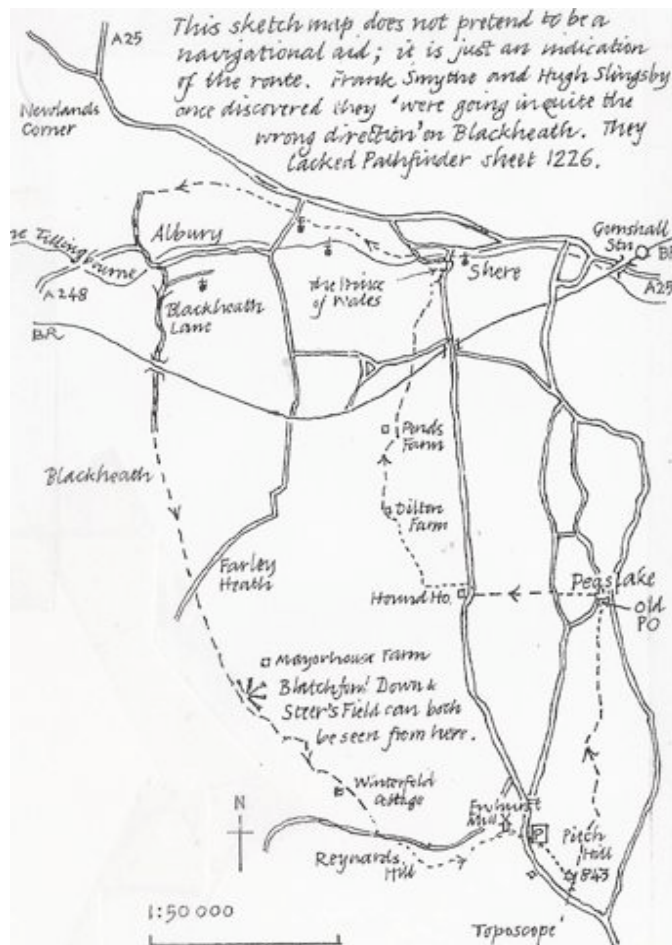
The total walk was 20 miles but I did also arrange to have a shortcut from the pub stop available to bring the total distance down to 17 miles if anybody did not want to walk the full distance. As one of the footpaths on this shortcut was overgrown, I went along two days before armed with my secateurs to eliminate the offending bramble, gorse and stinging nettles preventing unhindered progress along the footpath. **NOBODY WENT ON THE SHORTCUT!!!**

John Westcott

Horsley Experiment (Cont.)



Toposcope Toddle



The Toposcope Toddle Saturday 16th August

For a while this walk has been in our diary, partly because it was near our home and partly because the distance of 12 miles seemed a leisurely way to spend a Saturday. As the day got closer the weather forecasts were anxiously checked and did not seem too promising.

A total of 18 of us gathered at Pitch Hill car park for the start of the walk. The clouds that had seemed quite heavy earlier had now dispersed a little leaving a pleasantly warm day. Dave Challenger, our intrepid leader explained that today's walk was in memory of Tony Youngs and distributed annotated and illustrated sketch maps, Tony's handiwork of the walk that he had devised and that we were going to follow today.

The walk started with a visit to Pitch Hill Toposcope where Dave Challenger and Keith Chesterton paid tribute to the life and contribution of Tony to the LDWA and other interests that he had pursued during his life. One comment that was made was that he was smartly dressed and that was a standard that most of us while out walking were unable to uphold! We then had a time of silence when those of us who remembered him were able to think on his life. Those of us who did not know him (myself included) thought of an inspired man who had contributed to the work of the LDWA. Looking out over the Weald towards the South Downs my personal thoughts were ones of gratefulness to a man who had appreciated the wonders of creation and sought to make it accessible to others.

The walk then got underway, down hill to Peaslake where Dave told us about 'The Old Post Office' and its LWDA connections. Sadly it is empty at present. The walk continued towards Shere. On the way it was discovered that it was Ian McLeod's birthday. Some of his 'friends' decided that the only way to mark a birthday is by administering 'the bumps'. Only one bump was actually achieved in the interests of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

Shere is a really pretty place to stop for lunch. The picnickers sat by the river while the diners met in the pub. Those dining outside had to run the gauntlet of several wasps while those inside had an opportunity to catch up with the latest Olympic news.

After lunch we walked around to Albury. Keith Chesterton ever keen to educate us in the ways of alternative energy actively encouraged us to have a look at the land-fill site. The smell apparently did not get worse as one got nearer. We did a round route to Albury and then proceeded to Black heath and Farley heath. Our worst fears were confirmed as the walk went up up up at a sedate angle.

Dave who obviously has sharp eyes spied an adder on a side path. This was the first time that I had seen one.

We worked our way back through Reynards Hill, Windmill hill and all of a sudden there were the cars again!

On the way home Andy and I stopped for refreshments at The Barn Café at Newlands Corner. A rather familiar looking smartly dressed lady sat near to us. Yes it was Gillian Bull in a smart trouser suit, so maybe after all Tony Youngs's legacy of being fashionably dressed has not been dropped by all members of the LDWA just yet.

Thanks to Dave for a lovely and informative day.

Ruth Coleman

A Golden Coastal Solent Stroll Saturday 2nd August

It was a dull damp day when seven hardy souls and one dog gathered at one of the three car parks on the northern shore of Langstone Harbour to start what was actually to be a circumnavigation of Langstone Harbour. The first half of the day covered the western shore of the harbour and round to the narrow southern inlet. At high tide the water covers about 1900 hectares of the harbour but at low tide only about 200 hectares are under water. At low tide, the 1700 hectares of mud exposed saltmarsh and cordgrass are used by nesting birds and we were told, by a group of bird watchers, even more protected against the rain than we walkers were, that they had sighted a wimbrel and some godwits along with the scores of black backed gulls and other common coastal birds. In prehistoric times the harbour was an area of open grassland and woods. It achieved something like its present shape some 5000 years ago and since then man has built a coastal sea wall and exploited its natural resources.

The walk continued along the coastal sea wall with the incoming tide on our left hand side, more properly called port side as we were so near the sea, with a wonderful collection of wild flowers and shrubs including some magnificent blackberries. Towards the end of the first part of the walk the coastal wall had to be left for the navigation of a new housing estate in order to get to the ferry road that would take us to past the marinas to the ferryboat station. During the war-time era Langstone Harbour had been used to build four of the 121 Mulberry Harbour units and one of these was brought back from France, sunk in the harbour and can be seen from the ferry.

At lunch time we crossed the ferry to Hayling Island and the weather began to change to blue sky and bright sunshine. A roadside walk interspersed with a narrow, over grown path used by many bordering households as a dump for their garden waste followed before we got to our lunch stop at the appropriately named West Town Hotel, we were in West Town, South Hayling.

After lunch in what was now a glorious August day we followed the bed of the disused Havant to Hayling Island railway line, know locally as the Hayling Billy. The line linking Havant Station, on the main Portsmouth London line, with South Hayling opened in January 1865 and closed in November 1962. The station building at South Hayling is now used by the local amateur dramatic society. This was a very pleasant walk with high tide in the harbour and verdant fields on our right hand ending along the pavement of the busy, modern Langstone Bridge from which could be seen the remains of the old railway bridge. The final stretch of the walk was a mixture of sea wall and roadside walking back on the mainland.

At the end, in the car park very close to our starting point, Peter and Elaine Edwards served us a cream tea and cakes including glorious parkin.

Our thanks go to Molly and Elizabeth who led the walk and to Peter and Elaine who provide the cream tea and cakes.

It is with the deepest regret and with much sadness that I have to report the demise of Dave Green who collapsed and died recently when out on a social walk with the London Group.

He was a long-standing and very enthusiastic member of the LDWA and also a great supporter of all the Surrey Group challenge events along with his wife Jill.

He was a great character who will be remembered especially for his determination and dry humour by all our checkpoint marshals.

He will be badly missed by his many friends within the Surrey Group

John Lay

Guildford Boundary Walk - Sunday October 12th 2008 - Results

A total of 83 walkers and runners started our 3rd relaunched Guildford Boundary Walk (& the 18th overall). The walk was originally devised by Alan and Barbara Blatchford and first run in 1972. It was organised jointly by Surrey Group of the Long Distance Walkers Association and Unisport at the University of Surrey.

After a foggy start, the weather became fine and decidedly warm. It brought out the crowds at Newlands Corner, which was packed and the Chantry Woods Car Park became full, too. The weather forecast encouraged a few more entries – but it would help the organisers if more people pre-entered. There is a good financial incentive to do that!

Those that did do the event said they'd enjoyed it and liked the route.

Dawn Potter from Surrey University emailed to say:

"Just want to thank all of you for a fantastically organised event yesterday. Everybody was very friendly and the route instructions were great. And what a lovely place to run! I shall be back for more."

Any other comments would be welcome, and please spread the word about it.

Fabrile Leistner did the fastest time, running it in 1 minute under 3 hours – the same time as last year's quickest. We had fewer runners than normal this year, with the Windsor half-marathon on the same day. All but 4 of the starters finished the course. 2 who didn't, cut it short to walk home – very tempting! At least 1 person's time included the time spent in the Bull's Head at Clandon – it's not a race, so as long as you get back in time, fine. And one couple spent a lot of time taking photographs. Two entrants downloaded last year's route description from the website, rather than using this year's, so they went slightly wrong. We do check it every year for any necessary changes.

We had a little problem at the Newlands Corner check point, where 2 of the intended marshals had put the date down for the 19th, & not the 12th! This resulted in a last minute substitution of biscuits for bananas there, but we hope no one was troubled by this.

The marshals' walk to do a last check of the route and to give a chance to helpers on the day, to walk it, was held on September 20th. Jackie Barker, Elizabeth Bryan, Gillian Bull, Dave Challenger, Janet Chapman, John Dixon, Molly Groundsell, Richard Ireson, John Lay & Ian McLeod did it in 8 hours.

Thanks

Organising Committee – Gavin Baker (Unisport), Tony Cartwright, Keith Chesterton,
Posters & Signs - Gavin Baker

Registration - Tony Cartwright, Pat Challenger, Nigel Barraclough

Start – Keith Chesterton, Dave Challenger

CP1 - Janet Chapman, Molly Groundsell, Elizabeth Bryant, Ian McLeod

CP2 – Dave & Pat Challenger, Louise Cartwright, Cindy McLeod

CP3 – Richard Ireson, Nigel Barraclough, Gavin Baker, Janet Chapman

Finish - Tony Cartwright, Molly Groundsell, Elton Ellis, Ian McLeod, Keith Chesterton

Closing Down Marshal & Photographer – Keith Chesterton

Route Description - Tony Cartwright

Entries – Fiona Cameron

Results – Tony Cartwright

And grateful thanks to the University of Surrey for the use of their facilities & to the owners of Woolgars Farm, for allowing us to site CP1 on their land.

Keith Chesterton

Blackwater and beyond Saturday 27th September

On Saturday 27th September 14 walkers set off in the misty fog from the National Trust Car Park on the Ridges near Crowthorne Station to walk to Blackwater and beyond. The walkers including Erten and Jim from London Group and Adrian from Beds, Bucks and Northants. Avril Stapleton led the walk with an accommodating pace.

First we crossed Wellingtonia Avenue which is flanked by Wellingtonia trees planted in 1869, the trees form an impressive avenue which grows to 160ft high (though, on the outward journey this was a sight shrouded in mist!). We dropped down to Horseshoe Lake water activity centre before walking beside the River Blackwater through Moor Green Lakes nature reserve. This was our first encounter with the River Blackwater to which we kept returning over the 18 miles of the walk.

Then south, across the Blackwater, to Moulsham Green before touching Eversley Cross and then briefly following some of the *Three Castles Path*. On to Eversley church, where antiques can be arranged on a bench, and then west into Bramshill Plantation. Straight sandy tracks took us past the edge of the police college to head north again to rejoin the Blackwater. Then, as the mist finally burnt off, the river was again crossed (at Thachers/Little Ford) to head up to the edge of Swallowfield and the *George and Dragon* (adjacent to Rowes Farm).

Although we had liberally eaten blackberries as we progressed, the excellent cuisine was sufficient for us all. We were now well over half the way round though we faced 20 metres of gentle ascent at Chill Hill before dropping down again to the river Blackwater at Well House Farm. Now we progressed eastwards on part of the *River Blackwater Path* to the *New Mill* at Eversley. Stopping only for a photograph on the Bridge by the mill ford, we walked over Lower Common to Eversley itself. Although some wished to keep the steady pace going the attractions of *The Tally Ho* were too much for some and we took tea at this establishment. The final stretch took us east towards Finchampstead by way of Fleethill Farm and then past the modern sand/gravel workings to reach the western end of Moor Green Reserve. The ascent of Finchampstead Ridges followed to return to our start. Here Janet provide cake and hot drinks for those who had enjoyed their early autumn walk.

Richard Ireson, (back marker who did what his Leader told him!)



Autumn Weekend Friday 3rd October – Monday 6th October

The Surrey Group Autumn weekend has the following pattern: a short walk on the Friday afternoon, a full days walk on the Saturday and another full days walk on the Sunday. The party leaves for home on the Monday morning. It has been the practice for many years that Dave Challenger leads the Friday and Sunday walks and Chris Hayward the Saturday walk. This year the party was based at Baskerville Hall, near Hay-on-Wye, and consisted of 11 walkers and three non-walkers.

Baskerville Hall

The hall was built in 1839 by Thomas Mynors Baskerville for his second wife Elizabeth. The Baskervilles were related to the Dukes of Normandy and first came to Britain in 1066. From the 1920s the house has been used as a school, then a hotel and health farm, until 1984 when it was bought by its current owner who has undertaken extensive restoration work keeping as much as possible of the nineteenth century style. Some of the bedrooms are magnificent, if a little unusual. The style of baths, and their locations, were major topics of conversation.

Arthur Conan Doyle was a family friend who often came to stay. During his many visits he learned of the local legend of the hounds of the Baskervilles. It is reputed that on nearby Hergest ridge he translated this into probably the most famous case for his celebrated detective Sherlock Holmes. However, at the request of his friends he set the book in Devon “to ward off tourists”.

Friday 3rd Oct

The walkers gathered at 2pm in the car park at Hay-on-Wye. The sun shone, the ground was wet, the styles were frequent and sometimes not very easy to negotiate and some of the paths were plain on the map but indistinct on the ground. The walk was entirely on the English side of the border. Initially we went in a southerly direction up to Pant-y-fithel and on to Penhenhallt. From there we crossed Hen Allt Common to join the Offa's Dyke Path on its descent from Hay Bluff which took us back to the start.

Saturday 4th Oct.

Saturday was a very different day. It rained. Chris had planned three routes, a twelve-mile, a ten-mile and an eight-mile with the weather being the deciding factor for which of the three walks would be attempted. We did the eight-mile and got very wet. The walk was based on Llanthony Priory going north along the east side of the Vale of Ewyas on a mixture of footpaths and tracks to Capel-y-ffin. We then crossed the valley and returned on footpaths to Llanthony Prior on the west side of the valley. Our picnic lunch was taken in the churchyard of one of the two churches/chapels in Capel-y-ffin. The decision not to do the twelve-mile route was fully justified when we met a party who had descended from Hay Bluff and reported atrocious conditions on the summit ridge. Fortunately the Priory had a very nice tearoom and so we dried out a little, along with many other people, before travelling back over the Gospel Pass to Hay-on-Wye.

Llanthony Priory

The church originated with the settlement of two hermits and their followers and was built in 1108. The current church was built by Augustinian monks between 1180 and 1220. Further building work took place in the thirteenth century. At the dissolution of the monasteries the Priory was surrendered in 1538. It gradually fell into decay and parts collapsed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but now what remains is conserved to prevent further loss. Some of the buildings have been converted into a hotel and a part of the cellars into a tearoom

Sunday 5th Oct.

It poured in rain all Saturday night and was still raining on Sunday morning. Dave had based his walk on the Erwood Craft Centre a few miles up stream from Hay-on-Wye. We arrived, in the rain, had coffee, looked round the displayed crafts, bought various goods and much to our great delight it stopped raining. So at noon we set out on a shortened walk in the hills east of the Wye valley. A stiff climb took us up to about 300m and paths through fields

Autumn Weekend (cont.)

and over styles took us onto the moorland where it was mainly dry underfoot. Features of this walk were footpath entries into fields but no exits! In one case the only exit was over barbed wire and into an overflowing streambed to reach the desired track. Chris, who had exited by a different stretch of barbed wire, had to wade through the stream to join with the rest of us. Lunch was taken in the sunshine seated on a delightful small bluff. We descended into the Wye valley about one kilometre upstream from the Craft Centre with the intention of finishing the walk using the riverside path but we were defeated. The river was in spate and had overtopped the path. We were reliably informed that the markings and droppings in the field at the riverside were due to wild boars. Nevertheless a short roadside walk took us back to the Craft Centre where tea was taken and more gifts bought.

Our thanks go to Dave and Chris who organised the walks and to Peter who dealt with the administration

Elizabeth Bryan

Hay-on-Wye 3rd Oct



Descent into Hay-on-Wye, 3rd Oct



Lunch Capel y ffin 4th Oct



A well-dressed walker 4th Oct



Lunch 5th Oct

