



Surrey Group

# NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2009



Corfe Castle

## 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](http://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

## Apologies

For the lateness of the Autumn Newsletter and the shortage of photographs. The latter is due to technical difficulties in taking photos from the web page and inserting them into the newsletter. The former is due to pressure of other activities.  
P. Waterhouse

## New members of the Surrey Group

The following members have joined the Surrey Group since the last Newsletter. Please welcome them on our walks

Keith Sykes	27885	Sutton
Jennifer Caddy	28111	Godalming
Stephen Haasz	28138	Croydon
Jennifer Tankard	28194	Kingston
Ron North	28269	Guildford
Rush Yadave	28375	Croydon
Margaret Brown	28464	Guildford

**Christmas Dinner 12<sup>th</sup> December 2009**  
**The Hurtwood Inn Hotel, Peaslake (GR 086447)**

[www.hurtwoodinnhotel.com](http://www.hurtwoodinnhotel.com)

**7.00 for 7.30pm dinner**

### Booking Form

See the menu & booking form on the separate page.

Please indicate the choice of menu for each diner AND whether you/they will be walking and dining, or dining or just walking.

The group has agreed a special discount for Surrey Group members and spouses/partners of £23.00 per person; for non-members the price is £26 per person - send a cheque (LDWA Surrey Group). Sorry no payment on the day as account has to be settled in advance.

**Payment with booking:** The booking form to be returned with a £10 deposit or full amount to:

**Janet Chapman at 63 Yockley Close, Camberley, Surrey GU15 1QQ.**

Places allocated on a 'first-come first-served' basis as there is a maximum number that the hotel can accommodate.

Final payment: to be received by November 7<sup>th</sup>

**Changing rooms** (with showers): are available (at no extra cost) at the Hurtwood Inn Hotel for those who will be walking and dining. Bring towel and personal toiletries.

*Tea / coffee* has been ordered for walkers on arrival at the Hotel

### *The Walk*

Starts at our usual **8.45am** – to allow time for all the eating as well as walking! Look out for **final walk details** in December. These will give the location for the start of the walk.

**Funny hats / Christmas decorations** – hope all walkers will come suitably attired!

Looking forward to seeing you on the 12<sup>th</sup>

Regards Janet

**01276 65169/07770 807137**

**email [janet@the-chapmen.co.uk](mailto:janet@the-chapmen.co.uk)**

### **Midsummer Walk Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June**

It was a perfect summer's evening, warm with clear blue skies, when thirty walkers set out (at 7pm prompt!), from 12 East Meads for the Surrey Group's annual midsummer walk.

First we climbed through Onslow village up the north side of the Hog's Back to reach the trackway that runs along the top of the ridge where we turned to the west. After a few hundred metres we turned south to descend the ridge on a narrow, deep path, crossing the North Downs Way and continuing south to Polsted Manor. Here we turned east along field tracks, round the outskirts of Losley Park estate, through the tiny hamlets of Littleton and Artington to reach the A3100. We crossed this road, naturally with great care, to go under the railway and so to the River Wey Navigation for the traditional group photo call on the bridge at St Catherine's Lock. Now we turned northwards along the towpath, under the North Downs Way footbridge, to leave the towpath and up the steep ascent to the road. Again we crossed the A3100, this time with even greater care, to turn into Chestnut Avenue, passing Chichester Hall (of Surrey Inns Kanter fame) and up the roads lined with well appointed houses and gardens to reach the Hog's Back ridge for the second time. Here we had some splendid rural views to the west. The descent of the ridge brought us back to 12 East Meads and the anticipated splendid alfresco meal.

Our thanks go to Tony for the provision of his house and for leading the walk, to Pat Challenger for organising the meal and to all the Surrey Group members who provided food and drink. It was a truly memorable evening.

*Peter Waterhouse*



## **The Three Rivers Walk    Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June**

By train and car we arrive at the big empty car park somewhere in Reading, the sun was glorious so early. Hats on and sun cream liberally spread over exposed skin. We set off with the Thames on our right – river No 1. A brisk pace was set down the towpath; this soon sorted the wheat from the chaff leaving our 2 new walkers, friends of mine, trailing behind!

Morning coffee was at scenic Mapledurum Lock. Temperatures rising we sat under the shade watching Hyacinth Bucket adorned with pink hat, on the bow of her narrow boat as it slowly sunk with the lowering water level

We continued along the Thames stopping to admire seat put up in memory of Peter Saunders, trying hard to read the engraved plaque but a cyclist sitting on it eating his lunch was not very co-operative in making it easy for us to read.

We turned away from the Thames walking through Pangbourne, which dates back to Saxon times; it remained a small village until a station was opened up for the Great Western Railway in 1840. Now meeting our 2<sup>nd</sup> river of the day, River Pang. The sun was now very hot and was behind us most of the day. We continued through the modern roadside settlement of Tidmarsh found in 1196, which also has ties back in Saxon history. Here we crossed the small river of Sulham. The noise of traffic becoming very apparent, as we headed towards the not so quaint town of Theale and crossing the M4, we now turned onto the tow path of the Kennet River our 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 3 Rivers, accepting of course as Ian had rightly pointed out, the crossing of the tributary of the Sulham

We had already been informed at start of day lunch would be late, but one member was beginning to flag badly in the extreme heat of the day, he choose to rest under the shade of a large tree and fanned down by 2 female members of the group while doused with cool water from the river (there was a rumour our flagging member enjoyed every minute of it), while the rest of us were directed towards our lunch stop. On route we stopped to admire the braveness and skill of local lads as they gave us a show diving from the rails of one of the bridges crossing the river.

Lunch was in the Cunning Man at Burghfield Mill; this area also seeped with history. There were several interpretations of the pub name but this is one I found, we were given another version by a local man on his narrow boat, but who knows!

The pub's name comes from a local legend of a 'cunning man' - a good wizard who would help to protect people from dark spirits and witches. The original building was destroyed following repeated flooding; however the newly re-built pub-restaurant has been impressively restored in its original style - complete with thatched roof.

It did not take long for the flagging walker and his 2 female companions to turn up; I have to say looking a lot less flushed even if he was very wet from the dousing of Kennett water. Anyway, nothing that the amber nectar and some excellent food could not put right, but he decided to be sensible and was driven back to the start. Having enjoyed good food, service and much-needed cold drinks it was time for the rest of us to move on again.

Continuing along the tow path which by now was bustling with other pedestrians also out enjoying the glorious day, we started coming into urbanisation with beautiful properties on the other side of the river, with their gardens coming right down to the waters edge, we were now right in the middle of Reading town centre. So our last stop of the day was sitting on the steps of a very busy, cosmopolitan town drinking coffees and just watching the world and his wife go by. I am sure our sweaty, grubby attire didn't turn anyone's head, as like us, everyone was enjoying the wonderful day. Several of the group had split away at this point to catch their train home.

From here the rest of us did the last stretch of the walk to the conjunction of the River Kennet and the River Thames, and then we were back to the big and still empty car park.

Thank you Avril, for a wonderful day, and showing me personally, a part of the countryside I have never been to before.

*Jackie Barker*

### **Guildford Walkfest 17<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> July**

Haslemere station was the meeting point for 20 participants on this 18 mile night walk starting at 12.00.midnight 17<sup>th</sup> July

Juliet Eberle led the walk assisted by Elton Ellis. The participants were a mixed bunch, 4 of whom belonged to the LDWA. The rest joined as a result of publicity accompanying the Guildford Walkfest. The age range was 15 - 73 and most had not experienced longer distance walking. There was pouring rain on Friday afternoon leading up to the event, which fortunately ceased by 7.00pm. Clear skies developed later and no rain was experienced during the walk. The night weather was breezy, clear, and mild with conditions under foot being reasonable, but with some very treacherous and slippery small railway sleeper bridges spanning gullies and streams. The pace was startlingly good throughout and the whole walk of 18.3 miles was covered in 6.3 hours. The night walking section was in total contrast to the sunrise & daylight section, the former being limited to torchlight vision and silhouettes. As the sun rose there was a beautiful vista from the downs above Godalming as we descended to the River Wey. No owls were heard, and the dawn chorus was very subdued apart from the usual wren and blackbird greetings.

The event held great novelty value for most of the participants being a night walk and covering a greater distance than experienced before. The greatest novelty however was the extraordinary scene of Keith Chesterton setting up the 3.30 picnic on Milford Station with tables' chairs food and drinks. We were treated to sausage rolls, pork pies, scotch eggs, tomatoes, ambrosia rice pudding and pineapple with coffee, tea or squash accompanying. I was however rather disappointed he did not provide napkins!

In summary the leadership & navigation was excellent & the company enthusiastic and very willing to participate to the full. So was the leader's extraordinary dog, Harry the corgi, who managed the 18 miles, the streams, bridges, and stiles, all without difficulty but could suddenly stop or run under your legs. This did mean however that alertness was guaranteed with all walkers during the early hours of the Haslemere to Guildford night experience.

*Tony Buttrick*

### **Early morning sunshine on the way into Guildford**



**Guildford Walkfest 17<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup> July**

**Dorking to Guildford 23<sup>rd</sup> July**

We strode out at a steady pace from Deepdene Station on a cloudy yet bright morning, amicably led by Juliet and her lovely longhaired corgi, Harry, who literally swept the way in front, a real joy amongst our group of 14. (13 ladies and one man!) Leaving the tarmac and after a gentle climb we were soon into the countryside, hedges of purple flowers lining the way, bushes with red berries, blackberries, sweet peas, coltsfoot and an assortment of other wild flowers. Onto Steer's Field with a steep aerobic climb up with glorious views once you reached the top of outstretched fields amongst woods of green with the railway snaking it's way through the beauty. Heading west it felt as if you were on a road much traveled, how many feet had crossed these chalk hills over the centuries?

A fairly level walk across Blatchland Downs with WW2 pillboxes, most still in tact, strategically placed along the scarp. Coffee break & a couple of showers with lovely views to the south, Leith Hill in the distance. Walking now into an avenue of beech trees, oaks covered in lichen, yews, box, a GR letterbox and an unexpected sight of a herd of young Galloway belties chewing the cud. The sound of traffic heralded the approach to Newlands Corner with its superb views of the Surrey Hills, stopping here for lunch and a fabulous flapjack from Juliet. Onto the Norman church of St Martha's via a fairly steep sandy track with again lovely vistas amongst the grave stones. Then winding down into the majestic tall trees of the Chantries and then a short walk by the road to the towpath beside the river Wey passing narrow boats and taking us on to the end of our trail at Guildford Station.

A really enjoyable 15-mile walk combined with good company and many lovely sights, a great way to get a taste of the beautiful Surrey countryside

*Anon*

**Just around the corner 28<sup>th</sup> July**

Just around the corner was the evocatively named walk for the 17 walkers who set out from Newlands Corner car park at 9.30am on 28<sup>th</sup> July to walk 12 miles. We had five LDWA members and 12 walkers, some from other clubs, and some who walked only with friends and partners. In spite of very varied walking experience we all managed a good steady pace and were back in the car park by 3pm.

Our walk took us up St. Martha's and then via Chilworth and Blackheath. We lunched at the William IV pub in Little London in pleasant sunshine and skirting Shere we climbed back to Newlands Corner via Albury. Seven of us indulged in tea and cakes at the café.

Our thanks to Elizabeth for her good leadership, and Molly wasn't too bad as a back marker.

*Molly Groundsell*

## **Downsman revisited (Final stage)      Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August**

### **First things first:**

Janet arranged such a splendid walk: we were chimed in by the bells at Alfriston, both on the way out and on our return trip. The entire walk, over 19 miles, had no stiles at all. Considering how often published walks count up stiles as if they are a barrier to walking, I think this is a remarkable achievement. Janet also mentioned having had a word about arranging the weather for us, and she did a great job. She obviously has pull, it was gorgeous: we had sun with a light breeze most of the way. She also arranged that the steepest ascent, after lunch, was in a cool, shady stretch, and the final mile had a very pleasant mottling of cloud just to cool it down as we neared the end, happy but appropriately tired. If that wasn't good enough, she served cake and coffee from the boot of her car at the end. Does it get any better? I doubt it.

### **Second point:**

This was my first walk with the LDWA, ever, and I got 'appointed' the scribe for the walk (I think it was Jackie who volunteered me). I think this may be an initiation rite. Fingers crossed I pass, but forgive me if I get names wrong or miss someone out. There were 14 of us taking part, so I am still a bit fuzzy getting names to fit faces, but it was a lovely chatty group.

### **And now my review:**

We set out from Firls Beacon car park happily led by Timba, Elizabeth's lovely dog, and immediately were wowed by the paragliders hovering just below us on the left. This seemed to set the visuals for the rest of the day, as we continued to spot groups of gliders in various locations. Some discussion was had whether any of us would like to try this (in the group of 3 I was walking with 1 for, 2 NEVER), but they were rather exciting to watch. The early weather was cool with a light fog for the first 40 minutes, but cleared for sun by time we got to Alfriston.

We stopped for a lovely 10 minutes outside Alfriston church for quick snacks, the bells chiming continually, and then headed for the bridge across the Cuckmere for the group photo. Two, no less, Janet taking the first and then swapping with Avril as deputy leader, then off we went again, conversation buzzing like a mobile cocktail party.

I have to say the walk was so comfortable and attractive, the conversation so interesting that we were in Jevington before I could believe it possible. A few of us went for a picnic in St. Andrews Churchyard, a beautiful location with a stunning little Saxon church, complete with lychgate. It is such a nice building that I have a little bit of research for you from their website: I hope it tempts you to visit it on your next time through:

*The church building has examples of every style of medieval architecture. The tower was built by the Saxons (c.900-950) possibly as a refuge against marauding Vikings. Its massive walls approximately 90 cms (3 feet) thick reveal Roman bricks. A rare Saxon sculpture of Christ (c.1000-1050), discovered beneath the tower in 1785, shows Viking influence in the Urnes style of decoration.*

It is a lovely spot for a picnic. The main body of the group went on to the Eight Bells and looked very comfortable when we caught up with them for coffee. At 1p.m. we set off again.

Janet had warned us that the harder work would come in the afternoon, and finding the path again we were immediately heading up hill with the first, and I think, only mud of the day. Those in heavy boots looked a bit relieved that they finally had a purpose, with at least one person purposefully walking in puddles rather than on the drier edge with those of us in trainers and sandals. The path was cool and shady, and the conversation quieter after lunch as we all settled back in to the walk. And what a walk it became. As we worked our way on

### **Downsman Revisited (cont.)**

and out of the wooded portion we were greeted by the spectacular South Downs landscape – rolling hills, cultivated lands in varying shades of dusk and green, beautiful bowls, and very few people. To our left we had views of the coast, and on the right the open Downs and the Cuckmere valley, all of it clear as can be. There were a couple of long pulls up hill, but every one tucked in and completed them without complaint. It was a great day out.

My final paragraph is for Elaine Edwards, and it is a warm congratulation for completing the walk in fine form. During our lunch break I was told about her fall in the Drakenbergs S.A. and her two years of enforced absence from walking. Elizabeth's genuine love of (or is that addiction to?) long distance walking pushed her back into action, and at the age of 80 she was right there with the group all of the way. Impressive, and I am so pleased to have met her, along with all of the others.

*Laurie Jo Wright*

### **Downsman Revisited – The Epitaph**

The journey that commenced in August 2001 is now finished. Planning the revisits together with Avril, 'my deputy leader', over the years has been fun, with many adventures experienced along the way, many already recounted.

As has been the nature of the journey there had to be one last experience. Leaving Firlle car park, after ensuring all the rest of the walkers were safely on their way, we joined the M27 congratulating ourselves on the success of the day – with no mishaps. Oh dear pride certainly comes before a fall or a punctured tyre.

After a series of what we thought to be friendly motorcyclists and other motorists waving and us duly waving back, we became aware of a burning smell, yes a very sad tyre. Although only just half a mile from joining the exit for the M23 I could not risk driving further and pulled off into a very narrow section. After calling the AA (on my mobile) listening to the 'recorded 'risk assessments' we scrambled on to the grass above the road and there we sat on our little square mats for 1 hour 30 minutes. During that time our faith in the human species was restored in the shape of a motorist who pulled in. He proceeded to get out of his car and approached us. Being of a cynical nature and having decided that he was not an AA man in disguise, I viewed him with suspicion.

The gentleman, (who as we subsequently agreed was), handed us a bottle of water each. Noticing that I was eyeing it suspiciously he assured us that the bottles were still sealed, that he had in the last hour passed us (two ladies waifs and strays) twice and decided to do 'something nice that day'!. After he had gone on his way, the Police then stopped to enquire of our welfare.

As the sun sunk, and dusk came, we were delighted when a very very nice man, the AA arrived. In no time at all, the get you home safely tyre was fitted and we were on our way. Travelling at below 50 miles an hour in the slow line for 68 miles was not easy, and the hazard lights were in constant use, to inform motorists that it was not a Sunday driver holding up the traffic, most got the message and over took. I eventually arrived back in Camberley at 2200 hours and my 'deputy Leader' Crowthorne at 22.30 hours.

The MORAL of this tale, is do not travel without a mobile phone or roadside assistance card.

*Janet Chapman*



### **Semaphore Towers Walk – 2nd Half.**

#### **Stage 4 Feb 28<sup>th</sup> Godalming to Fernhurst**

This started with an easy section to Witley & Sandhills. Here we went up the steep Barnacle Hill road to see the O<sub>2</sub> Mobile phone mast on the site of the old Semaphore Tower. The site is still used for sending messages!

Then a section familiar from past Punchbowl, before a complicated set of paths through remote scrub to get to Haslemere. A stop at the Weatherspoons pub refreshed us for the last stretch up to the Haste Hill flats above Haslemere & a beautiful walk by the edge of Blackdown. We were pretty tired as we waited for the bus back to Haslemere & the train.

#### **Stage 5 May 9<sup>th</sup> Fernhurst to Rowlands Castle**

Back at Haslemere station, we caught a bus again to Fernhurst for the most rural section of the whole Semaphore Towers Walk. Peter Willey, past LDWA Chair from far Cumbria joined us to get some tough walking in to prepare for the 100 event! Old friends Paul Treacher & Dave Toogood joined us, too. The route to Older Hill from Fernhurst is one of my favourites, leading on sheltered ways to the excellent views from Older Hill. But just before there, we went up Telegraph Hill to see Semaphore House – now renamed Brackenwood House, a very ordinary new name for what until a couple of years ago had the splendid name of Telegraph House, another semaphore site.

Down to a new coffee/café at the old Post Office at Redford. This is really recommended! It got us ready for the boggy stretch through Stedham Marsh – I have a “dry weather route” for winter - and on to three historic churches at Iping, Chithurst & Trotton. The last has a brass tomb of Lord Camoys who commanded the English left wing at the battle of Agincourt.

We stopped at the Keepers Arms in Trotton, getting there five minutes before they stopped serving, but had a very friendly and helpful reception there.

Then to Elsted, where we reached the road just as the two-hourly bus arrived. We stopped this so Paul and David could return to Portsmouth. Although it was 3pm, we still had 10 miles to do. The rest of us climbed up to Beacon Hill, at 242m the highest point of the walk. We got our 1<sup>st</sup> views of the sea just past here. We walked to Telegraph House, where Bertrand & Dora Russell used to run a progressive school. Then back up and on to another house, once a semaphore, above Compton in Sussex. Past the Coach and Horses – too early to visit - & the last five miles to Rowlands Castle & the train back.

#### **Stage 6 (Final) August 15<sup>th</sup> Rowlands Castle to HMS Victory at Portsmouth**

Again, Paul who'd helped me a lot with designing this section joined us. We followed the green strip of the Staunton Way through the back of Havant to Bedhampton. We admired the 600 years old yews in the churchyard and saw some 18<sup>th</sup> century houses, before going up an unavoidable tarmac stretch on Portsdown Hill Road to the site of the Semaphore Tower on that hill. There was newly erected barbed wire around the field containing it, but Portsmouth Council had no objection to our crawling under the wire to see the site and the view.

We went down hill, passing the Sunlight pub – to some protests from my group – before following a Paul inspired route through the industrial Railway Triangle, on a footbridge over the Portsea creek, by the Napoleonic era Hilsa Lines & green paths to Anchorage Walk. It was now just before 1pm & we stopped at a good value pub, the Compass Rose. Then it was by the edge of Portsea Island, first by the edge of Langstone Harbour to Eastney, where the Royal Marines used to have a large base, till we reached Southsea.

We then passed a succession of famous places: the Royal Marines Museum, Lumps Fort – where an auxiliary semaphore used to be; a green roofed public lavatory; South Parade Pier; Southsea Common and reached the Square Tower at the bottom of Portsmouth High Street, the original terminus of the Semaphore chain in Portsmouth. The crowds were steadily getting thicker on this fine sunny holiday weekend. And there were lots of people in the spanking new Gunwharf Quay shopping centre, which we went through to go past Portsmouth Harbour station to go into the Dockyard. Timba (Elizabeth's Labrador) and her owner were not going to be allowed into the dockyard. But a plea that we'd come

### **Semaphore Towers Walk – 2nd Half. (cont.)**

the way from Trafalgar Square allowed Timba to be designated as Ian's guide dog, and with Ian clutching her, we were all let in!

We stopped at the Dockyard Semaphore Tower – now the centre controlling shipping in the Isle of Wight area – but once the final Semaphore, when it was moved from the Square Tower. And we finished with the traditional group shots of our party in front of HMS Victory.

I had to rush off for a Guildford event, but many of the others stayed for a Fish and Chip meal at the seaside.

Can I finish by thanking everyone who supported me by coming on these walks & providing corrections to my draft route descriptions. Now it is up to me to get the whole route pulled together.

*Keith Chesterton*

### **Treading New Territory Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August**

There is no more you can ask from life than a beautiful summer day in the Surrey hills. And this is exactly what we got, courtesy of Jackie and Ted! We started off with the magical surrounding of the stepping-stones near Box Hill to then proceed on the North Downs way path overlooking the Denbies vineyard. Then, through cornfields, crossing few A-roads and rail lines, while taking any chance of stopping to pick on blackberries (and few prunes). After Coldharbour, we reached Capel and the lunch stop, where we were offered a show of hats and morning suites by the guests of the wedding taking place in the church next door. The afternoon was a pure English feast: Newdigate welcomed us with a display of a bowling game, a cricket match and some football, all in the space of few square metres. Few miles later, the energetic among us had to be restrained from trying out an immaculate horse race track and, in Henfold, from having a swim in one of the fishing lakes. There couldn't have been a better ending than the last few yards across a golf course, a nice, smooth stroll and, for the first time in the day, totally stile free!

*Jackie Barker*

## The Corgi Cake Canter - Harry Corgi Eberle - 14 June 2009

First, I'd like everyone to take note of the name of the walk: The Corgi Cake Canter - Harry the Corgi's walk. I'm first, which is just how it should be (and food second and exercise third, also just how it should be).

So, come Sunday morning, the lass puts me into the car (usually a good sign), and off we go to Box Hill. There I find my escort waiting: eight more people! Look, I know security is important - after all, my cousins consort with royalty - but nine? Six would be perfectly adequate, surely. Still, if they want to provide nine, and the cost doesn't come out of my food bowl, who am I to argue?

Off we go, along the slopes of Box Hill, along Stane Street (where Caesar's corgis used to parade, no doubt), and up Jupiter Hill to Headley Heath. It's quite a steep climb and rather hot, so when I come across a puddle, I stop for a quick dip. Lots of lovely mud, just the way I like it.

After crossing the road at the top of Pebble Hill, Jackie realises she has lost her sunglasses and together with Elton, she belts off back to find them. Great sport chasing after them, but the lass comes tearing after me in great distress to stop me: she says I might get hit by a car - as if! We corgis are not stupid, you know. Not many puddles in these parts, so I'm pleased when we reach Buckland with its village pond. I jump in and paddle around. Then the lass calls me out for a little photo-shoot. When you're a corgi you get used to the constant press attention. Now, though, I have a bit of a problem, because whoever made this pond inconsiderately left very steep banks, unsuited to my compactly structured legs. Eventually one of the lads gets down and lifts me up onto the top of the bank. I reward him with a quick shower because he looks a bit hot.

We join the Pilgrim's Way, then on through woods and fields, along village lanes and leafy glades. We reach a pub at Betchworth and stop for a drink and lunch. I get tied to a bench leg, and nose around in some daypacks near me. Thoughtless people! Nothing for a corgi in any of them.

After lunch we climb back to the North Downs Way. The last stretch is very steep, and one of the escort, a lad called Tony, goes storming off on these incredibly long legs, leaving behind those of us who are more vertically challenged. Show-off!

**The Corgi Cake Canter - Harry Corgi Eberle - 14 June 2009 (cont.)**

At last we reach Dorking. It's been a hot day with too few rivers, not enough puddles and too many hills. So I lie down. The lass stops, sighs, and picks me up to carry me. Ah, bliss. But only across a road. Then she puts me down again, gives me a bowl of water (not before time, either), and strolls off, expecting me to walk the rest of the way! Talk about hard-hearted!

After a very long half-mile, we reach home. Big Frank and the lass bustle to and fro, offering tea, cold drinks, flapjacks, chocolate, lemon drizzle and fruit cake to everyone. All I get is water! Then, to add insult to injury, the lass brings out Bonnie the Cockatoo. Of course, everyone starts oohing and aahing over the idiot bird. And the show-off laps it up, ducking its head and flaring its crest, going from person to person, and even saying "Hello" in a really smarmy way. Later Carmen the eclectus parrot and Rodney the tortoise are brought out too - both brazen attention seekers. What's that? Jealous? Me? I won't dignify that with an answer.

As the escort leaves I sit on Big Frank's lap, graciously accepting the compliments on my hospitality. So that was it as far as I was concerned. I let them find their own way back to their cars at Box Hill. This was where the Canter bit came in. They should have been at the car park by six, the official closing time. Of course, without me to chivvy them along into a canter, they were late. But as they were a corgi's escort, special allowance had been made and the gates were still open. So all that remains for me to say is: you weren't a bad escort, and you'll all be welcome next year.

Harry the corgi. (Ghost written, with Harry's gracious permission, by Elton Ellis)

## **Autumn Weekend Swanage, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> October**

The weekend this year was nearer our home base but still in an area not previously visited, namely Dorset and on rock to which we are unaccustomed, limestone. We also had a trip on a steam train.

On Friday afternoon, Dave led us out of Swanage and west along the Priest's Way passed Langton Matravers to turn north into Langton West Wood and out by Wilkswood Farm where some of the party took the opportunity to buy local produce at the farm gate. We then crossed the main road and railway line to New Barn and turning south we made our way back to Swanage.

Saturday is easy to describe. Steam Railway to Corfe Castle, south along the Purbeck Way to Chapman's Pool and then east along the South West Coast Path to Swanage but that does not do justice to a splendid walk again guided by Dave. It is a rare event to be behind a steam locomotive, 34028 Eddystone, but to add wonder to the trip we left the railway at Corfe Castle with its splendid ruins still showing clearly its medieval importance. After a coffee break the Purbeck Way took us south through fields punctuated by stiles, a feature of this part of the country, to end with a steep, almost precipitate descent to Chapman's Pool. Here the white limestone of the cliffs gives way to the blue grey of Kimmeridge shale. After lunch a steep ascent took us up to the cliff top, where we had to fight a howling gale to reach St Aldhem's Head with its ancient chapel. We then followed the coastal, switchback path east to Swanage, passing the remains of coastal quarries. Along the cliff path we encountered another feature of this part of the country, the steps into and out of the inlets that punctuate the cliffs are supported by stone and not wood, as is the practice in Surrey. The nearer we approached Swanage the more popular became the path.

Sunday was under the guidance of Chris. We followed the South West Coast Path through Swanage up onto the Purbeck Hills passing Old Harry Rocks to the outskirts of Studland. Not surprisingly, the region around Old Harry Rocks was very popular with whole families enjoying the spectacular scenery. The long distance views were somewhat restricted but we could see Portland Bill to the west, Bournemouth to the east and the Isle of Wight. From Studland a steep climb took us back onto Ballard Down and a brief rest allowed us to view the whole of Poole harbour at our feet. Then along Ballard Down to the obelisk followed by a very steep descent on the southern side of the down. After lunch, we had to climb back up again. However, rather than follow the Purbeck Way that runs along the spine of the hills we kept to the southern flank, to drop down through farmland, across the road and railway into Langton West Wood (again). Crossing the railway we had the sight of our steam train of Saturday powering round a bend in the line. We walked through Langton Matravers (again) but took a different route back into Swanage from the one we used on Friday afternoon. A feature of the walk was our encounter with a party from the London group. In fact we met them once on Saturday and three times on Sunday!

Monday was a very different day; it started off with drizzle that then changed to rain. The plan was to do a walk in the New Forest; that had been identified by Dave, starting from a car park south of Lyndhurst. There were 11 people who braved the weather and completed the 9-mile walk mainly on good paths. Fortunately a scout hut was found with an ample overhang to protect the group from the rain while they had lunch. As so often is the case, by the time the group got back to the car park the rain had stopped.

*Peter Waterhouse*



Steam hauled to Corfe Castle (with photographer!)



Harry rocks (with canoeists)