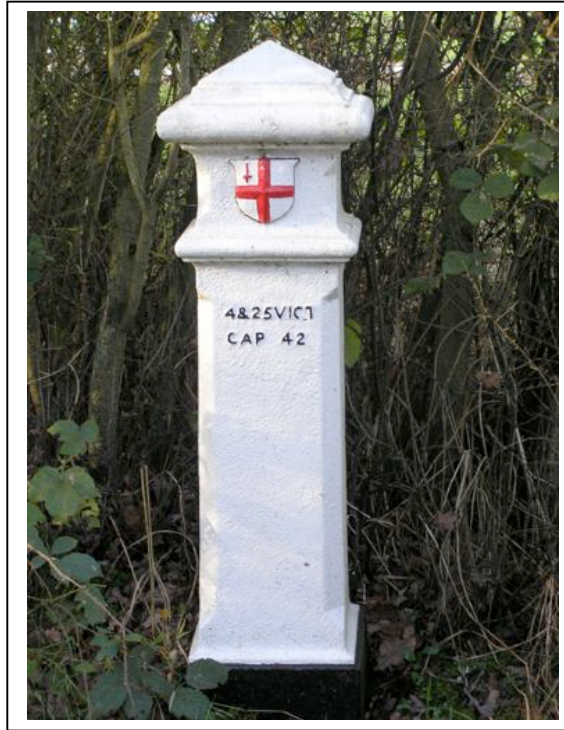




Surrey Group

NEWSLETTER

Spring. 2007



Coal Duty Boundary Post: Ashtead Common

Items for Newsletter

The Newsletter is published three times a year, Spring, Summer and Autumn. 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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Editorial

Due to lack of space the normal editorial content has been abandoned. However, readers should take note of the two articles on page 15 of this Newsletter, the information on page 3 and the appeal on page 7.

Obituary – Peter Saunders 23.11.1934 to 10.12.2006

It is with deep sadness that I report on the death of my friend of 47yrs, Peter Saunders. Peter died after postoperative complications following major surgery for a growth in the bile duct.

I first meet Peter at EMI Electronics where we worked in the same area for most of our working life. Peter was diagnosed with a form of Macular Degeneration in his early twenties, a disease that was to lead to the slow deterioration of his sight, ultimately rendering him unable to work when he was registered blind (although Peter always had a little peripheral vision). Peter was a good sportsman particularly football and cricket – the latter he managed to play with the help of his teammates – for a number of years. As a bowler he used to bowl at the person (he couldn't see the wicket) but his system proved very successful! He was an excellent Bridge player, and, had he retained his sight, would certainly have gone far in the Bridge world. Peter showed great determination all through his life in battling with his disability, never giving in and remaining positive and competitive in every way. When he was forced to retire from his work he took up walking and he and I joined the LDWA in 1992. Here he found a new interest, new friends and challenges, which gave him great enjoyment. He repeatedly tried to complete the 100 but never quite made it due to repeated bouts of sickness during the event. He always volunteered to Marshall on the Oxon Walks helping wherever he could. He was a kind, generous, popular and thoughtful person. Peter leaves a wife, two children and four grandchildren who will lovingly remember and sadly miss him always, as indeed will I.

Avril Stapleton

NB It is hoped to have a seat in memory of Peter in the Pangbourne Meadow, Berks where he often walked.

Guildford Boundary Walk Sunday October 1st 2006

The start



At Newlands Corner check point



Guildford Boundary Walk - Sunday October 1st 2006

125 walkers and runners started our relaunched Guildford Boundary Walk, the first since 1989, when increased traffic on the roads made us stop organising it. The walk was originally devised by Alan and Barbara Blatchford, 2 of the 3 founders of the LDWA, and first run in 1972. We used the same basic route as then, but with significant alterations to avoid the most difficult crossings. The Mayor of Guildford, Councillor Angela Gunning, started our 20-mile walk from Surrey University sports grounds at 9am in nice sunny weather. Unfortunately, this was about the only part of the day that was sunny!

Fierce storms battered walkers on the route. Helping at the Newlands Corner checkpoint, I got soaked just getting from car to café. And sheltering there, the unflooded space was getting smaller and smaller. I admired the cheerfulness of the walkers continuing on with their journey.

And at the finish, many said they'd relished the challenge and really enjoyed the day out. Roy Barnsley recalled the 1980 event, just after Alan Blatchford had died, when the tiny streams then on the route, were torrents, and we all said Alan must be sitting on a cloud laughing at us all. Well I think he was laughing again this year!

The walk was held partly to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Charter of the University. It was organised jointly by Surrey Group of the Long Distance Walkers Association and Unisport at the University.

We were very pleased with the turn-out on such a bad day, especially the number of younger people taking part. We didn't get any young children this time, but in the past, the Blatchford, Cartwright and Chesterton children have all done this walk, at around 10 years old and thereabouts. Parents have become more fearful since then, but perhaps in time, children will be allowed a little adventure again.

Times taken ranged from 3 hours 15 minutes by Alistair Doyle and Ben Smith to a more leisurely 8 hours 55 minutes by Christine and David Hewson. And Jonathan Charteris-Black celebrated his final week working at Surrey University by doing this walk – and stopping in 2 pubs on the way! 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 Sept 2nd. It was good weather, but we took 8 hours 20 mins as we stopped for lunch at the Bull's Head for an hour.

After this success, we will be repeating the walk, but on July 8th 2007, to act as the climax to Guildford's WalkFest, a festival of walking ending on that day.

Keith Chesterton (also Chair of WalkFest)

Church Stretton Weekend – 5th to 8th October

There are still a few places available on our October weekend break. This year we will be walking in the Shropshire Hills, staying at Church Stretton at the Longmynd Hotel. We travel on Friday Oct. 5th and we plan to have an afternoon walk. This will be followed by two full days walking before our return on Monday Oct. 8th.

The cost of the weekend for full board will be approximately £199.

If you are interested please contact Molly Groundsell, 01483 762843

Lakes weekend 7th to 11th October 2006



Ascent of Grizedale Pike



Coffee break, Watendlath

Lakes weekend 7th to 11th October 2006

Saturday. Twenty-five Surrey Members participated in another action packed weekend.

Kick off was arranged for 14.00 hours for a walk led from the house car park, by Anne Beeching and Ron Rowarth, two Surrey members who live in the north. To ensure that the first walk of the weekend was not missed, carloads travelling north started their journeys at about 0700. All went well until ten miles from Keswick, when road works and delays were encountered. *Oh if only we had taken the scenic route was the cry! followed by frustration as attempts to reach the organiser by mobile, failed miserably.* With minutes to spare all cars arrived as one in the car park and panic at missing a walk abated.

The weather was mild and dry (not windy) as we set off up Cat Bells. The higher we climbed the more perilous the route became. As we clung onto the craggy ledges, the wind blew and garments sailed off into the distance. As we all laid flat and slithered down to below the wind, Eric, Ian Mac's cousin, (who was nearer to the ground than anyone else, other than Gillian Bull) was running all over the summit collecting garments. To add to the pandemonium, runners, who knew the area well, were throwing themselves flat, as they came over the summit, to escape the gale. 16.30; and safely back to the house we all enjoyed a well-earned tea, followed by dinner, later to join the rest of the guests in a 'get to know you' session.

Sunday. After a hearty breakfast and after collecting our packed lunches (I must add at this point that, although being known to enjoy my food, the consensus was that food throughout the weekend was excellent), we all assembled at the front entrance for the first photo call of the weekend. At 0900 sharp, led by Chris Hayward, nineteen set off from the house to conquer Grizedale Pike. The whole day was a panorama of clear views. After some hard climbs and about seventeen miles, it was agreed that the cream tea that greeted us on our return to the house was an apt and welcome reward.

Monday. Our Leader for the day was Dave Challenger. The walk was billed as low level, with a few challenging climbs. The walk started with a short car journey to the Kettlewell car park beside Derwent Water. The road to Ashness Bridge was followed to reach the Waterfalls and Surprise View. We then continued along paths to Watendlath where we stopped for coffee, hot chocolate and rock cakes in the gardens of the Cottage Café. From Watendlath the path was followed that climbed to Dock Tarn. At the Tarn we sat on rocks and enjoyed our picnics. After lunch there was a long steep descent followed by a level track, to reach Rosthwaite. From here the route followed the River Derwent to Grange where we stopped for tea, cakes and ice cream Here the party split some going around the end of Derwent Water to the cars, whilst others walked and followed the western bank of the lake back to the house.

Monday Evening: An informative and enjoyable presentation was given of the work of The Cumbrian Mountain rescue team. The slides of the rescues were rather disconcerting, bearing in mind that the impending climb of Skiddaw was on the Agenda for the following day.

Tuesday: Led again by Chris Hayward, the challenge was Skiddaw. Disappointingly, although wisely, after having mastered some steep climbs and within 150m of the summit, Chris took the decision to abandon the expedition. The summit and all surroundings peaks were shrouded in thick mist, there was a strong wind blowing and the temperature had dropped. We started the descent and lunched cosily huddled together in the heather. Reaching civilisation we again enjoyed afternoon tea at a Forest Centre.

Tuesday Evening: This was party piece time, Gillian Bull, Chris Hayward and Peter Waterhouse, flew the flag for Surrey LDWA performing to a packed house

Wednesday. Return home in torrential rain. While the core of the party walked and climbed and ate, there was something for every one. Those that did not aspire to great heights enjoyed visits to slate mines, shopping in Keswick and leisurely strolls around Derwent Water.

Another superb weekend organised by Molly Groundsell –

.Janet Chanman

Three Hills Walk Wednesday 18th October 2006

On a day which threatened rain but turned out mild and humid, nine members of the Surrey Group collected in Milton Heath car park. Our leader confirmed what we had guessed that the three hills were Leith, Holmbury and Pitch and that we were to have lunch in Peaslake. Primed with this knowledge and consequently a reasonable idea of the route up to lunchtime we set off just after 9.30am. Unfortunately, after about 30mins walking one of the lady members felt ill and said she was returning to her car. Our leader escorted her back to the car park. Before leaving he described the actual route to be taken and indicated that we should be in Peaslake by about 1.30pm. Thus armed, seven of us continued the walk

The route took us past Squires Farm, along Wolvens Lane to Coldharbour and up to Leith Hill summit where a coffee stop was taken. The route descended the west side of Leith Hill and on down past Upfolds Farm and then up to the summit of Holmbury Hill. The westerly direction continued through the grounds of the Duke of Kent School and up to the broad track leading to the summit of Pitch Hill. At this point a unanimous decision was taken to omit Pitch Hill and descend to Peaslake. We arrived at the lunch stop shortly before 2pm to be met by our leader and the lady now recovered.

We could not leave Peaslake without taking a group photo outside the post office that played a key role in the formation of the LDWA. Sadly, this is now an empty shell. For the return we were back to a party of nine. It started with a steady descent through the fields to Abinger Hammer and then the well-known route through Abinger Roughts to Westcott, Ince Lane, across the A25 and the Greensand Way back to the car park.

Our thanks to Don Bolton, who missed the hard bit by being the perfect gentleman, and who led us back along the easy bit.



Another Afternoon Around Ashtead Saturday 21st Oct. 2006

Being new to the area I was looking forward to this walk and it didn't disappoint. Fourteen walkers set out at lunchtime under the guidance of Dave Challenger. After crossing the railway line we made our way to Ashtead Common zigzagging through eerie burnt out trees to reach King Oak, the highest point of the Common. We passed Roman remains and the flood alleviation scheme, which will ensure that my house remains dry the next time there is a river surge. The route took us through Ashtead Park, passing the ponds on the way, up Grays Lane past Thirty Acre Barn. to Headley Road. The walk then went under the M25 to arrive at the horse ride on the north side of Headley Court. We walked along the bridle way through fields containing many horses who seemed pleased to see us but it was doubtful whether any could win the Derby. After a brief road walk we took narrow footpaths to arrive at Slough Lane. The route then took us across fields with extensive views to the south and west to finally arrive at the small car park for Nower Wood. We descended on the south side of Tyrrell's Wood Golf Course to Stane Street. Stane is the Saxon word from which we got stone and a number of places along its route incorporate the word stone in their names. Over the M25 this time and then more mansions, mushrooms and mud. Unfortunately for us it poured in rain for the last five minutes of the walk.

The rain could not dampen the enjoyment of the impressive choice of homemade scones and cakes and lots of tea. Our discussions over tea ranged widely and being the youngster of the group, I'm still not sure how many Beatles are still alive.

Our thanks go to Dave who devised and led the walk and to Pat for food at the end.

Graham Treacher

URGENT – MORE HELP WANTED

Saturday 26th May 2007

WELSH 100 2007 100 – Cantcanolbarth

CP 2 GR 078 473

Explorer 188 or Landranger 147

Surrey Group to host CP2. Aberedw, an indoor CP 14 miles from the start. The village is 11 miles South of Llandrindod Wells, the 100 venue. Rumour has it that it is a friendly village with a good pub.

It will be a very busy CP as the walkers at this stage will be bunched and staying no longer than 15 minutes. At any one time there could be up to fifty walkers needing TLC. Further details re menus later. Approx arrival for set up will be 12 noon and the CP is open until about 1700.

If interested please contact Janet Chapman 01276 65169/07770 807137 or email janet@the-chapmen.co.uk who will be co-coordinating the Marshals for this Checkpoint.

Offers of help so far have been received from:

Elizabeth Bryan	Reg. Chapman	John Dixon
Peter Edwards	Elaine Edwards	Andy Fogell
Molly Groundsell	Barry Harrison	Chris Hayward
John Lay	Anne O'Mara	Ann Sayer
Peter Waterhouse	Betty Waterhouse	John Westcott

More information about the event can be found on line at www.cantcanolbarth.co.uk

For those who have never experienced a 100, the atmosphere is terrific. You may wish to make it a long weekend and stay in the area. If you did stay you could also watch, on the Monday morning, those walkers who have survived two nights struggle into the finish.

Janet Chapman

THE INNS PATH - Sunday 12 November 2006



A total of 23 walkers - four of whom were 'First Timers' - plus Timba the dog disturbed the peace of Chestnut Avenue at 0900 on a fine November morning to set out on the Inns Path, which subject to minor modifications, was the proving walk for the Surrey Inns Kanter. Tony Cartwright led the walk ably assisted by Louise who brought up the rear.

We set off along the River Wey to Shalford and then up to the tower at Chinthurst Hill. We then went on to Blackheath where we had a short break by the war memorial, which interestingly contained the names of just seven people who had died in the First World War. We basked in the warm sunshine, drank coffee and enjoyed fine views of St Martha's Church through recently cleared trees. The route then continued across Blackheath following part of the Surrey Summits route and then onto Abinger Hammer via Shere where we stopped for lunch at the Abinger Arms. A slight hiatus at this point; Louise suddenly took off back along the route to look for one of the party who had appeared to have gone missing. After some discussion it appeared that the missing person was in fact in the pub and ordering his food - panic over.

The Abinger Arms did a sterling job of providing a variety of baguettes, soups and cooked meals for the walkers in an incredibly short space of time all washed down by pints of their Black Sheep Ale. We were soon rounded up by Tony and off we went to ascend the steep slope up onto the North Downs Way, just what was needed to get the legs going after the excellent lunch. A quick stop to admire the views over Blatchford Down and then onwards and upwards.

A fine pace was set along the North Downs Way with a quick look at the Siamese twin trees and a discussion as to how they evolved. Then through Honeysuckle Bottom to a tea and cake stop at the top of Newlands Corner, which may have explained the rapid pace along the NDW. Night was closing in fast but we had to stop and admire the sunset, which was spectacular for a mid-November evening. Down off Newlands Corner to the bottom of St Martha's Hill where a local resident was BBQ'ing in his garden. Despite the recent stop on Newlands Corner we were all getting pretty hungry and were wondering if he could accommodate another 22 (one walker only did the morning section) for dinner.

Due to the fading light we had to give the climb up to St Martha's a miss and torches came into use for the climb up to Pewley Down and then across the fields, over St Catherine's Bridge and back to the finish at St Catherine's Hall by just about 1730.

The weather had been particularly good for mid-November so a superb route was complemented by excellent walking conditions and fine views.

As a footnote (pardon the pun) Paul and I formed 50% of the 'First Timers'. Having both retired recently and now managing our own leisure time rather than having work commitments, we decided to rejoin the LDWA and Surrey Group. We both thoroughly enjoyed the walk and the company and will certainly be back for more.

Sandra Houghton.

Richmond Roundabout Revisited 18th Nov.2006

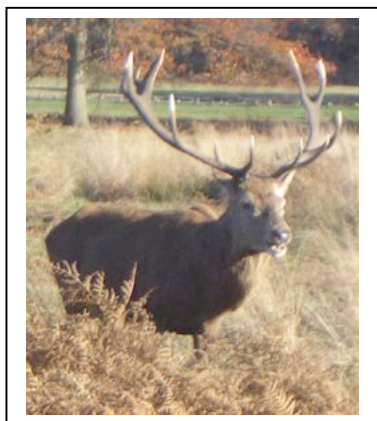
A glorious late autumnal morning heralded the day of this varied and interesting walk. Thirteen of us, including members from London and Thames Valley Groups, gathered at the Diana Fountain in Bushy Park. A packed car park confronted us – just in time to see a group of innumerable runners silently commence their weekly circuit of the Park. Some interesting sights so early in the morning – dads wheeling push chairs, children of all ages, grandmas and grandads, and of course the elite runners who were already out of sight.

We commenced our walk with a circuit of Bushy Park, ably lead by Dave who gave interesting info. on the way. A comment was heard that the Americans were now coming to “Old England” in the fall, such was the magnificent array of late autumnal colour, with many of the trees still retaining their full complement of leaves. The chestnut trees were first planted in 1699, and the mile-long Chestnut Avenue was planned by Sir Christopher Wren to give a grand new approach to his projected north front of Hampton Court Palace. There are also ten miles of lime trees. We exited the park by way of Teddington Gate, through the pleasant High Street full of interesting shops, and crossed the Thames by Teddington Weir, marking the extent of the tidal influences. Thence along the towpath, skirting Ham Common, passing Ham House built in 1610, and over Petersham Meadows, we came eventually to Richmond, where we were cheered by a rather vocal boatload of Springbok supported en route for Twickenham – I believe we won that one!

An ascent was then made of Richmond Terrace Gardens on Richmond Hill with magnificent views of the Thames immortalized by Turner, then via the Royal Star and Garter Home for disabled servicemen into Richmond Park. On to Henry VIII’s Mound with its vista of St Pauls, and so to lunch in Pembroke Lodge. Richmond Park is the largest urban park in Britain, and brings authentic rural air to town. It was first enclosed by Charles I as a deer park, and still has large herds of fallow and red deer together with majestic oaks and rhododendron plantations, and Pen Ponds, which are a perfect sanctuary for waterfowl. Leaving the Isabella plantation we were accompanied by a handsome and inquisitive stag, a subject to numerous photo calls. On by way of White lodge, built as a hunting box by George II, and leaving the rural charms of Richmond Park by Kingston Gate we came to Kingston Upon Thames. Avoiding the centre of this traffic-ridden town we trundled along the quaint riverside to Kingston Bridge, thence by way of Home Park and Hampton Court, built between 1515 and 1520 for Cardinal Wolsey and taken over by Henry VIII in one of his many nasty moods, back to the cars in Bushy Park.

Thank you Dave for a most interesting circular walk on a perfect day, with magnificent colourful views of the Thames and its surrounding parklands.

John Stovell



Batts and Bluebells

12th December 2006



December 12th seemed a reasonable day to make one of my occasional forays with the Surrey Group. The drive filled me with foreboding as the fields were flooded and roads awash with the recent heavy rain. Nevertheless, ten hardy souls gathered at the start for a rerun of a previous Kanter. Underfoot was wet and sometimes muddy with the weather blustery and showery but fortunately the heavy rain missed us. Waggoners Wells was passed and we eventually arrived at the Crown in Arford for lunch (a village and pub unknown to me). We were looked after well and this included Christmas Crackers for all. After lunch we gently puddle our way back to Tilford with the last few miles walked by flickering torchlight

An excellent walk ably led by Tony Cartwright.

John Farrar

SURREY BORDER PATH (PART 7) Saturday 16th Sept. 2006

So there I was all alone in this remote, deserted and dark car park at 8.30 in the morning (the advertised start time) unable to see my hand in front of my face through the thick cloud shrouding the ridge of the North Downs. The main road was only a few yards away but what passing traffic there was ghosted by in the gloom and nobody turned in to the park or stopped. Nobody but me. Should I go home? But no, almost having given up hope, a smart Saab convertible turned in, strangely the same one that I had seen drive past the entrance some ten minutes earlier. Had they missed the turning? At least we now had two walkers but as 9.00 approached there was no sign of our 'glorious leader' or of any more walkers. If we could find the meeting spot through the cloud then surely the leader ought to remember where he had asked us to meet. Maybe not! But yes! - "well I only left Kingston ten minutes ago so you couldn't expect me much earlier!"

Lengthy explanations and apologies completed we headed off eastwards along the ridge, the cloud slowly dispersing to provide extensive views of the M25 and a lovely day and a splendid walk unfolded before us.

The ridge of the North Downs turns away from the motorway and we were soon heading into some of the quaintly named little villages of Kent – Knockholt, Knockholt Pound and did we go to Pratts Bottom or Horns Green? Wherever it was we were led to an attractive pub for lunch for two. Our leader being a sandwich man was left to peep through the window hoping that we were not going to move on to the second bottle of wine. He need not have worried it was only the second cup of coffee which delayed us. So we turned for home, passing the estate of Chevening and joining a part of the Pilgrims Way for our journey back to Titsey. After a short dice with death along the main road we turned through the fields dodging the farmer and his tractor trying to plough up the path around us and headed up the hill and through the woods to a safe return to our three lonely cars all by themselves in the little lonely car park.

Really Jerome it was a great walk, thanks for taking us .

John Dixon

Christmas walk Saturday 9th December 2006

Only two days after the North London tornado the annual Christmas walk began in bright sunshine. Nineteen eager walkers gathered at The Parrot in Shalford and set off in the direction of Chilworth, before ascending the path up to St Martha's Hill. A welcome rest on the benches surrounding the church was cut short by cries of 'This isn't the coffee stop!'. Down the hill we went and on up to Newlands Corner and a proper café.

The start of the next section over to Albury was marked by the sight of four men lurking in the undergrowth. Further investigation revealed large hawks on their gloved arms and some of us were lucky to see one of the birds of prey swoop from a nearby tree onto one of the gloves. The walk continued through pretty villages before the path ascended through woodland, the sun low in the sky and blinding at times. We had been told that this pre-lunch section was the longest of the day, so stomachs were rumbling as we descended from the wooded hills into Shamley Green. Pubs were sighted, hopes raised, then dashed as we walked past - a tradition of the Christmas walk is that the route and stopping places are kept secret.

Finally the front markers were seen to turn into the Jolly Farmer in Bramley - and what a good choice it turned out to be. Excellent food, a dining area interestingly decorated for the festive season and we were even observers of a bride and groom leaving the church opposite as we laced up our boots for the afternoon. This saw us proceeding in the opposite direction to our known destination back in Shalford. The weather was still fine and mild, although the wind became colder and stronger as the day wore on. The tracks became muddier as we descended - now approximately heading towards Shalford! The sun went down and torches were used to negotiate the paths back to the A281. Spirits again took a knock as we reached the main road to be told 'Bramley, our lunch-stop, is only half a mile down there'! A whole afternoon's walking to progress half a mile?

But there in the distance were the red twinkling lights of the tea stop (Tony's flashing festive headgear). Mulled wine, homemade mince pies and jam tarts were very welcome and fortified the merry band for the last few miles back along the canal to our starting point.

The mud contributed to the most bizarre incident of the day. While negotiating a particularly sticky path, Janet had one of her soles partly sucked off by the mud. Tony answered her cries for string and had three attempts at tying the damaged footwear together, before Janet gave up, pulled off the flapping sole and continued the walk sole less (but certainly not 'soulless').

Thanks are due to Louise and Tony for organising and leading such a memorable Christmas walk - finished off by an excellent Christmas dinner at The Parrot that evening.

Andy Fogell

Christmas Walk Saturday 9th December 2006



Country pursuits!



I wonder who they are?

Volunteers Walk Wednesday 8th Nov. 2006



On a grey, overcast morning nine of the usual mid-week suspects plus myself, Chris, a nurse with a day off and two long-distance runners met at St Martha's west car park at 9.30am. The 13 of us plus one K9 named Timba went south of St Martha's past Chilworth Manor and the old gunpowder factories to cross the A248 and head into Blackdown Forest. I had warned everyone that I had a better than evens chance of taking a wrong path in this featureless forest and this duly happened but Tony Cartwright corrected my (minor) error and we exited Blackheath and made our way to Brook as planned. We then went past Farley Heath to north of Peaslake regrestfully not having the fine views of the South Downs that this walk usually affords. Then onto the 'Volunteers' pub in Sutton Abinger for an early lunch.

During a very good lunch the first shafts of sunlight came through the pub windows promising a brighter afternoon. About 1.30pm we went round Paddington Mill to Abinger Hammer and then through Shere, Silver Wood, over the A248 again and onto Water Lane cottages. As it was only mid-afternoon we felt certain that we could get tea at Newlands Corner so we went up the long track, known as Water Hill, and were duly rewarded with tea and cakes.

Then the NDW took us back to our cars via St Martha's church, which was, unusually, open. About 17 enjoyable miles. My thanks to everyone (plus K9) for your company

Don Bolton

Winter Tanners Sunday 14th Jan.2007



Marshals

John Westcott, start and closing

Dave Challenger, start and checkpoint 1

Pat Challenger and Keith Wilson, checkpoint 1

Reg. Chapman, Nigel Baraclough and Bill Thompson, checkpoint 2

Peter and Betty Waterhouse and Anne O'Mara, checkpoint 3

The route was created by John Westcott and checked by Dave Challenger

Well I did predict a fine day for the 30th event in last year's report, so now I am having delusions that I might be the new Nostrodamus. Should I try commodity speculation; or the betting shop next? Given that we have had 3 weeks of rain and wind, rain and gales, I was expecting rain and hurricanes and that a kit check would require a ball and chain as essential equipment to stop participants being blown away. In the event the only complaint could be that the going was slightly soft in places.

Indeed it was such a pleasant day that there were few problems and even those participants who decided to invent their own routes all got back OK and enjoyed the day.

The checkpoint teams operated with their usual efficiency and the only disappointment was that not all the biscuits were eaten. Perhaps having done our bit to encourage exercise we should look to healthy eating and provide diced carrot and cold sprouts - only joking. Checkpoint 2 should also have had a supply of Winalot as it seems to be in the middle of the dog-walking centre of England. I understand that some canines left their own signature at the checkpoint. No doubt they are the type of dogs who have fry-ups in front of the TV whilst downing a bowl of lager, rather than the super-fit hounds that completed our event. For the first time, I believe, more than half the entrants entered the 20-mile route, 133 with 115 on the 30-miles. The 30 is still popular and the growth in the 20 reflects to some extent people trying-out the event. Congratulations to all who took part and don't forget a pencil note in the diary for 13th Jan. 2008 when I predict the weather will be ...

Barry Harrison

Mission accomplished

Four months ago, I made a casual remark to a stranger and suddenly found myself in a whirlpool of meetings, phone calls, correspondence (my mail is nearly 3 inch thick) and visits! This all concerns the proposed closure of footpath 139 at Brook, Surrey.

This was my first involvement in anything like this, and I soon found out that things are not just black or white, or even right or wrong, it is how devious one can be! At the meeting at Guildford Council, Mr Taylor of the Surrey County Council told us that the path (sorry, the public right of way) was impassable due to fallen trees, nettles and dangerous rabbit burrows and badger sets. We had a site meeting the next day. I got to path 139 1½ hours early to try to force my way through and fill up the holes (that's not being devious). I was amazed. It was a lovely sunny day, the wide track was a carpet of golden dry leaves and I managed to find a couple of rabbit burrows high up on the bank. There was nothing to do, so I just sat and admired the view to the North Downs. The inspector, in her new wellingtons, and everyone else arrived, and I think that it was the clearly visible state of the path that decided it. Although, considering we were fighting multi-millionaires, and, believe it or not, The Ramblers Association, it was fingers crossed until mid-January. We won!

John Lay sent a letter from the LDWA. The Open Spaces Society were involved, as were many local people. Some, who one thought of as dog-walkers (there were lots of these), turned out to be retired Government Officials and Lawyers.

It pays to keep fighting

Mervyn Harvey

A3 Hindhead Tunnel

On October 27th 2006 the Secretary of State gave the go-ahead for the A3 tunnel at Hindhead. Preparatory work starts now: tunnelling starts in March 2008 with a final completion date set for August 2011.

More information at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/England/southern_counties/6245735.stm.

Alternatively, peruse a very comprehensive leaflet (with detailed map) at the Devil's Punchbowl NT café whilst enjoying an excellent bacon butty on brown!

In terms of the Punchbowl Marathon route, my reading of the map shows a new underpass to carry the footpath from Hole Farm across the A3.

Tony Cartwright