



Surrey Group

# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009



## Walton-on-the-Hill



### 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

## The Alan Blatchford Memorial Seat; Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel



### New members of the Surrey Group

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

Rachel	<b>Birchall</b>	Hounslow	27472
Graham	<b>Davies</b>	Hounslow	27674
Kay	<b>Koeslag</b>	Surbiton	27659
Kathryn	<b>Morton</b>	Swanmore	27633
Liza	<b>Mouton</b>	Weybridge	27679
Maria	<b>Oinn</b>	Basingstoke	26353
David	<b>Rogers</b>	Camberley	27738
John	<b>Sykes</b>	Purley	27568

### Autumn Weekend 2 – 5 October

This year the weekend will be centered on Swanage, Purbeck House Hotel, and the walks will be in the Purbeck Hills. Holiday Fellowship use this hotel for their Purbeck Hills walking.

The cost will be £172.80 per person dinner, bed, and breakfast. Packed lunches, £5.50 per person, will be available to purchase from the Hotel each day for those who require them.

As is our custom we will plan a half-day's walk on the Friday afternoon followed by two one-day walks on the Saturday and Sunday. It is possible that we will be able to plan a morning walk for Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October before people leave for home. There is also the possibility of incorporating a steam train ride into one of the walks.

A provisional booking has been made for five double rooms (twin-bedded) and four single rooms making a total of 14 places.

A deposit of £30 per person is required by end February for those wishing to enjoy this walking weekend.

Will those who will be coming please let me know as soon as possible and send me a cheque, payable to P Waterhouse, for the £30 deposit?

Further news will be given in the Summer 2009 Newsletter

**P Waterhouse**

## **Semaphore Towers Walk.**

This is a new walk I am designing to link the sites of all the semaphore towers, built in the 1820's, to pass messages between the Admiralty in London & Portsmouth Dockyard. These towers worked from 1824 till 1846, when they were replaced by the electric telegraph, following the railway.

The Admiralty originally built a chain of shutter telegraphs between London & Portsmouth, which started operating in 1796. After 1814, when Napoleon was exiled to the Isle of Elba, the line was closed down. However, experiments then started on a new system & the line of Semaphore Towers was built.

My walk follows the Semaphore Towers, rather than the shutter telegraphs, as there is more to see!

The walk starts at Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, and ends at HMS Victory in Portsmouth. My aim is not to take the most direct route, but to use as interesting paths as possible, between each site. The route is 94 miles long in all.

I have done a route description of the whole route and am walking it out with the Surrey Group in the hope that they will find bits that aren't clear. We have done 3 walks so far, & have now reached Godalming.

The 1<sup>st</sup> one, on May 31<sup>st</sup>, set out from Trafalgar Square & through St James's Park, where we were met by the band of the Guards. They were practicing for the Queen's Birthday & we couldn't persuade the police to let us through the parade, even though we said we had to get to Portsmouth! The walk went past the site of the 1<sup>st</sup> station, now the new Saatchi Gallery & we had a long stretch by the river Thames, where we stopped at the Ship, a very pleasant Young's pub by Wandsworth Bridge. We lost a couple of people here – but the rest of us carried on through Putney Heath & Wimbledon Common to reach the Hogsmill river. Here we gave Gillian a new adventure by getting her to ride on a London bus.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> stage started by using the Thames Downs Link path & a set of tricky paths to reach Semaphore House on Telegraph Hill, right behind Hinchley Wood station. Just past here, John Lay took us into the Foley Arms, a splendid Young's pub in Claygate. We then went across Esher Common, & by linked paths through the rich Fairmile estate, to have tea in Cobham. Refreshed, we reached the only remaining 4 story Semaphore Tower, still in existence, on Chatley Heath. Unfortunately, Surrey Wildlife Trust have stopped opening it regularly, so we couldn't get inside. We finished at Horsley station.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> stage had us go through Sheepleas, where I'd made a hash of the description by mistyping 60m as "600m"! I went back the following week to redo my description. It was a very simple route from then on – via the NDW to Newlands Corner, for a café lunch, & the N Downs to Pewley Hill in Guildford, to pass another Semaphore Tower. Then by the Wey towpath to Godalming. We had a last touch of excitement when we had to retreat from our path to Godalming station, as the police had blocked the path (we later discovered, because of a knife attack)

The next 3 stages are in this programme and will go to Fernhurst, the wildest stretch of the walk to Rowlands Castle with the finishing stage on August 15<sup>th</sup>, when we should celebrate by HMS Victory.

*Keith Chesterton*

## **Eastern EXPLORATION**

### **No 3 in a series of Mini Tanners social walks**

**Wednesday 15th October 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 intended to be based on the 1981 Winter Tanners. Bearing in mind the first 2 were based on the 1976 and 1977 events respectively, the more mathematically astute among you will have observed this was out of sequence. Although it was my initial intention to take each Winter Tanners in order for the series, I have since decided to pick and choose to give a variety of areas and also not to try to stick rigidly to the original route, in fact, I will be looking to use some of the nice paths I have rejected as unsuitable for challenge events for one reason or another.

1981 was the last Tanners Marathon route Alan Blatchford devised. He gave me the trace map 3 days before he died for me to develop the route description for the Winter Tanners. I called this social walk the Eastern Exploration because, as far as I am aware, 1981 was the first Tanners Marathon 30 (definitely the first Winter Tanners) that went east of the A24. The Tanners Marathon had at that time had 50 mile biannual events in which participants, before going on the 30 mile route, did a 20 mile loop which always used Epsom Downs/Banstead Heath/Colley Hill and this was a means of introducing the area to the 30 milers. 1981 was a non 50 consecutive year.

The section of the 1981 route I had in mind included a non dual carriageway crossing of the A24 which I would not use now even on a social walk let alone a challenge walk. As my idea to alleviate the problem proved to be unsatisfactory I had to adjust the route somewhat to the extent that it did not look much like the original 1981 route even though it was aiming at the same area. Having abandoned any semblance of accuracy I also decided to do the route in reverse. This was mainly my compassionate nature coming to the fore to get the more strenuous climbs over before the lunch stop. One compensation though, it has formed the basis of a new Winter Tanners route and this was used for 2009.

There were 9 people assembled for the start in Crabtree Lane Car Park. Examination of the sky (through the trees) prompted some to put on waterproofs but it stayed mainly dry throughout the day. Setting off through the woods and fields to Burford Bridge, the tough ascents were soon encountered over the northern ridges of Box Hill.

Through to Headley Heath going round a pretty valley to show the heath off to best effect. A diversion had to be made to avoid a makeshift pen where the highland cattle were in consultation with their chiropodist. Then a stop in the main car park to inspect and indulge in the wares of the new snacks caravan. The nice new chrome counter and green livery does not quite have the character of the old dented cream and brown abandoned caravan but the welcome and quality of food and drink is just as good.

To avoid a grotty bridleway the route went across some fields with a series of stiles (you have to have one or the other). A plunge to go along the bottom of the North Downs scarp before another stiff ascent up that scarp on to Colley Hill. Going over the motorway, Jackie tried to take the bridge picture but she did not seem to get cooperation from one of her models. I took a photo from the next footbridge over the motorway but even with the zoom lens it was too far away.

The lunch stop was at the Sportsman Mogador. It so happened that the waitress had only started at the pub that morning and they were fairly busy so even though I had pre ordered the food and the party got there within 3 minutes of the ETA we had to wait some time before we got served. One person decided to solve the problem by claiming food which somebody on the next table had ordered.



Over Banstead Heath to Walton-on-the Hill. As the total distance of the walk was a little in excess of 21 miles, rather than the 20 miles advertised, there was provision at this point to take a short cut but nobody wanted to do this. So on to Epsom Downs, along Stane Street, turning off to go on the fenced bridleway between the fields of Cherkely Court and through Givons Grove Housing Estate - I do not think it is council.

Escaping from the environs of how the other half (probably a little under half) lives, necessitated a crossing of the A24. Even with the advantage of it being a dual carriageway at this point, it was only by virtue of a kind motorist stopping that enabled the party to cross.

So through Norbury Park where a crossing of the River Mole, I hope, provided a fix for those with a social walk picture bridge addiction. I have come to the conclusion it is easier to join them. One last climb up to Norbury Park House then a diversion off the drive to look at the viewpoint in the gathering gloom (the prominent feature of the photos taken being the car headlights on the A24) before returning to the Crabtree Lane Car Park.

*John Westcott*

## **The Blueball Beckons**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

**or**

## **The walk with and without John**

Twelve walkers including Timba set out from Holly Lane car park near Chipstead to traverse the rolling farmland and golf courses between there and the North Downs Way. The weather was still in Indian summer mode as we set out on a route which our leader assured us contained no hills, only hillocks. A relatively steep ascent was encountered within the first two miles, but the initial prediction held true for the rest of the walk – until the last stretch back to the car park.

The morning coffee break was taken in a sheltered glade provided with large logs for seats, which leader John had transported to that very spot for our relaxation – so he claimed! On over Banstead and Walton Heaths to lunch in glorious sunshine at the Blueball at Walton on the Hill. The afternoon walk took us over the noisy M25 to the North Downs at Colley Hill – fortunately a brief ramble along the top rather than an ascent of the south face. Back over the motorway, through Kingswood and back into farmland on route to the car park.

The walk, in ideal weather for late October, showed us some of the beautiful countryside to be found within the M25. It was ably led by John Lay standing in at short notice for the absent John Dixon – we send him our best wishes and that the scenery in Patagonia matches the delights of our walk today.

*Andy Fogell*

## Another afternoon around Ashtead. Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Departing from Agates Lane twelve members, including one member from London Group, set off on a fairly quiet October afternoon in the direction of Ashtead Common. Ashtead, meaning the homestead among ash trees, boasts a very extensive Common comprising 210 ha (519 acres) including 26 ha (64 acres) of woodland. It is covered with ash, birch, willow, oak and a thick undergrowth of bracken, and bears witness to grazing and timber felling in the past. While relatively quiet now, the common and woods were once a very busy area, with certain WW1 Army regiments being billeted in Ashtead, making parts of the common a parade ground. In the period between the wars, the common was used extensively by children from inner London, who used to arrive by special excursion trains. With tea rooms situated close by, on a balmy day the area must have seemed like heaven to the hundreds of children from the grimy London suburbs. We passed numerous City Posts which marked the point at which duty became payable on coal coming into London. They were set up about 30 km (20 miles) from the City in 1861, some being painted, and some being located by the railway remained unpainted. After suffering a long period of neglect after the war, suffering numerous fires in the droughts of the 1970s and the outbreak of dutch elm disease, the common was left in a parlous state. In 1991 the common passed into the ownership of the City of London Corporation, who manage 200 ha and it is now National Nature Reserve. Many of the trees devastated by fire have never recovered.



We traversed the common to its eastern extremity bordering Epsom Common, and we re-crossed the railway line and made our way through Ashtead Park. The Park is part of the grounds of Ashtead Park House built originally in 1684 for Sir Robert Howard, a not particularly amiable gentleman of fashion, who entertained royalty, including Georges II and III and William III. A nice park with two lakes interspersed among pastures and woods. We walked on by St Giles Church, built originally in 1125 but since then extensively restored and transformed inside and out. Headley Court was our next destination, a rehabilitation centre for service personnel. The writer remembers very well a visit made to Headley Court with a RAF keep fit instructor over thirty years ago! He did not distinguish himself on the neck flips over the horse in the gymnastic hall, but remembers very little else after being invited to the bar! (Dave will verify). We went on by Tyrrels Wood golf course, along Stane Street, being the original course of the Roman road from London to Chichester, and back to Agates Lane where a wonderful tea was awaiting us prepared by Pat. Many thanks to Dave and Pat for another great afternoon around Ashtead, and for their hospitality.

*John Stovell*

### **Walk from Ardingly – Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2008**

At 8.30am I, my wife Valerie, Ted, Molly, Ian, Kieth and Dave gathered at a lay-by opposite the South of England Showground, Ardingly in Sussex for a walk led by Jackie Barker. The weather could be described as *good for walking*. Waterproofs stayed firmly in our haversacks. “Just a few little spots of mud – but mainly dry underfoot.” Jackie reassured us. And away we went. The course was a figure of eight. Firstly we walked east then turning slowly west on a cross country route past Wakehurst place. Almost immediately we began we were in – yes you’ve guessed it - mud!

However after turning west we were on higher ground heading to pretty village of Balcombe. There Jackie gave us some home made cake which went down well. Almost as far as our muddy boots. After this the route made its way south east through glorious woods and fields to Ardingly reservoir. Views were spectacular. A short climb from the reservoir took us to Ardingly village itself where having completed over 12 miles our lunch stop was the Royal Oak Public House where a good selection of food was available, all having the bonus of a good warm at the same time.

The air was a little chilly in the afternoon but the weather stayed fine as we set off through the magnificent Ardingly College and off across country towards Horstead Keynes. Again we had great views and walked by a number of pretty lakes and mill ponds. Later in the afternoon we arrived at the Bluebell Railway line and Horstead Keynes Station, this being one of three stations on the line which is owned by the Bluebell railway who run regular steam trains. We could hear the whistles and puff – puff sound during our approach. The next part of the route was alongside the track and we were rewarded by two passenger steam pulled trains full of waving passengers passing us almost in touching distance.

Soon we left the railway and headed west back to Ardingly. Val decided to take a quick route down a hill – on her behind when she slipped but was fine, apart from now having muddy trousers. The latter part of the walk was changed near to West Hoathly due to darkness coming in so we finished the last half mile or so on road leading us back to the South of England Showground. The time now was about 4.30pm. Everyone parted after enjoying a good fun social walk of almost 20 miles.

Jackie, Ted, Valerie and I went back to the Royal Oak for a well deserved pint (or two) and a meal. Great!

## **Christmas Walk Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2008**

As Joan Wrenn and I walked from her house to the centre of Guildford at quite an early hour on the morning of the Group Christmas walk we both commented (probably to reassure ourselves) that it would not continue to rain all day (optimistic or what) and when we met up with Keith Chesterton he assured us that it would rain all day. However, the Surrey Group being stoic, 26 members arrived at the start point, and while being dressed for the weather several members sported appropriate hats for the season. I decided not to wear mine, as I didn't want to have red dye running down my face.

Shortly after setting off it was obvious that there was as much water underfoot as there was overhead, but thanks to the wonders of Gortex feet stayed mainly dry (except when we had to go through what appeared to be unmarked rivers. I would have liked to have waxed lyrically about the views in the morning, but in the main they remained hidden. When we were climbing up quite a steep path with water rushing down I did hear Tony saying to some one that he thought it was preferable to climb the hill instead of being on the flat in mud (I'm still out on that one Tony!)

We were promised a coffee stop and this appeared like a mirage at Abinger Hammer. Here the pub provided us with unlimited amounts of tea and coffee, along with ginger nuts and custard creams. We were able to dry out slightly; we all left feeling restored thinking that we would last the day.

Between coffee and lunch we tramped through open fields and woods, all very wet, but as usual the conversation was good as people caught up with news, and talked of future events and our lunch stop at the Volunteer soon appeared, Reg. and Avril had arrived by car, and a good lunch was enjoyed by all. Several people decided to call it a day here and when I stood outside the pub ready to go I must admit it seemed a very attractive alternative.

Tony, as always very good at keeping the best till last, had decided that the route would start going steeply downhill just as it was getting dark and several people took the speedy route down through the wood this caused the rest of us to be very careful to ensure we stayed upright.

I feel it is worth noting that the rain did stop for a full 20 minutes at this point.

Our last refreshment stop was in a large barn; several of us remembered this was a checkpoint on the Surrey Summits. Mulled wine and mince pies were the order of the day, thank you Louise and Tony for arranging this. Wonderful! By this time darkness had come down so torches were the order of the day, on the way back to the car park we waded through fields and a river that had spread its banks.

Thanks to Louise and Tony for arranging not only a successful walk, but also the dinner, which we attended later in the evening.

Tea, coffee and hot showers restored our equilibrium on arrival at the hotel followed by good food.

John Lay gave a vote of thanks for the day, which agreed that while it was very wet, it had been enjoyable and a great time had by all.

PS. Perhaps we could repeat this route on a nice warm spring day

*Glenys Kirkpatrick*



Spring 2009

### **Blueball Beckons Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October**



### **Christmas Walk Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December** **Water, water everywhere**



## Winter Tanners Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Jan.2009

Driving to Leatherhead was stunning, a glorious sunrise behind me and the moon still up ahead. Days like this always make it such a pleasure to have our health to be going out to participate in such events in our beautiful countryside.

Fiona, Dave and John were all wrapped up as they took on their duties of checking us in and out in the very chilly car park which was bustling with runners and walkers signing in or moving off.

I had a new buddy for the day as mine was crook and doing the shorter option on this occasion. We were a group of about 8 runners as we set off in various states of dress, some long legs, sleeves and hats, others in just shorts. Much care was taken as very slippery underfoot with the snow that had been down for several days followed by some very severe frosts. Time zipped along quickly when there is a group of you and nattering together, just have to be careful you concentrate on the route description.

Decided even the toughest were not prepared to run UP the steps at the start of the steep climb up Box Hill but gave us a wonderful opportunity to look back and admire the amazing views around us. The large Yew tree ahead proved quite elusive at the top of the hill and this is where the group now split up, many of us carried on too far - trying to make the yew trees and paths fit the route description, **it never works!!**. Anyway found our way to valley bottom and hairpin bend and we were on our way again, our large group now just TWO, with others ahead or behind somewhere.

Coming up the heath land towards 1<sup>st</sup> checkpoint met with many early dog walkers all wrapped up from the chilling wind. Have to say running I had now warmed up totally; we could see other competitors on our left coming down on the other side of the valley. We arrive at Headley heath CP1, the marshals looked frozen all bundled up in warm clothing dishing out drinks and biscuits. All very confusing when we moved off as there were runners and walkers coming towards us – who *was* lost! After asking them, found out it was the 20 milers coming into CP1 from a different direction.

Later crossing Mogador golf course it was impossible to see the course with snow coving it all so no golfers out today. Now starting to pass some of the 30 mile walkers that must have set off in the dark sometime to get this far ahead of us and they were not hanging around. My Buddy lost his glasses as they got flicked off by over hanging branch, this was definitely in my interest to help him find them otherwise ALL the reading was then down to me. Glasses found and straightened we cross the road at Walton, with the wonderful sight of all the Seagulls sitting on top of the frozen pond we now headed for Epsom Downs up past the white railings round the track and into a very exposed CP2 at Tattenham Corner and not a race horse in sight. 3 marshals looked and confirmed they *were* frozen, as they took our numbers fed and watered us. We did not hang around long enough to get cold and headed south ish, across the Downs, the wind blowing very strongly against us. There appeared to be hoards of dog walkers ALL owning several German shepherd dogs all running chaos everywhere. Having spent 16 miles without seeing many pedestrians so far that day we wanted to make a move on and get out the crowds to peace and quiet again. We see one lone marshal standing on the track adorned with yellow bib on his own – he said he was on duty at a crossing - for horses, he definitely had a lonely and cold job that day, so thank you to you who ever you were.

Followed the Thames Down Link for a number of miles at this point, taking us down a steep path that had now become quite 'claggy' on the bottom of our shoes as the ground had started to thaw. This then led us past the steps we climbed some hours previously up to Box Hill, then passed Rykers café along A24 to turn off and follow the NDW which of course had to involve a long climb to the top. But this also gave us the stunning views around us including the vineyard of Denbies below and the South Downs in the distance. The roads still very icy and precarious for 3 cyclists coming down the road towards us as we passed the church heading to last CP at Steers Field NT car park. Cold and hot refreshments available here also dried fruit that made a lovely change, just hope the dates did not work to quickly. Here we joined up with another member of our starting group, who had got left behind from his group when he had gone for a pit stop. So we said our thanks and goodbyes to the cold but cheerful marshals and headed on with 3 of us now, down past Tanners Hatch youth hostel and the newly erected memorial seat with 5 miles to go. Just after this, we nearly went wrong by following the route the event normally always returned on, rather than reading the instructions properly! Luckily 2 of us were on the ball and we could smell the finish now and most of it seemed down hill as well.

Marshals were still there, huddled in Leatherhead c/p checking us in after yet another GREAT day.

I can only say a **BIG THANK YOU** to **all** the marshals that stood outside for many hours feeding and watering us on such a chilly day, I only heard yet again, great reports from all people taking part.

*Jackie Barker*

### Checkpoint 1, Headley Heath



## Offers of help required      Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May WESSEX 100 –

Surrey Group are hosting CP2, GR 740253 in Steep Village Hall, 14.6 miles from the start at Eggars school in Alton. The CP will open for walkers at 13.00 hours and close at 1700.

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. Approx arrival time for marshals to set up will be 1100. The hall has a large car park.

The menu will include:

- \* a variety of sandwiches, jam, marmite, salad, cheese (to be prepared at the hall)
- \* Jaffa cakes
- \* Bananas
- \* Tea and squash

(Food and equipment will be delivered to the hall)

**Offers of help** - please contact Janet Chapman 01276 65169/07770 807137 or email [janet@the-chapmen.co.uk](mailto:janet@the-chapmen.co.uk) who is co-coordinating the Marshals for the Checkpoint.

Offers of help so far have been received from:

Elizabeth Bryan	Peter Edwards	Ray & Rosemary Rowe
Reg Chapman	Jackie Griffin	Ann Sayer
Keith Chesterton	Molly Groundsell	Avril Stapleton
John Dixon	Chris Hayward	Elaine Edwards
John Lay		

More information about the event can be found on line [www. Wessex100.org.uk](http://www.Wessex100.org.uk)

## Goodbye from LDWA runners to MABAC:

The decline in runners from LDWA Surrey Group taking part in the monthly cross country runs organised by MABAC Running League has recently come to a close.

MABAC, started up by Alan Blatchford in 1977 and joined shortly after by Ralph Henley's group from Matthew Arnold School, continues to attract some 150 runners each month at various Surrey locations, but the LDWA group had dwindled down to zero at the end of 2008.

Back in the mid 1980s LDWA had around 20 regular participants, among them Bryon Alden, Keith Chesterton, Dave Challenger, Mark Pickard, Peter Short, James Crawford, Des Yeabsley, John Westcott, John Robinson, Kathleen Wartnaby, Tony Cartwright and Mike Mardle.

The runs, usually of approximately 5 miles, are operated on an informal points basis with no prizes or entry fees and popular locations include Ockham Common, Lightwater Country Park, Holmwood, Peaslake and Puttenham Common.

The first event of the year, and the best attended, is held in Windsor Park.

Even though LDWA now ceases to play an active part Surrey Group members are always welcome to sign up on the day with any of the remaining groups for a late morning blast of fresh Surrey air. It is also worth remembering that the runs are suitable for families with a shorter course for joggers and children.

Details from:

*Erik Falck-Therkelsen 01932 347639 email: [surik@btinternet.com](mailto:surik@btinternet.com)*