



Surrey Group

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2006



Wotton Estate, fish pond



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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Surrey Group LDWA

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Editorial

As I write this editorial it is raining, windy and a touch on the chilly side; in other words it is anything but the sort of fine spring day that is usually experienced in mid May. However, such minor points do not deter the Surrey Group walkers as can be clearly seen in the descriptions of the Punchbowl Marathon and the Mugswell Meander given in this edition of the Newsletter.

This edition contains a description of Part 1 of the Portsmouth Marathon with the Part 2 due to take place on July 1st. This walk is not entirely a new concept for the group as there have been walks in London in the past but it does signify that the group is not hidebound by the concept that enjoyable social walks must take place in the countryside.

The changes that the group are seeking to initiate in the near future are described in the following article written by our chairman and one of the changes can be seen in the new format of the group programme contained in this edition. As can be seen, the format of the programme has changed and a new innovation is that a map showing the start point of a walk can be obtained by a simple click of the mouse button (not available in the printed version). A further advantage for those taking the email version is that the photographs it contains will be in colour and not black and white.

There are 33 walks listed in the new programme. The Guildford Boundary Walk will take place on Sunday 1st October. This walk is linked with the 40th anniversary of the University of Surrey in Guildford gaining its Royal Charter. The marshals' walk for this event takes place on 2nd September. Bill Grace has decided to follow Ian McLeod's initiative with two walks to note his 75th birthday on the 29th July and 5th August. It is worthy of note that these two walks to mark his 75th birthday are the two longest social walks in this programme! Ian has a new initiative, the Guildford Parishes Walk, which will take place on Saturday 26th August. This walk will visit all the 24 civil parishes within the Borough of Guildford. Parts 6 and 7 of the Surrey Border Walks are listed as is Part 6 of the Downsman revisited, and Keith has discovered three more Surrey Tops to add to his list, Sunday 24th September.

What the well-dressed walker wears!



Changes to Membership and Newsletter arrangements

Those present at the AGM will recall an item tasking the Membership Secretary and Chair to formulate a proposal which would address the issue of not knowing when one's membership had expired. In considering this we were also mindful of taking the opportunity to reduce our admin. load where possible and make the whole basis of joining us simpler and more attractive to new members. To cut a long story short and after much discussion with individual members, looking at what other groups do and thinking how we might best exploit our new web-site, a proposal based on free membership with email distribution of our Newsletter was proposed and agreed. A Newsletter postal service as at present would be retained for those wishing to pay.

The advantages of this are considerable:-

1. No annual membership fee means no renewal requirements and the issue of membership expiry disappears
2. New members can join by completing and submitting an online form – considerably reducing membership admin. (no details are held online – the data is simply auto-emailed to the Membership Secretary for him to update the membership database)
3. The same online form can be used by members who wish to inform the Mem.Sec. of a change in details (e.g. change of Tel.no. etc)
4. Newsletter to be emailed to the Surrey group mailing list (reduced Newsletter admin.)
5. Postal Newsletter service retained (at cost) for those that want it. The posted Newsletter will, as usual, include our walks programme (printed from the web at the time of going to press).
6. The 'definitive' walks programme will be that on the web with any walk updates being circulated on the mailing list.

If you have not yet taken a look at the new web site then please do (address below) since it will give you the feel and thrust of what we are trying to achieve in reducing admin. and making ourselves more attractive to new members – an increasing number of whom will have Internet access.

The new arrangements will not start in earnest until Jan 2007 so nothing changes until then with the exception that the Newsletter will be emailed as well as posted. There will be an insert in a future Newsletter for completion by those who wish to continue to receive their Newsletter by post after this year.

This brings me to a final point. We have about 120 paid-up members with about 75 email addresses on the Surrey group mailing list. If you have an active email address and you have not been receiving mails from the mailing list (e.g. walk updates, agendas, discussion items etc) and you would like to then simply visit www.LDWAsurrey.co.uk click 'membership' and subscribe yourself to the list. It really is that simple!

I hope this helps to put you in the picture of where we are, what we are trying to achieve and why. My thanks to all who have contributed to this debate, with special thanks to our Membership Secretary Reg Chapman.

If you have any questions please contact me (maybe via the 'contacts' page on the web!)

Tony Cartwright, Chair

Punchbowl Marathon; Sunday 12th February

Its called Murphy's Law, a rule of thumb that states that if there is a Surrey LDWA Event that is planned to take place at any time in February then it pours down in buckets on the day and forget about the fine days of winter sunshine that we enjoyed earlier in the week. This day was really memorable for the quality of the mud and the level of the rainfall. Well the mud and the mire were certainly five star rating and the rain kept on all day, from what I heard from some who survived it all.

There was a time, about ten minutes before the 7.30am start when we had only about 40 walkers in the hall and I was beginning to feel just a little bit desperate, but then, suddenly, within the space of about 30 minutes it was all change, people got out of bed and the invasion really got under way. I was also told that the trains from Waterloo had taken a long time to get started, which meant that our friends from London were making a late start.

After the last runner had disappeared across the cricket pitch it turned out that we had about the same numbers as last year, I should have known that a spot of rain wasn't going to put you off.

I'm glad to say that we had as many runners as LDWA walkers, it's good to know that there are several running and orienteering clubs in Surrey and SW London that now recognise this event as good cross-country training: long may it continue

Meanwhile congratulations to you all for taking part, we hope that you enjoyed it and that you will all come back again next year.

Marshals

Equipment, Checkpoint closing

Reg Chapman

Start. Registration. Certificate

Ann Sayer, Les Maple, Peter Waterhouse, John Westcott

Pre-entries

Gillian Bull

Caterer (am)

Elizabeth Bryan

Car Parking

Peter Short

CP1, Little Cowdray Farm

Dave & Pat Challenger, Mervyn Harvey, Fiona Cameron

CP2, Tilford Village Hall

Tony & Louise Cartwright, Joan Wrenn,

Glenys Kirkpatrick, Molly Groundsell

CP3, Marwick Hall

Richard Ireson, Bill Grace, Brian Haigh, Ray & Rosemary Rowe

CP4, The Moat Car Park

Dave & Pat Challenger, John & Sarah Stovell

Chichester Hall Caterers

Janet Chapman, Ian & Cindy McLeod, Erling Hansen,

Molly Groundsell, Chris Hayward

Body wagon

John Lay

Results

Tony Cartwright

Special thanks to Dave Challenger and Tony Cartwright for redefining the new route description. Thanks also to all marshals for their efforts in being there and making it all happen.

John Lay

Alastair Doyle of Guildford Orienteers emailed

Thanks for yesterday's event and a big thank you to the team involved who were so friendly and cheerful despite the inclement weather. As I lay in bed on Sunday morning at 6.30 (I am sure you were already up!) I could hear the rain on the windows and thought surely not, after such a dry day on Saturday! Come rain or shine the event just can't be missed, and like many others who took part I am sure we all had a great day out. The tracks were as wet as I have seen in a while and I was pretty well out of control on most descents and probably wouldn't have looked out of place in the Downhill at Turin! The reward of a hot shower, tea and food at the finish made the 30 miles all seem worthwhile, So thanks again and I shall make a note in my diary for next year.

Punchbowl Marathon, cont.

Erik Falck-Therkelsen writes

I wondered whether the Almighty, with clever prompting from Alan Blatchford and Chris Steer, had engineered the weather for this event to make it a true Surrey winter endurance test? After all, we had experienced the longest dry period in January and early February for many years and it only ended on the morning of the 12th.

Coming into the base of the Punchbowl in 2005 we had encountered a pretty chilling snow shower but on this occasion the area was enveloped in a heavy mist and rain was falling steadily for the rest of the day. Strange how slowly bone-dry ground is unable to absorb a few hours of rainwater and to make surfaces slippery as ice-rinks. As the day wore on, puddles appeared and familiar gullies turned into chutes of sludge and loose rock.

The Punchbowl has been my favourite long distance event for quite a few years now as it is always well organized with just the right amount of check-points and refreshments and the course always takes on some of Surrey's loveliest scenery. It is also held at the time of the winter when the weather could be at its most unpredictable; that in turn tests us all in equipping ourselves for all eventualities.

After a smooth registration at Chichester Hall walkers and runners set off in odd groups and, before long, slippery paths were testing our footwear grip. Crossing the A3 near Thursley is something of a chicken-run but safely across you only have to say hello to two docile bulls. Checkpoint 1 sheltered snugly in a barn and not long after we were into the Punchbowl. Kettlebury Hill opens up to a long ridge above Hankley Common and, just below, I pick out the area where in the mid 70s Alan Blatchford sent us off on the Masters' and Maidens' Marathon that proved to become an important forerunner to many larger city marathons.

Across Hankley Common golf course carefully avoiding two galloping horse riders and we closed in on Checkpoint 2, the familiar village hall and a good supply of food and drink. Here Tony C and Glenys K were busy in the rain recording congested groups of walkers and runners. There was more mud and slippery slopes before ascending Crooksbury Hill but from there onwards to Puttenham Common, more sandy paths take over. The "FR 10° 170y after pond" did cause some hesitation and spread a few of us over various parts of the common but eventually Checkpoint 3 was reached at Marwick Hall, once again well supplied with sustenance,

Quite a lot of slipping and sliding followed on the way to Elstead and beyond Checkpoint 4 at Moat Car Park, smartly arranged in a canopy tent. Skirting the western edge of Thursley nature reserve, we gradually navigated towards a second crossing of the A3 where the traffic shoots past at breakneck speed.

The finish is now getting close along very familiar paths and short road sections before emerging opposite the village church at Witley and then heading for the timekeeper on the veranda. Another Punchbowl completed quickly followed by a trip to the basement where, if you played your cards right, you might enjoy a lovely hot MIXED shower. The meal at the end may be basic but by golly baked beans and chips and a cup of tea never taste better.

Well done to all the organisers and helpers on the day. May this event continue its annual success.

Mugswell Meander Sunday 26th February

On 26th February 10 walkers set off from Reigate Hill car park under the careful leadership of John Dixon. We headed east along the *North Downs Way* heading straight into a band of light snow/sleet from the northeast! It was bitterly cold! We dropped down to Merstham, now dry and out of the wind, to turn north over the M25. Passing a modern plasticized imitation of Stonehenge at Gatton Park, we headed towards Banstead. Briefly the sun came out for our coffee stop where the ever-entrepreneurial Ian tried to sell a sheep to a passing tourist! Then south through Kingswood to the *Well House Inn* at Mugswell (locally known as Chipstead Valley). We arrived at noon, almost before they were open. Ian drank *Hogs Back* but John L found a beer named after Doom! All had jacket potatoes (except abstemious Dave who kept to Minestrone). John L, off course, had Spotted Dick and declared that he thoroughly recommended it (as we all agreed we would recommend the *Hill House Inn* for a further visit.)

Refreshed we headed south before turning west to skirt Mogador and across Banstead Heath to Walton on the Hill. The sun tried to appear and it was almost pleasant once out of the wind! Onwards to go under the M25 and past Headley Church. Then back past Walton to the NDW. In places the mud was of a high standard but John D, as leader, distinguished himself by refusing to take us up the sheer sides of Colley Hill but rather left the NDW to continue on the old *Pilgrims Way* to an easier ascent of Reigate Hill. Though mostly green, the sides of Reigate Hill still showed very small patches of snow that had not thawed that day. After almost 20 miles it was great to catch the NT tea counter still open, as we drank our tea on the open wooden benches the cold wind did little to extinguish the pleasure we had from this walk. The first part of the walk touched on an area of eastern Surrey that the group may have previously neglected; we thought it merited a further visit.

Our thanks to John Dixon for an enjoyable, if cold, walk.

Richard Ireson

Portsmouth City Marathon, Part 1 'Cream teas'



Blossoms in the Park Thursday 6th April

On a crisp spring morning thirteen walkers, including two from Thames Valley Group, and led by Gillian Bull commenced their walk with a circuit of Virginia Water. The lake is one and a half miles long, one third of a mile across at its widest point, the original marshland being drained and the lake created in 1746 by the Duke of Cumberland, aided by Paul Sandby. With wildlife in abundance, the views of the lake were, to say the least, impressive, especially so to the writer, for whom it was surprisingly new territory. We passed cascades, the cavern, and the ruins of a colonnade brought by George IV from the ruins of Leptis Magna in Tripoli, North Africa.

A break was taken beneath the statue of Albert, the Prince Consort, and we then traversed Smiths Lawn Polo Grounds before arriving at the heather gardens, banks of camellias, magnolias and a valley of daffodils stretching up the hillsides, and it was here that we quite rightly stopped for a photo call. The cold dry March had somewhat held back some of the blossom, but this magnificent array more than compensated for any lack of colour. Continuing by way of the Obelisk Pond, built by George II for his son, the Duke of Cumberland, on his return from Culloden, we duly retired for lunch at the Sun PH.

After lunch we continued by way of the Cow Pond, around Royal Lodge, the former home of the late Queen Mother, and into Windsor Great Park, where the scenery became less formal and more like open country. Windsor Great Park consists of upwards of 1500 acres, is stocked with fallow deer and lies to the south of the Castle. Across Snow Hill, the highest point in the park, we then encountered the equestrian statue of George III on his copper horse situated at the southern end of the Long Walk, with fine views of Windsor Castle and over London. Battling down the Long Walk into the teeth of the wind, we were grateful to make a left turn towards Prince of Wales Pond and the Gallop, where great herds of deer moved off, as one, on hearing our approach – what a majestic sight. On up Queen Anne's Ride to our third statue, namely that of our present Queen, erected in 2002 on her Golden Jubilee, but modelled on a much earlier likeness at the time of her Silver Jubilee. Then via Cumberland Lodge, and the Cow Pond, to tea at the Savill Garden Café. Finally a detour took us to view the Totem Pole, a 100ft pole erected in 1958 and carved from a 600 year old single red cedar. It was a gift from the Government of the Province of British Columbia in Canada and showed a family tree (forgive the pun!).

Back to the cars and our grateful thanks to Gillian for leading us on a great day's walking, which made one realise how fortunate we are to have such magnificent landscapes so close to London.

John Stovell



Trundle Trek 2nd April



A return to the South Downs to retrace the steps of Tony Youngs' 22 mile walk he led in 1980.

The start on Bignor was not the easiest of venues to find, even Janet's SATNOV led her astray, but she arrived with 5 minutes to spare. Dave welcomed walkers from Wessex, London and Thames Valley to join the Surrey group. A total of 13 and 'Timber' the Labrador set off at a brisk pace to get warmed up, as a chill wind seeped through to the bone whilst we were waiting at the start.

After 3 miles we dropped down to the A285 passing Dogkennel Cottages and bringing back memories of the "Downsman 100s" to a few of the group. We then climbed to the highest point in Sussex, 233m (766 ft) to feel the chill of the northeasterly wind. I am told you can see Blackdown from that point. We then turned south over downland to reach the lovely village of Singleton nestling in a valley.

As I recall, having been the only one of the current group who was present when it was first walked in 1980, we stopped for a refreshing pint in Singleton (possibly two!) and proceeded up the hill without noticing the incline. However this year we were deprived of our ale owing to the closure of the pub, and the hill seemed twice as steep as it was in 1980! If there is a next time I think I will bring a hip flask. The group were well spread out after the climb from Singleton until we gathered together before descending The Trundle. Going up it was so windy some had to stop talking, as you were unable to hear anything but the wind. At the top we were rewarded with a glorious view of Goodwood Racecourse. On descending to the road we were greeted by Pat in her car, she was to meet us later in a car park to provide a picnic of gratefully received piping hot soup, bread and teas.

From the car park we continued south until we reached Boxgrove Priory where we turned northeast, two miles on there was an option to visit Eartham Windmill (disused) which all except two took. We then continued a steady climb back to Bignor.

According to GPS we walked 22 miles at 2.9 mph with 92.5m (3030 ft) of ascent but it did not record how enjoyable the company and the walk was, despite not even seeing a PUB all day.

Oh dear, I forgot, the whole point of climbing The Trundle is, according to Tony, it affords views of Leith Hill, Beachy Head and the I.O.W. Personally, I didn't see any of them this year or in 1980, but I enjoyed every bit of the walk.

Our thanks to Dave Challenger, who led the walk, to Pat Challenger who provided the refreshments, and to Tony Youngs who created and led the walk in 1980.

Ian McLeod



**Portsmouth City Walks Marathon
First 10 North Portsmouth 05 May 2006**

As lonely LDWA Surrey Group members Dave Toogood and I were keen to show the visiting walkers that Portsmouth City can be as enjoyable to walk as the rural countryside, we did this with a green and pleasant route with innumerable attractive conglomerations checked by traffic and modernism weeds. This idealised map of the intriguing route we took. Overland and across, up and down exploring the open air places for the freedom of recreation surrounded by the rigours of civilising and working parks, playing fields, landscaped gardens, promenades, tree lined avenues, seafront, historic monuments, murals, pubs, sports etc etc toilets and one 100 meter hill.

Everyone set to when half for a prompt start through Portsmouth's old civil airfield. Now mostly hidden because of the Council's decision that grass runways would always open with civilisation growth. Then over Portsea Creek deepened for Naval sailing ships to escape from a blockaded Portsmouth Harbour, through the railway triangle and up to the top of Portdown Hill. As the walk progressed along the hilltop via South Portsmouth (1 July Walk), with its Spinnaker Tower and the Isle of Wight in the distance appeared in the morning with like a picture in a postcard quite a developing tray. Down through the densest chalk quarries to the first proper toilets. A walk stopping event was studying the usable toilet map of Portsmouth. Then through a huge sports field, under the A27 into ICB's landscaped mile of grounds and ponds recycled from North Harbour and flats. On to Gun Batteries and moor, like Stanshaw promenade built for Decatur's defence. Then a surprise to watch fast walking twice our speed, Hampshire walking, Hampton's in the Mountbatten Sports Centre outdoor track. Then good open air at the Green Post Pub. Ample refreshed onward to the whole Island way, a sea shore walk with an interesting local defence mile full of forts and time for posing for the digital camera enthusiasts. Good view of Portsmouth's two new brown hills of Hampshire rubble at Gosport, only 5 years old with the millions of years of Europe buckling the rocks to form Portdown Hill. Under the A27, at a mile full of sea life murals, up Northern Parade over high walk bridges to Victoria Lines Station. Here a defence of down concrete and cables. The Ranger gave a fascinating talk on the fortifications through 300 years and present day forts and found. Onwards to Hilsea Station for a period. An enjoyable walk with very friendly staff about this and that. Thanks to everyone who came and to the locals who helped to make it such a pleasing sunny day.

Paul Treacher
WALK LEADER

Reg Chapman recognised!!

It seems very timely that as Reg passes on the torch of responsibility for the Group's web we recognise Reg's significant contribution to the Group over very many years (to say nothing of his work at National level). Although unable to walk with us now Reg has always been the willing supporter for our Challenge Events and has often single-handedly underpinned support for Marshal's walks. My own recollection of Reg is finding him in the dead of night making bacon butties on the CP at Leith Hill or more lately tempting tired walkers to an extensive range of delicacies on Elstead Common on the occasion of the very first Surrey Tops Marshal's walk last year.

Reg has acted as Equipment Officer and Membership Secretary for many years. Hopefully the new membership arrangements might reduce the burden of the latter! Reg set up and administered the Group's web site when web sites were indeed a novelty.

On behalf of all the members Reg – many, many thanks – and we do look forward to seeing you in the woods again sometime!!!!

Tony Cartwright

The Chair presents Reg Chapman with a 'bottle' in recognition of his support for the Surrey Group and its activities over the years.



Guildford Parishes Walk Saturday 26th August

Distance 45 miles, circular in a clockwise direction from Wanborough station

Start 08.30

Options

18 miles to Effingham, return by train 16.03; arrive Wanborough 16.37

20 miles to Horsley, return by train 16.36; arrive Wanborough 17.07

25 miles to Clandon return by train 19.11; arrive Wanborough 19.37

33 miles to Guildford return by train 22.17; arrive Wanborough 22.23

Those walking beyond Guildford must make their own provision for transport as we will finish long before the trains wake up on Sunday morning