



Surrey Group

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008



Great crested grebes

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 to see more pictures of events, links to other groups and organisations, an archive of past events and lots of useful information

Editorial

With over 20 walks in the programme for the last six months of the year there should be something to please every one. Included is another of the former Winter Tanner's routes, the second and third of Keith's Semaphore Towers route, another Downsman revisited, our annual seaside stroll, and another trip around Ashted. For those who enjoy nighttime walking we have part of the Guildford Walkfest overnight on the 18/19th July. This programme also includes our annual 4-day event, which this year is in Hay-on-Wye staying at the strangely named, for the district, Baskerville Hall. We also have two memorial walks, one to Tony Youngs on 16th August and the other to Alan Blatchford on 15th October. Last, but not least in this programme of social walks, we have a 20-mile challenge walk, the Guildford Boundary, on 12th October.

Looking further ahead, the dates for the Xmas walk and dinner, the Surrey Inns Kanter, the Winter Tanners and the Punchbowl Marathon are included in the programme.

New members of the Surrey Group

The following members have joined the Surrey Group recently. Please welcome them on our walks

Derek	Bradshaw	London	27142
Gina	Coulson	Banstead	26284
Tony	Hopkins	Brentford	27037
Gill and Andy	Morris	Godalming	27061
Sue	Nash	Woking	27171
Pamela	Spencer-Smith	Woking	27195

Pooh Bridge 6th April 2008



The change that only a few days can bring

Friend Unite Again Sunday 6th April



Ericaceous Delights Thursday 10th April



Juliet's Mystery Tour Sunday 24th February

As we met on Ranmore Common the grey skies cleared to blue, and the sun started to shine with the promise of spring. The chill wind however reminded us that we would still need to wear at least 3 layers! A total of 18 humans and Juliet's dog, Harry, set off with a nice steady downhill track through Denbies, to the foot of Boxhill. From there we rounded the base of Box Hill to pick up the route of the Roman Road, Stane Street, and so to the top of Mickleham Downs. From the northern end of Mickleham Downs we descended to Cockshot Cottage and up and along the western edge of Headley Heath. The walk then took us southwards through Boxhill Village to join the North Downs Way above Brockham Quarries. We left the NDW to go through Boxhurst and then turned southwards to cross the A25 and into Betchworth Park. Soon we picked up the Greensand Way and followed it westwards around the southern edge of Dorking, our route took us past Juliet's house, and here Harry was dropped off, and Juliet's husband, Francis, joined us for the remainder of the walk. The walk continued along the Greensand Way to Westcott for lunch at the Crown. The bar staff were very welcoming and we all enjoyed a variety of fare from hearty soups to the fearsome sounding Roadkill Pie!



The sun at one point got quite warm and layers were shed. Juliet's Italian teacher joined us for her first walk with LDWA and told me as we neared Dorking that the most she had ever walked in a day was about 10 miles. I think by the time we had this conversation we had nearly achieved that.

The afternoon took us south from Westcott into the region of Logmore Green and Coldharbour Common. As we did some of us looked behind us at the familiar scarp slope on top of which our cars awaited our return. We now turned north to descend to Wotton where we could see the landmark spire of St Barnabas high on Ranmore Common. Our walk could have taken us up one of the steeper sections back up to Ranmore Common but a slightly longer, gentler section was opted for as we walked along the bottom of the valley, then up to join the NDW again and back to the car park, just as it was starting to get dark, and starting to rain.

The walk was hugely enjoyable, and I think that the final opinion was that it had been about 21 1/2 miles.

Our thanks to Juliet who devised the mystery tour (or was it her GPS?)

Nick

Friends Re-unite Again Sunday 6th April

The first walk in BST was due to start from East Grinstead led by Ted and Jackie. As I don't walk too far in winter (I don't like walking in the dark), this seemed to be a good walk to make my come back, a nice stroll through the Sussex countryside enjoying the first signs of spring.

This was the Sunday of the heavy snow, and so it turned into a walk in a winter wonderland. The scenery was beautiful, with snow bedecked branches, and fields of unblemished snow. It wasn't particularly cold, except when exposed to the chill wind, and the snow eased off around lunchtime.

We parked in the car park at the back of St Swithun's church, (perhaps that was an omen for the day's weather), who's tower was a good landmark for finding the start point. Nine hardy souls set off in a SE direction, past Weir Wood reservoir, to our first photo opportunity outside the gates of Brambletye Manor. The Manor was built in 1631, but fell into disrepair some 50 years later. This was due to mainly to the owner, a Roman Catholic, being accused of treason and fleeing the country to Spain.

We skirted Forest Row, where Jackie and Ted had laid on some very welcomed hot drinks. We followed a succession of local footpaths, including the Sussex Border Path, the Vanguard Way and the High Weald Landscape Way. It was quite hard going with a few inches of snow under foot, often masking some muddy areas, and a succession of styles of varying height and repair.

We stopped for lunch in Hartfield at the Anchor Inn, where we were well looked after. The beer and the food were very good, and we had the back bar to ourselves and waitress service. The building has quite a history, dating back to the 15th Century when it was built as a manor house. In the 18th Century it became a workhouse and a pub in the mid 19th century.

Well watered, fed and warmed by the hour in the pub, we continued through Hartfield, with its associations with Winnie the Pooh and AA Milne, who lived at nearby Crotchford Farm. A short detour was in order to Pooh Sticks Bridge, to play the famous game. There was also a degree of bumping into trees here, bringing showers of snow down on unsuspecting fellow walkers. Perhaps it was the infectious spirit of childhood associations.

From here we headed back towards East Grinstead, stopping for a rest on the sculptures outside Emerson College. The private institution embraces the philosophy of Anthroposophy, which is, to quote: the philosophy that underlies the work of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) that embraces a profound understanding of the human being and of evolution. It investigates the whole interplay of the physical, the psychological and the spiritual in human life, and through its study it is believed that we can gain greater strength and courage for the tasks we undertake. It sounds good but I'm none the wiser. I was starting to feel quite tired towards the end, and luckily Ted took us back along the A22 for the last mile or so, rather than cutting across more fields. It was an enjoyable walk, much better than sitting at home watching the snow through a window.

Ericaceous delights Thursday 10th April

‘Ericaceous delights’ and ‘hooped petticoats’ were the buzz words for the day of yet another delightful walk in Windsor Park led by that pillar of Virginia Water society, Gillian Bull.

The ericaceous delights were not quite as ericaceous as they have been in previous years but the hooped petticoats were charming and, as usual, we saw the lake, the cascade, the totem pole, the deer, the statue of the Queen and, through a hole in a large stone dumped in the middle of the path, we could actually see Windsor Castle!

This year Gillian promised nobody would get lost. This was a good idea as it meant that we had to maintain an even more leisurely pace to ensure that the ‘old ones’ could keep up. In fact at the first coffee stop our leader made a very solicitous approach to the writer to enquire, “are you alright dear?” If I had been smart enough I would have realised this was a subtle softening up process completed at lunchtime to persuade me to write this report.

A total of 16 people enjoyed this excellent day blessed with beautiful weather and good company and it was especially good to see our esteemed Secretary completing his longest walk since acquiring his automated leg.

What with a coffee break, lunch in the pub, tea in the visitor centre and a stop on at least 5 bridges for photo calls, it was surprising that we still managed to complete the walk and still be back in good time for Keith to get to his meeting!

Thank you again Gillian for another lovely day. I know we are all grateful that you know your way around the Park so well. Most of us had lost any sense of direction after the first 10 minutes and but for our leader could still be wandering through the daffodils.

John Dixon



Lurgashall Bluebells Sunday 27th April



I'm not sure how I come to be writing this. After all it is a bit invidious having to write up ones own walk. Perhaps I might however take heart from the nice compliments that came to me by email after the event. I'm glad that you all found the railway station without me at the end.

The weather looked to be indifferent though not impossible to manage and there were 10 keen souls awaiting me at the start, amongst whom, most appropriately, Avril. Through the local woods to Linchmere then and onto the Sussex Border path for a mile or so then off to the South followed by a big black cloud but no deterrent to taking off the weather gear as the temperature rose. With Glynis's help we reached the Marley Heights viewpoint for coffee. Guess what! The big black cloud stopped too and also lightened its load - and blocked the view across the valley. Time for a phone call to the pub with orders for snack lunches! Message left with the answer phone – a pub on answer phone?


Typical April weather took us through Cognor Wood and carpets of bluebells to the bottom of Blackdown and on to Lurgashall and a visit to the village shop, fortunately open, for sandwiches and soft drinks at very reasonable prices. My email about the pub will have explained all. The return route to the north out of the village brought us more bluebells in profusion and then it was on to Fernhurst and a welcome halt at the very welcoming Red Lion where we were able to quench our thirsts with a decent drop of ale (or tea or coffee) at three in the afternoon. This was much to Peter Waterhouse's satisfaction as he was able to maintain his record of having a drink of beer on every walk he does The way home took us along the valley from Fernhurst through woods to Shulbrede Priory, Newlands Cottage and up the hill to Stanley Farm with a pause at the top for a breather and a look at the view opened up by the 1987 storm and still clear.

Thanks to all those who came for their company and good humour.


Chris Hayward

THE CISSBURY CIRCUIT

A 22 mile walk from Findon Valley

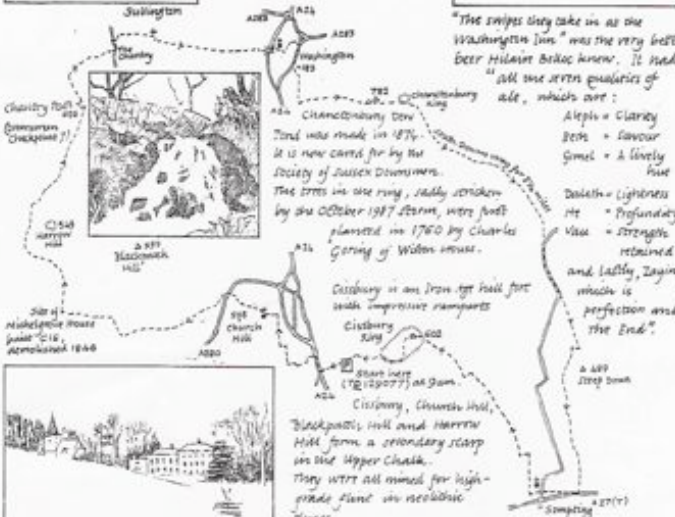



At the Chantry, the River Stour springs from the foot of the chalk scarp; it tumbles over the Upper Greensand terrace in a fine waterfall. We follow the terrace through Jullington, note its high status with its 'manor house', its Washington, and the Frankland Arms.




"The snipes they take in at the Washington Inn" was the very best Beer Hilaine Brice knew. It had "all the virtues qualities of ale, which are:

- Alps - Clarity
- Sea - Savour
- Gael - A lively hue
- Daleth - Lightness
- He - Profundity
- Vau - Strength retained
- and lastly, Zepin, which is perfection and the End".





This area of the Down is threatened by a proposed railway byway (as though the A 27 (r) isn't bad enough). The proposed route cuts across the slopes south of Cissbury. Some Wiltshire residents are pressing for a route further north, between Cissbury and Chanchisbury. If you think this would be a disastrous bit of vandalism please let Cecil Parkinson know.



The Cissbury Circuit was first walked by the LDWA Surrey Group on 16 March 1982. The route has been very slightly changed, and that for the better, for the second expedition on 22 April 1988. Whether it will be worth walking in 1990 remains to be seen.

Maps: Landranger 197 & 198; Pathfinder 1987 & 1986

TOM VIGGAS APRIL 1980



Cissbury Circuit Saturday 19th April

The day dawned wet and damp, and a sense of foreboding was discerned among the fifteen members, plus some from other groups, as we 'robed up' in assortments of wet weather gear – testimony to the bleak weather forecast at our starting point in the Findon Valley. With our leader, Dave, at the helm, we were following the route of our late very popular member, Tony Youngs, over the 22 mile Cissbury Circuit, first walked in 1982 and again in 1998. The morning section took us by way of Church, Blackpatch and Harrow Hills, and although the views were somewhat restricted, we encountered an open landscape of almost treeless hills folding one after another, with waterless valleys in between. This area was mined for high-grade flint in Neolithic times, approximately 6,000 years ago. At the Chantry, the River Stour springs from the foot of the chalk escarpment, and we followed the greensand terrace through Sullington, where A J Cronin wrote 'The Citadel' and so on to Washington for lunch.



After a good lunch we pushed on up the steep climb to the top of Chanctonbury Ring at 238 m (738 ft), and once the site of an Iron Age Fort, also containing the remains of a Roman Temple. The word ring applies to the earthworks of the fort, and not to the ring of beech trees planted in 1760, and sadly devastated during the great storm of 1987 – the one not forecast by the Met Office. Unfortunately, the forecast for our walk proved correct, for once, and heavy rain hampered our progress along the South Downs Way. Following a hastily convened committee meeting a decision was reached to bypass the descent to Sompting and the A27, and to cut across country to ascend Cissbury Ring, thereby curtailing the walk by four miles or so. Cissbury Ring is the largest of all the earthworks on the South Downs covering 26 hectares (65 acres), with two ramparts of a hill fort dating from about 300 – 60 BC, with about 61,000 tes (60,000 tons) of chalk having to be removed in the process. With all the mod-cons of our modern society, we might just spare a thought for our iron age predecessors, who had to endure this stark landscape, living in rough shelters enduring Artic conditions, let alone having to defend their pitch against European invaders – on reflection nothing much has changed in over 2,000 years, what with high energy bills and the EU!

Then back down to the cars, where Dave treated us to a very welcome hot cuppa and a variety of delicious home made cakes from Pat. Many thanks to Dave for a great day on the hills, to Pat for her excellent cakes and to Tony Youngs for his ingenuity in planning this series of walks all those years ago.

John Stovell

THE WINTERFOLD SWITCHBACK
(First in a series of Mini Winter Tanners Social Walks)
23rd April 2008

The idea for this series of walks came about as a spin off from a project to document Winter Tanners routes in case it is decided to recycle old routes to perpetuate the event. I thought it would be a good idea to use the research to include a social walk in the Surrey Group calendar. Unfortunately I am unable to lead a 20 mile walk these days but my sister, Olive and her husband, Roy volunteered to lead these walks for me. I was told that things had changed since I used to take part in social walks and that there are some who prefer a little less than 20 miles so I arranged a post lunch short cut as an alternative which was nothing to do with the 1976 Winter Tanners.

The route for this walk was based on about 15 miles of the southern section of the 1976 Winter Tanners route with a 5 mile link* between the homeward and outward routes. It was my intention to stick rigidly to the original routes when on the Winter Tanners section but using 30 year old routes can lead to difficulties so I did introduce a couple of diversions which I would recommend using if the route is used again for the Surrey Group's prestigious event. In any case, it was also necessary to divert for the lunchtime stop.

There were 10 people (having put on waterproofs as the rain started) plus Timber (celebrating a 6th birthday) who set off from Abinger Roughs Car Park, a little later than advertised due to heavy traffic when getting there. After clearing The Roughs the route took an invigorating unusual climb up Blatchford Down to get to the North Downs Way. Although not part of the 1976 Winter Tanners route, it seemed appropriate that this memorial to Alan, who started the event, should be a significant part of the walk. It is however sad to see that the fencing to allow sheep grazing paid for from the memorial fund is no longer there and the gates are gradually falling into a state of dilapidation.

The North Downs Way was followed for about 2 miles (in the meantime joining the 1976 Winter Tanners route at Gravelhill Gate) then plunging down that awful byway into Shere. I had the intention of getting a photo of the walkers in Albury Park with the North Downs in the background. When I got there, the rain had stopped but thick mist prevented seeing the North Downs. By the time the walkers arrived it had started to clear so I did get my North Downs background, even if it was a bit hazy.

A break was taken at Albury Heath which included taking orders for the pub lunch meals. The question was asked where the bridge was on route to have the group photograph taken. I had to confess there was no suitable bridge on route.



This is apparently a modern obligation that social walk organisers have to cater for and even Alan Blatchford, with his imaginative foresight, could not be expected to have considered this as a requirement when he was planning a challenge walk 30 years ago. At the suggestion of a Surrey Group Executive Member, a photograph was taken with some flowering gorse as a background but I had the impression that this was regarded as a poor substitute.

Continuing to Blackheath and Farley Heath where the mists were still swirling another dog decided to join the happy band but fortunately it had a disc with a telephone number and the owner soon came to collect it. The problem would not have been so quickly solved in 1976 without the use of the mobile 'phone.

One of my diversions from the 1976 route was between Farley Heath and Winterfold to avoid 2 rather grotty byways. Then came the switchback as a prelude to the lunch stop. With a late start, a toilet stop in Shere (only 1 ladies), a 10 minute coffee stop which took 25 minutes, waiting for a dog to be collected and the slowing down on the switchback ups, the walkers did not get to the Hurtwood Inn at Peaslake for the lunchtime stop until 10 past 2 (the kitchen closed at 2 o'clock) but thanks to the flexibility of the hotel staff, the orders taken at Albury Heath were executed while some took the alternative of getting snacks from Peaslake Village Stores. By this time the meals were enjoyed in blazing sunshine.

There were 5 who continued on the full route to rejoin the 1976 Winter Tanners at the end of the switchback then via Upfolds Farm to Leith Hill Tower (where the afternoon break was taken) then through Broadmore to leave the 1976 Winter Tanners route at the Wotten Hatch and take up the rest of the link back to Abinger Roughts Car Park.

I joined the other 5 to "lead" the optional short cut via Abinger Common and Paddington Farm back to Abinger Roughts Car Park. As I had not walked the morning session I thought I would be able to keep up with my companions but I still found myself leading from the back. When we got back to the Abinger Roughts clearing I had intended to use a newly cleared route back to the car park but there was an objection to the additional 20 seconds needed to indulge in this imaginative enterprise so we stuck to the usual boring drag. As the editor was the chief mutineer, this part of the report could well receive the treatment of the blue pencil.

A route description of this walk is available. Email: johnwestcott2003@aol.com or hard copy SAE to me at 31 Bracken Way, Chobham, Surrey. GU24 8PR.

John Westcott. LDWA 679



Midsummer Walk Wednesday 18th June

A regular feature of our walking programme is the midsummer evening walk. This is a two-hour walk based on our chairman's home in Guildford and ending with an alfresco meal.

This year the walk started with a steady climb along the roads of Onslow Village up to the Hog's Back. After passing Sunnydown Plantation we turned south and descended the Hog's Back, crossed the North Downs Way and at Polstead Manor we turned east. After passing Loseley Park we went through the tiny villages of Littleton and Artington to cross the A3100. The walk then continued eastwards to join the towpath of the River Wey Navigation. The towpath walk towards Guildford was enlivened by the sight of a rowing four; four well built young men coxed by a slightly built young lady, gliding smoothly over the water. As might be expected for a fine summer's evening there were other groups enjoying a stroll along the path many accompanied by their dogs. We left the tow-path to follow the well-known final stretch of the Surrey Inns Kanter but this time we passed the hall and climbed the road over the Hog's Back and descended through Onslow Village to end our the walk at our Chairman's home

Although it was a pleasant summer's evening it wasn't quite warm enough to wear shorts. However this was an advantage because many stretches of the path were badly overgrown with nettles and other prickly vegetation.

Our thanks go to Tony and Louise for doing the organisation and most of the catering

