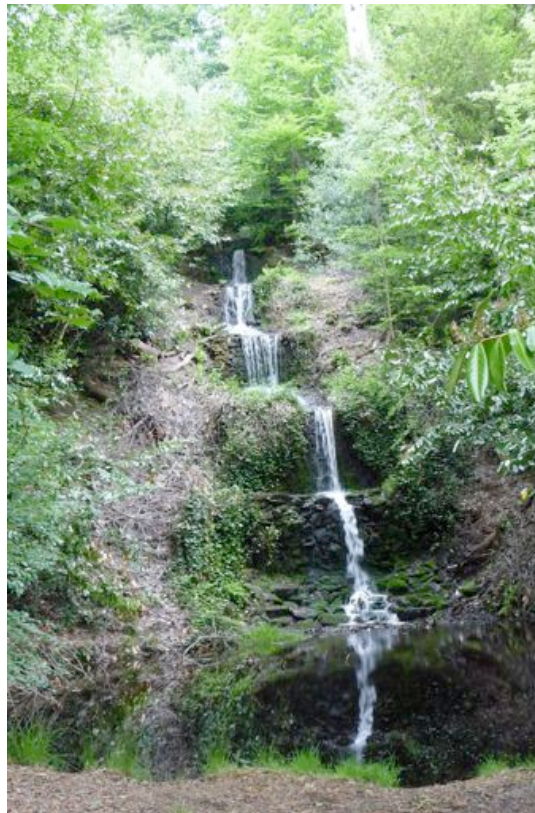




Surrey Group

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2010



Waterfall; Wotton Estate

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

New members of the Surrey Group

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

Alan Foreman	29431	Warlingham
Dot Crocombe	29356	Guildford
Nicholas Francis	29414	Lingfield
Jayne & Gary Johnson	29463	Ewell
Michael Mace	29255	New Maldon
David Mullarkey	29402	Purley
Alexander Stilwell	29143	Godalming
Matthew Wire	29377	Walton on Thames

Roman Roundabout Sunday 6th March



Roman Roundabout Sunday 6th March

Eighteen walkers met at Peaslake on a dry, bright morning in early March. After an inauspicious start that would have had the Roman soothsayers examining their chicken entrails for bad omens, we passed through Winterfold Wood and on to the site of the Roman Road. Here the Roman engineers would have been shaking their heads in despair: lack of road maintenance is obviously not just a modern problem. The road is shown on the OS map but on the ground there is nothing but a dense woodland. We turned north to Blackheath Forest, then east to Shere. After a brief tea stop we pressed on to skirt Abinger Hammer to the north, then turned south again to stop for a pub lunch. Of this, the less said the better: slow service, limited choice, undrinkable soup and dregs in the coffee. Then on through Holmbury St Mary to the Greensand Way, through Hurt Wood and down to Peaslake. The weather stayed good, the mud was dryish, and a good time (I hope) was had by all.

Lessons learnt by a novice leader

1 Recce the route until you can lead it without a map. Do not, as I did, recce it twice, with variations both times and think: "it'll be all right on the night." It won't. The walk started off with a record breaker: off route in the first 5 yards. Unfortunately not a record that excites envy, but rather one that results in incredulous glances from your group.

2 Socialising on a social walk is for the social walkers. Leading is for the leader, and never the twain shall meet, because without fail, the leader will be engrossed in conversation in the middle of the group when a crucial junction is reached, and those in front, naturally, will go straight on unless told otherwise. Result of socialising, in increasing order of embarrassment to the leader: return to correct route by short diversion through undergrowth.

return to correct route by backtracking 50 yards along path already walked

return to correct route by stopping, lying down and rolling under electric fence, then crossing field.

3 Leading from the front results in slower walkers at the back getting left behind and lost. Leading from the back results in the faster walkers in front taking the wrong route and getting lost. Which is best? Lead from the middle. This way you lose some from the front and some from the back, and it evens out.

4 When someone compliments you on the interesting choice of route, saying they have never been on this path before, there's no need to admit that you have never been on it either. Just accept the compliment and gently steer the group back to the correct route.

5 When the walks' secretary says, "Lovely walk, beautiful scenery, but ...er... next year, don't call us, we'll call you," accept it with good grace.

Elton Ellis

Addendum by Juliet Eberle:

Being a believer in Elton's firmly established ability in navigational skills, I was never in any doubt when the walk started through slushy ground at the base of a steep embankment without a path leading directly onto a road and traversing seldom trodden paths in otherwise familiar territory. This I took to be a quirk of Elton's confirmed and unusual sense of humour, never suspecting for a moment, that any of it was unintentional.

The only real omission on our leader's part was the reconnoitring of the local taverns encountered on our route, because most surely, a more dismal establishment would be hard to find in our fair Surrey Hills.

Downs Link with Don

Sunday 21st March

Serendipity! As a visitor, I made nine new friends in Surrey last Sunday, a mere two weeks after joining the LDWA.

To celebrate being seventy-two, I'm planning a personal challenge of about eighty-four miles at full moon time in July. It will be out from my home on Longridge Fell, then around and back from the Three Peaks of Yorkshire in about thirty-six hours.

My wife and I are visiting our family in Selsey this week, hence my guest appearance on Don's twenty miler. He promised no hills and regular stops. Sure enough, we had regular stops and no hills. Plenty of steep escarpments, but absolutely no hills.

Your countryside south of Guildford is magnificent and truly breathtaking, even when the nearest breathtaking escarpment is miles away. Don's walk was full of interest, with rivers, canals, woodland, farmland and even Jerusalem and Calvary. (I left the group at the foot of the Cross and sneaked off for (ahem, a comfort stop). There was also the excitement of trespassing into stately home gardens for the obligatory 'bridge' photos. *'Oh, wud some Pow'r the Giftie gie us, to see oursels as others see us'* (Robbie Burns)

The warmth of the welcome I received affected me even more than the scenery. These are my memories of the 'Nine nice walkers'.

Don Bolton. Team leader and modest superstar. My great achievement on that day was to match his pace side by side and conduct a gasping kind of conversation up just one of his non-hill escarpments. Good luck in Dorset, Don. You won't be intimidated by whatever the giant has got to show off!

Mary. First of the coalface team to greet me with warmth. Always up near the front. Can maintain an allegretto pace forever and ever.

Molly. You name it, she's not only done it, she probably thought of it in the first place! A privilege to share a birthday picnic with you and yew, Molly, in St Peter's beautiful churchyard, Hambleton.

Avril. Ten hundreds! I've press-ganged her into personal consultancy for me.

Jackie. Superfit athlete, warm nature. Turns up everywhere in the group. Vaults gates and does daft tricks. Bullied me into writing this and takes lots of pictures.

Ted. Grizzled, strong, quiet and dependable. I'd turn to him in a crisis.

Richard. Mr Hospitality! Great LDWA enthusiast. A natural social secretary.

Tony. Rugged, tall and lean. Good fun, and never stops talking. He loves the outdoor life and also vaults gates.

John. Last but by no means least. Clear winner of my 'Battling Bill McGrew' trophy. The hypnotic tap of your stick, John, made twenty pleasurable miles melt away for me.

Nine positive people, as fit as butcher's dogs. Thank you all. Come and do my three peaks challenge, or any part of it. Free bed and board and lots of fresh air and partying is on offer.

The've invited me to join the Surrey section again from time to time. As my wife once said, to a hospitable American Dental Conference delegate as we were breaking up, "Don't invite Tony. He'll come.

Tony Lee

Downs Link with Don Sunday 21st March



Dukes and Squires Wednesday 7th April



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For the 6th walk in the Mini Winter Tanners series we went in search of Dukes and Squires. About half the route had been used for previous Winter Tanners routes but did not follow any event in particular. The remainder has never been trodden so far by Winter Tanners participants but I have provisional plans to partly rectify this for the 2011 event.

14 people presented themselves at Milton Heath Car Park to take part in the mainly gently undulating 19-mile walk. The day was overcast with just a threat of drizzle now and again. Bear in mind the heavy persistent rain we had in March; it was inevitable that underfoot conditions were going to be rather soggy. On this point, one observation was that it had not actually rained for the last few days so it has had a chance to dry out. In the event, although 2 diversions were made to deprive the walkers of the most glutinous parts of the route, there was still plenty of scope to practice the technique of coping with walking the peat bogs of North Derbyshire.

Having crossed The Nower, the route went south through the allotments and fields to North Holmwood then over Holmwood Common. It was here the heaviest drizzle of the day was encountered prompting one person to raise an umbrella to spoil the photographs. Through Hawesrew, Shellwood out to the most easterly point at Herons Head Farm, just south of Leigh. The diversion out to this farm was a filler to rectify a shortfall in distance because I was using a different pub for the lunch stop from that originally planned but as it turned out, the footpath I would have been using was closed on the day of the walk. Continuing via Hammond's cove to the quarry of the gastronomic delights.

The Surrey Oaks at Parkgate is a real country pub and the landlord takes pride in his having the approval from CAMRA members all over Surrey and beyond as well as serving good food. When I saw it marked on the map, being so isolated, I assumed by now it would have suffered the fate of so many country pubs to be eradicated from the landscape having fallen victim to economic viability. When I found it was still there, I thought I had discovered a gem that I would introduce to the LDWA but my enthusiastic delight was received with indifference from one long standing Surrey Group member saying it was nothing new as it had been used at least once before on a Surrey Group walk. The drawback of using this pub is the short time lunches are available but the arrival time of just before 12.30 was ideal.

Leaving the pub, the route went to Beare Green, Moorhurst and Bearhurst before taking on the biggest climb of the day – 600 feet (nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total climb of the walk) in 1 mile. Taking a break half way up at the Landslip Car Park, the rest of the climb was necessary to bag the first of the locations giving the name to the walk. DUKES Warren is a little spectacularly beautiful area that is off the direct routes surrounding it to and from Leith Hill and Coldharbour and is worth the little wander around it. The route was then all down hill as the second part of the walk's title was bagged by going through SQUIRES Farm. Thence via Logmore Green and Milton Street to return to the Milton Heath Car Park at around 5.30.

We were blessed with the presence of our chairman for the first time on one of these Mini Winter Tanners walks and he pointed out that I have not been organizing these walks correctly. He said I should have arranged for tea/coffee and biscuit stops, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

John Westcott

Pyecombe Perambulation Saturday 17th April



There was a superb turnout for our leader Dave Challenger for what proved to be the best day of the year so far, in terms of weather. This beautiful spring day graced us with a cloudless sky and a wonderful cool fresh air high upon the South Downs. As we walked, many of the banks and pathways were adorned with wild flowers; celandine, primroses, daffodils, wild garlic and milkmaid, to name but a few. We were accompanied by enchanting birdsong for much of the route and we were reminded of the joys of spring as we passed through fields of newly born lambs on Danny Estate.

The walk took us from Henfield village where the view of the South Downs was shrouded by mist. We proceeded in a southerly direction up the South Downs with fine views over to Truleigh Hill on our right and Devils Dyke to our left. As we walked towards Devils Dyke, some walkers spotted giant 'Orb' balls bouncing down the hillside. We did ask Dave if he was up for the 'Challenge' but the thought of bouncing down the hill as if in a washing machine put him off! We continued across the Devil's Dyke and pressed on towards our well-earned lunch stop at Pyecombe. We basked in glorious sunshine as we downed beers and ate baguettes on the terrace in the pub garden.

After lunch, it was onward and upward to Wolstonbury Hill where we were surrounded by 360° views over the rolling countryside and at the trig point, took the opportunity for a group photo. From here, the descent in a northerly direction down Wolstonbury Hill was very steep with fantastic views across to Hurstpierpoint Church and Danny House; Lloyd George's country retreat and location for cabinet meetings during the 1st World War. The house is now split into private apartments and is surrounded by wonderful parkland. As we passed through the Danny estate we came across fields of Alpacas; one can only describe these animals as being comically cuddly with a somewhat haughty expression – as one walker said 'a cross between a camel and a sheep'. The walk continued, skirting past Hurstpierpoint and passing by a number of picturesque chocolate box cottages as we passed through Albourne village and through the graveyard of Albourne church. This quaint building looks very 'Norman' and does have some original Norman parts to it; but mainly dates from 1859. We proceeded in an easterly direction back to Henfield village.

This was my second walk with the Surrey LDWA and a first for my husband Clive and sister, Julia. On behalf of my family, and I we can honestly say how pleasurable it was to be with such a friendly, sociable, mixed-aged group of people, all with fascinating stories to tell! May there be many more 'sociable' walks to enjoy! Sorry – but my legs aren't up to a challenge yet!

P.S. On behalf of the group, our thanks go to Dave Challenger for leading the walk and to Jackie for sharing the dark chocolate egg at our mini morning break!

Caroline Dabney-Smith

Here we go again Wednesday 21st April

What a lovely walk!

We started by circling Virginia Water with its waterfall and sculptured paths. Then we crossed a bridge and entered the Valley Gardens where we saw a superb show of Azaleas and Rhododendrons! Someone said that they would be even better in a week or two, but this was the most intense colour that I had seen this year. We had a coffee stop here amid the blooms and then walked through the heather gardens and up to Smiths Lawn for a quick chukka and pictures in front of a horse. This group seems to have a thing about horses and crowding onto small fragile bridges for pictures. You will probably have to amend your Risk Assessment to include this. Lunch was at the Sun Inn. Very tasty!

In the afternoon we continued north (I think) to more horses, one at the end of the Long Walk where the 2012 Hundred will finish, provided that Herself gives permission! This is a beautiful park, but then they have had a few years to get it right. Another coffee and cake stop at the Savill Gardens and the back to the car park, past the largest Totem Pole that I have ever seen. I will definitely do this walk next year. Thank you to Surrey LDWA for making me so welcome and lumbering me with this walk report.

John Davies



Robin Hood Gate and beyond Saturday 8th May

Eleven members, mainly 'regulars', met at the Post Mill (built in 1817) on Wimbledon Common for the walk as the day dawned overcast and threatening, but mercifully the MET office was wrong again! Ewell, a few stops down the line had rain. The Common comprises a thousand acres of natural heath land and silver birch woodlands with three good-sized lakes. It was once the haunt of highwaymen, preying on folk on the nearby Portsmouth Road, and there was a gibbet at the crossroads, when justice was dispensed more quickly than today. The walk took us south over Caesars' Camp and the Royal Wimbledon Golf Course, down Beverly Brook, which we followed to the Robin Hood Gate and the A3. Caesars' Camp perpetuates a legendary connection with Cassivelaunus' campaign against Julius Caesar, and with the adjoining Roman well has never been known to fail. My previous visit to Royal Wimbledon GC arose when a casual remark that I made to my boss, namely that I played golf. To my horror he was soon whisking me away early from work one evening to have a game at the said Royal Wimbledon, where he was a member. My "playing golf" remark, done to impress no doubt, had involved hacking around some courses with my three boys at various times. In full view of the watching members, I struck my first tee shot fully ten yards up the fairway. My boss then proceeded to strike a monster drive, which flew at a tangent over an adjacent high wall into some gardens. He caught up with me at the sixth tee! Mercifully crossing the A3 by a footbridge we then entered Richmond Park, the largest urban park in Britain, and near enough to bring an authentic rural air to town. It was first enclosed by Charles I as a deer park, and large herds of fallow deer and red deer still roam among the well-wooded majestic oaks and rhododendron plantations. We embarked on a partial circumnavigation of the park, visiting Roehampton Gate, East Sheen gate, the Bog Gate and finally Richmond Gate arriving at Pembroke Lodge for lunch. Nearby King Henry's Mound gave fine views of St Paul's Cathedral to the north, and the south western aspect gave us views of the Thames Valley, immortalised by Turner. We returned to the Robin Hood Gate by way of Isabella Plantation, where we were fortunate to experience the azaleas and rhododendrons in full bloom, which were majestic due to the very hard winter holding growth back, and the warm, sunny April; which set everything moving.



Skirting Putney Vale Cemetery we returned to the Post Mill where a very fine tea was experienced. Many thanks to John, our leader, for an excellent walk so near to the heart of the capital and for good company on the way.

John Stovell

Headlong from Headley Thursday 18th March

Dave gathered a dozen of us together in Headley car park and just as the tea and bacon butty van arrived he led us safely away from temptation - headlong down wooded slopes and onto rolling farmland. Bruce and Sue bravely joined us for the first time. In pleasant sunshine we walked across fields and over stiles passing no less than three other groups, fortunately all going in the other direction. We crossed the Mole, thankfully no longer flooded, and pressed on over the mud, largely dry underfoot. The obligatory bridge photo' was on one of many bridges, which in this area seem to have a stile at each end just for good measure.

Martin opted for the alternative start, on the M25 (!), but was waiting, beer in hand, when we arrived at the Plough at Leigh. A relaxed and tasty meal, served by a charming waitress, was enjoyed by all, with two members even indulging in dessert!

Suitably refreshed we set off once more along the footpath - except for the maverick element who escaped onto the local playground for a quick swing! All was going well until we came face to face with an impenetrable thicket - which called for desperate measures - for the first time Dave had to consult the map!! Back on the right track we strolled through Brockham village alongside newly-released schoolchildren, across the green and thence to the slopes of Box Hill looming in front of us. The ascent was completed at varying speeds - those in the rearguard being forced to smile for the camera as they struggled up the final few yards! We recuperated by the grave of a Danish man's greyhound, "Quick" - is there a lesson in this I wonder? After these exertions we meandered across Headley Heath and back to the start, the tea van being safely shut by this time. A very enjoyable day!

A Walker



Ardingly without the Mud

Sunday 16th May

Mud within the first half-mile but fortunately not for long. Despite a chilly breeze and threatening rain, the weather generally was very good to us and the ten of us remained in good spirits. The first part of the course was an 'out and back' route via West Hoathley at which point the route turned back west. This first part of the route did take more time than was expected, mainly because of the undulating terrain. However, after the first hour of so we picked up the pace and headed towards Balcombe, then on towards Staplefield, a small village on the Handcross to Haywards Heath road. The course was fairly direct and mostly cross-country eventually arriving at the Tanners pub in Staplefield some forty minutes overdue. The pub is situated in a very old building that started life as a farmhouse but for many years has been serving travellers such as ourselves. On our approach we were welcomed by Tony Cartwright looking surprisingly awake after spending the night doing the Moonwalk in London. He still had part of his costume on - but we will say no more on that! In the afternoon, having been joined by four other members, a now rather large group set off after lunch southeast towards Ardingly. I never grow tired of the view we have of the approach to Ardingly reservoir and following wander through the magnificent grounds of Ardingly College. Our walk was followed by a short walk to the Showground where our cars were waiting. Then for it – mud to finish in!

All had a lovely day out thanks to Jackie and Ted who led the walk. Rain was forecast and it came fortunately when we were having lunch in the pub.

Chris McLaren

Heart of Scotland 100

Congratulations to members of the Surrey Group who completed the 100 mile walk. It was actually 104.44 miles!

Fiona Cameron
Jeff Campbell
Elton Ellis
Gail and John Elrick
Adrian Hudson (who completed his 10th)
Don Newman

Congratulations also to Janet and John Whiteman for completing 61.69 miles.