

LDWA London Walks 2010

Sun 19 Dec 2010 Thames Path - Abbey Wood to Westminster linear 20ml.

Start Abbey Wood stn 9.05. Depart London Charing Cross 8.30. Finish back at Charing Cross stn. Regular trains back to Abbey Wood for drivers. A riverside walk through East London to the heart of the capital. Lunch stop at The Cutty Sark, Greenwich. Maps OS Exp 162 & 173. Joint walk with LDWA Kent. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

Well, despite the freezing weather conditions over the previous few days and the terrible disruption to our regional rail network and very icy roads, eight of us determined and maybe slightly stubborn walkers persevered hard enough to make our way to Abbey Wood railway station at the eastern fringe of London on this snowy Sunday morning. Just a couple of days before the shortest day of the year, we met with a shimmering winter sun just beginning to inject a rare warmth into our cold limbs as we began our walk north on the Green Chain Walk up through Thamesmead and the Erith Marshes to skirt round the attractive urban lake of South Mere, with the water topped with a frozen powdery matt coating and the occasional darkened thinner patch of ice allowing us a glimpse into the icy depths of the lake. There were several horses chained up around the housing estates near the periphery of the lake who seemed so happy to see us, as they probably anticipated a welcome feeding, with the occasional sprinkle of their early breakfast hay laying scattered along our route. After crossing the A2016 we made our final push through the 'inland' section of our walk to at last reach the spectacular sight of the Thames spanning the panorama before us at Barking Reach. After a peaceful pause in the snow on the waterside path, we began our journey west towards the inner city along this ancient artery that winds its way through the heart of the capital. We very soon reached Tripcock Ness opposite Creekmouth on the Essex shoreline. At this point our path swung southwards for a while until reaching the famous Royal Arsenal at Woolwich with its lovely old mottled brick workshops and riverside canons on permanent display guarding the city. After passing several seemingly ancient piers on the south bank of the river near the currently disused Woolwich foot tunnel, we continued on a stretch of the Thames Path that was common with the Capital Ring that took us briefly away from the river and into the northern reaches of Charlton. When we eventually rejoined the riverside we were immediately confronted with one of the highlights of our days scenery - the unmistakable silhouette of the Thames Barrier, looking cold and grey under the now darkening, murky winter sky. We continued our way to meet the Greenwich Peninsular at Bugsby's Reach and pushed on around the deceptively lengthy path that hugs the circumference of this ancient finger of industrial land. It was at this stage of the walk that we were greeted by the famous iconic crown of the O2 Arena with its white coating looking somewhat gloomier than usual as it reflected the mood of the threatening winter sky above it with the occasional flake of snow now floating to earth around us. To reach our long awaited lunch stop, we burrowed our way through the quaint alleyways and cobbled back streets through the old wharves near the Cutty Sark and The National Maritime Museum to finally reach the entrance to the Greenwich Foot Tunnel and a shock by the hum and bustling energy of the local city life and colour all around in the immediate vicinity. After a warm and relaxing hour at the local Wetherspoons pub and plenty of soup and coffee to combat the persistent cold outside, we set off to tackle the remainder of our route, immediately crossing underneath The Thames via the old foot tunnel that's spanned the river, allowing countless pedestrians a free crossing for the last hundred and eight years. Arriving on the north bank at The Isle of Dogs for the first time that day, we continued our way upstream past Millwall and West India Dock with the tremendous towers of the financial and business buildings in

this area soaring upwards around us. Fantastic! Reaching Limehouse, the river swings due west then south slightly to Bermondsey and Wapping. By this stage we could feel the surrounding culture of the city changing markedly. We were now in the heart of Docklands and fast approaching St Katherine Docks. Shortly after passing by the oldest pub in London, 'The Prospect of Whitby', we soon had one of the most iconic skylines in the world dropped upon us like a weight in the form of the awe inspiring pinnacles of Tower Bridge spanning the freezing winter flow of the Thames in Central London. The OXO Tower, HMS Belfast, Custom House, The Tower of London and the mighty rising presence of 'The Shard', all helped add to the colourful, pulsing glow of the city at this stage of the rivers' route. Our penultimate crossing of The Thames was by using the Millenium Footbridge between Blackfriars and Southwark Bridge that took us from St Pauls over the waves to the Tate Modern Gallery on the south bank. By this stage of our walk we were amongst so many other people, just enjoying the life and energy of the evening city. Some people commuting, some tourists and many like ourselves just going about their daily business adding to the unique human character of London. After our last stretch of river walking along the south bank past The National Theatre and The Royal Festival Hall, we made our last traverse of the river back over the footbridge just south of the Charing Cross rail bridge with such spectacular night views of The London Eye and The Houses of Parliament immediately to the south. All glowing a myriad of colours in the cold night sky. We eventually found ourselves at Embankment Station where we climbed our way up to The Strand and Charing Cross Station to end a happy and satisfying midwinter walk. Mike

Sat 11 Dec 2010 Linear Bexley to Docklands 20ml.

Start Bexley stn 9.00. Depart London Charing Cross 8.26. London Loop, Green Chain walk and Thames path. Lunch in Erith, pub or cafe or picnic by river. Finish at Mottingham about 4.45 Buy returns to Bexley. Mottingham is a few stations up the line from Bexley. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

The cold spell departed and it was quite a mild day although we did see some remnants of the recent snow and ice. 18 of us set out from Bexley to walk the final or first section (depending on your point of view) of the London Loop. An early detour took us to see the impressive Hall Place with its mix of architectural styles and its park, the first of several treats that the leader said would be on offer. Along the river Cray and some unsalubrious sections of industrial wasteland but soon we were out onto the marshes where the Cray joins the Darent and then the Thames, with views of the Darford bridge and Thames flood barrier. Lunch in Erith at the end of the Loop with a variety of places used. Dave W and I were delighted to find a unique coffee shop which provided the yoyo of the day. The longer afternoon section followed the Green Chain Walk through a number of delightful woodlands interspersed with urban areas. The ruins of Lesnes Abbey was another cultural treat and after Bostall woods and East Wickham open space we came to a locked gate across the path. There was one small gap in the nearby fence which we were all just able to squeeze through as fortunately no one had a body mass index problem. With Oxleas Woods we also joined the Capital Ring and via Eltham Park to Eltham Palace, our final treat. St John's Walk led up the hill to a fine view over East London and the City just as the light was fading and down to Mottingham for the finish. Jerome

Sat 4 Dec 2010 LAST MINUTE REPLACEMENT WALK (linear) "A loopy walk in the snow" 17ml.

Start 9.15 Cockfosters underground station at the end of the Piccadilly line just beyond

the ticket barrier. Cockfosters is about 45min from Central London. Round the north east corner of London across Enfield Chase and Epping Forest to Chigwell underground station on the central line. Lunch in Enfield. Finish c4.15. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

With Mike's walk cancelled due to the weather, this was a last minute replacement and with uncertainty over the snow and the transport I wondered if anyone would come. However 4 of us met at Cockfosters station to continue the London Loop from where we had finished the week before. Much of the snow was melting and although the temperature was still low it felt quite mild in comparison to the last week. We crossed Enfield Chase and Trent Park in rather gloomy conditions but the weather brightened up as we went over Clay Hill and followed the Turkey Brook into Enfield where we even had a suggestion of sun for our alfresco lunch at the Lock. Over to the river Lea and its reservoirs and then a pleasant wooded section over Sewardstone on the edge of Epping Forest. On to the massive Chingford Plain with the Queen Elisabeth hunting lodge and over the Roding valley and M11 to reach Chigwell just before the dark and the rain. 18 miles. Jerome

Sat 4 Dec 2010 Biggin Hill circular 20ml. CANCELLED DUE TO WEATHER

Start Knockholt stn (TQ484629) Depart London Charing Cross 8.15. A walk in west Kent via Downe, Cudham, Berry's Green, Pratt's Bottom and the North Downs Way. Head torches just in case. Lunch stop at Downe. Map: OS Exp 147. Joint walk with LDWA Kent. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Sat 27 Nov 2010 A winter crossing of map 173. 20ml+ Linear.

Start 8.50 Hatch End stn. Depart London Euston 8.20. Finish in Enfield. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

"Winter crossing" was an appropriate title for a walk on a bitterly cold day where the temperature never seemed to go above zero. 10 polar explorers set out from Hatch End station to pick up the London Loop going east, on which we stayed for most of the day. There were some delightful wooded areas, open spaces, a reservoir dug by French prisoners of war at the time of Napoleon, parks and river walks. These were adequate compensation for the less salubrious parts such as a tramp along the A1 (very thoughtless of the Romans to build this road across the Loop) and the downtown urban jungle of Boreham Wood. However we all found a good lunch place there and our 19 mile crossing finished at Cockfosters just as it got dark. Jerome

Sat 20 Nov 2010 West Essex circular 19ml.

Start 9.23 Audley End stn. Depart Liverpool Street 8.28. Lunch at The Dial, Elmdon. 2 return trains per hour. Ldr Lonica Vanclay

Summary:

20 of us set off at 9.30 - thick but high grey clouds in the sky. This being Essex wide open spaces, low ridges and sweeping vistas of fields with scattered trees lay ahead - certainly that had been the case when I did the recce three weeks ago. However just an hour into the walk and through the first of many pretty small villages with thatch cottages the fog rolled in - and for the remainder of the walk we could seldom see more than a 100 yards ahead. Trees at very close quarters when we walked through a small copse - otherwise fields and mud - It could have been anywhere! Fortunately the pub

was very welcoming - a 17th century farm cottage now a very cosy pub - tasty food - and the pub owner even brought us a bowl of chips to share. He promised that if we came back in the summer he'd show us the 17th stained glass sundial in the church. And I have to say - I think I will have to do the very same walk again in the summer so at least we can see what we should have seen. Lonica

Sat 13 Nov 2010 West from Bentley. Circular 20ml.

Start Bentley stn 9.02. Depart London Waterloo 08.00. A walk in Hampshire via Wyck, Upper Froyle, The River Wey, St Swithun's Way and the North Hampshire Downs. Lunch at Well. Map OS Exp 144. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

Eighteen of us met at a cold and overcast Bentley Station early on Saturday morning. Starting our walk just south of the A31 we walked due north towards the rush of the weekend traffic and after crossing the busy road via the footbridge we soon approached the Hampshire village of Bentley. Continuing north out of the village we soon passed our way through the old Norman church which lies exactly on the route of St Swithun's Way. Soon finding ourselves in very rural countryside with gently undulating terrain all around we passed by several remote farms and eventually made our way through Lee Wood to skirt the southern reaches of Crondall which formed our most easterly point of the route that day. Swinging south, the sky started to clear with streaks of warm vivid blue and energising rays of sunshine breaking through the cloud, though unfortunately this was the most sunshine we would receive all day. Gradually we made our way north towards the town of Odium and the bleak field of lamas, with super views looking out over the North Hampshire plains. Reaching our most northerly point just east of Odium Airfield we finally swung south past the helicopter base and landing strips which dominated the scenery in that area. We then passed by several more farms as we walked south towards our lunch stop at The Chequers Inn in the tiny hamlet of Well. After a good hours' rest and some excellent food we set off in a south westerly direction along a track named on the O.S. map as 'Frog Lane' which had a truly ancient feel to it. Staying on this path for at least a mile or so we eventually climbed up onto the high ground which had obscured our view south for some time and then continued up and down over some quite hilly and very muddy country towards the village of Upper Froyle. Along this stretch of the walk we were treated to some excellent views looking south towards the coast though sadly never a glimpse of the sea itself. A very open and expansive terrain this certainly was, which seemed to characterise so much of this walk. The occasional clump of woodland gave much of the terrain a feel something half way between the South and North Downs which geographically is pretty much exactly where we were. Very shortly after pausing for a drink and a bite to eat in the churchyard of Upper Froyle, we re-crossed the A31 and then the main railway line in the area coming down from London to reach our most southerly point that day at Binsted. After passing through our third lovely church of the day and right past the grave of Field Marshall Montgomery, we climbed out of the village as the light was just starting to dim and soon approached Alice Holt Forest in a delightful pinkish evening glow to finally reach our way back to the station. Mike

Sat 6 Nov 2010 Circular from Billingshurst 20ml.

Start Billingshurst stn 9.15. Depart London Victoria 8.02. A fairly flat walk in the fields and woods to east of Billingshurst passing a Norman castle and deer park, windmill, a literary trail and a D day airfield. Pub lunch at The Crown Inn at Dial Post. Maps OS Exp 134 & 121. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

A lovely autumn day, with beautiful colours, amazing light and perfect weather. There was a short sharp shower but it conveniently came when we were ensconced in the pub. A sizeable contingent of 19 for our 20 mile walk headed east across the fields to Coolham for a morning stop at the Polish war memorial in the village. Then beside the nearby airfield that had been used by the fighter pilots of WW2 preparing for the D Day missions. Trees along the route commemorate those who did not make it back, appropriate route for this remembrance time of year. The deer park at Knepp castle gave us a few more snippets of history; the largest hammer pond in Sussex, the new ornamental castle and the remains of the original Norman castle. The church at West Grinstead has a poetic memorial to another fighter pilot and an ancient herringbone masonry wall. Lunch at Dial Post was fine but the presence of saga tours made for a lengthy stop and a finish in the dark. Early on the return, trumpets and tally ho was heard, a drag hunt with all the trimmings of redcoats and dogs chasing a piece of scented cloth. A literary break at Shipley to admire the windmill next to the house where Hilaire Belloc lived and later another fine Tudor house The Blue Idol where William Penn and his Quaker friends used to meet before leaving to America where he founded Pennsylvania. The last 3 miles was now taken at a gallop as the light was fast fading and unfortunately some of the group without torches became detached but I think we all made it back although the leader might have to face some punishment from some of the group next time we meet. Jerome

Sat 30 Oct 2010 A Wander round Woodcote circular 21ml.

Start 9.06 Goring and Streatley stn. Depart Paddington 8.18, change at Reading. Lunch at the Four Horseshoes, Checkendon. Ldr Steve Singleton

Summary:

A total of 21 walkers set out from Goring and Streatley Station in excellent weather conditions, fine and sunny with a gentle breeze, and with beautiful autumn colours in the many woods through which we passed. Our route took us downriver, briefly following the Thames Path, and then climbing away from it via Great Chalk Wood and Cold Harbour to Whitchurch Hill. We stopped for elevenses on a bank near Path Hill, then carried on eastwards to Cane End before turning north towards Checkendon for lunch on the green by the church, or in the Four Horseshoes pub, where the food may well have not been up to its normal standards because the chef had taken the day off! The afternoon's route took us on to hillier ground, northward to Well Place then steeply upward to the ridge east of Hailey; we followed the ridge westward before descending to Ipsden. The fine weather we had experienced so far was interrupted by a shower, but it soon passed over and before long the sun was shining again. As we got back towards Goring, some of the group raced on ahead of the leader, thinking that we might not make the 17:12 train, but in fact everyone was at the station with plenty of time to spare. Steve

Sun 24 Oct 2010 14th Founders Challenge

26ml or 16 miles in 9.5hr from Peaslake Memorial Hall, GR TQ085447, on good fps & tks in the Surrey hills. Route incls places associated with the LDWA founders - Blatchford Down, Steers Field, Tanners Hatch YH, the Toposcope on Pitch Hill & the Old Peaslake PO. See full entry details on the Founders' Challenge page.

Sat 16 Oct 2010 1066 circular 23ml.

Start Battle stn (TQ754155) 9.14. Depart London Charing Cross 7.38. A walk in East Sussex via Darwell Reservoir, Steven's crouch, montfield and The 1066 Country Walk. Lunch stop at Woods Corner. Map OS Exp 124. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

Starting our walk just a few miles north from the coast, the eight of us who started our northerly loop from Battle would sadly only have a few rare glimpses of the sea on this day although we would get to enjoy the beautiful undulating countryside that characterises this part of East Sussex. We soon passed the Abbey after leaving the train station and descended to lower ground just west of Senlac Hill where the famous battle of Hastings was fought in 1066. Following the 1066 country trail west we soon passed through Catsfield which was our most southerly point on our route then up to Steven's Crouch where we had great views looking north and west into the heart of the Weald. After leaving the 1066 trail we continued north and west through some very rural areas with good conditions underfoot and the occasional burst of sun through the intermittent patches of heavy cloud. Dallington was a highlight on the route with it's beautiful Norman Church and other ancient buildings. Finally reaching our lunch stop at Woods Corner we enjoyed the comfort of the wood fire and excellent coffee at The Swan before continuing on our way. Thanks to Lula who arrived too late in Battle to start the walk with us, we were now nine as she showed determination by making her own way to the lunch stop by herself. The later stages of our walk were characterised by some great woodland walking which seemed all the more special at this time of year with so many of the trees having their leaves turned gold and red and starting to form an autumnal mouldering carpet under our feet. Passing a couple of Jack Fuller's follies soon after leaving the pub added a sense of eccentricity to the day and as we eventually swung round to walk back south, the evening light began to produce the most beautiful atmosphere as we walked into the sun with our long shadows following in our trail behind us. Mike

Sat 9 Oct 2010 Witley to Haslemere 18ml.

Start Witley stn 10.09. Depart London Waterloo 9.15. The route will be via Witley Common and Ockley Common in the morning. Lunch probably at the old mill pub in Elstead. Via Thursley and Devil's Punch Bowl to Haslemere in the afternoon. Ldr Peter Buchwald

Summary:

OSE 133 & 145, 22 people

*We walked along suburban streets
Through Witley village, past a church
Forded a babbling brook into heathland
Dressed in its autumn golds and reds.*

*Watched comical ducks at Elstead Mill
Crossed an ancient bridge over a river
Reaching mysterious swamps and woods
To the God of Thunder's former home.*

*Skirted round the Devil's Punchbowl
Shrouded in swirling liquid mists
And in the woods a haunted place
Where three villains once were hanged.*

*We passed an old forgotten temple
A pub closed in the sleepy afternoon
Strode across green meadows and open fields
To the vibrant life of Haslemere town.*

Peter

Sun 3 Oct 2010 Founders challenge marshals walk 26ml.

Start Boxhill & West Humble stn 9.04. Depart London Victoria 8.08. Return trains 26 & 56 min past the hour. Ldr Don Bolton

Sat 2 Oct 2010 John Merrill's Epping Forest Challenge Walk 23ml.

Start Waltham Cross stn 09.01. Depart London Liverpool Street 08.28. A walk around Epping Forest past places associated with Queen Boadicea followed by a stretch of River Lea Navigation. Pub Lunch High Beach. Ldr Rob Myers

Summary:

The weather was dreadful in the week before the walk so it was a massive relief for the 12 walkers present (including 3 first timers) to begin the walk in bright sunshine. From Waltham Cross station I took the group to the Town Centre to see one of the 3 surviving Eleanor Crosses (out of 12) in the country (the others being at Geddington and Hartingstone). From there we walked to Waltham Abbey where stopping at the grave of King Harold I gave a short talk on the history of Waltham Abbey Church and gave the group a chance to visit it. The route began by leaving the Abbey Grounds and entering Lea Valley Regional Park where we passed a series of fish ponds once used by the monks, a dragonfly sanctuary and a carved boulder from London Bridge used to mark the Meridian Line. After crossing several fields and a couple of nurseries we came across the first of 2 obelisks erected by Victorian farmers to mark the places (according to local legend) where Queen Boadicea took poison following her defeat by Roman Governor Suetonius and the place where she died. Shortly afterwards we entered Warlies Park where we saw some fallow deer. Also we walked through a field with a threatening looking bull in it. I realised I was wearing my bright red England shirt and had to cover it up fast. We passed the 2nd obelisk and headed towards Copped Hall which was a famous mansion dating back to Edward 3rd that is currently being restored. We entered Epping Forest via Epping Cricket field under which was the M25 tunnel built at great cost following a public outcry. After about a mile we reached Amesbury Bank Iron Age Fort the alleged site of Boadicea's battle. Lunch was at the Kings Oak, High Beach where the food, though slightly pricey, was delicious and served amazingly fast. After lunch we had another long stretch through Epping Forest, where we saw the famous long horned cattle, to Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge. This was a Tudor grandstand used to watch the deer hunt below. We ascended Pole Hill to get good views of London's skyline before descending to reach King George's Reservoir. The last few miles back to Waltham Cross were a pleasant walk along the Lea Valley Navigation back to Waltham Cross. A few of the walkers fell behind during this stretch and at Waltham Cross and I said goodbye to the rest of the group at the point and waited for the stragglers. They had, however, bypassed me and by catching a bus arrived at the station at the same time as the rest of the group. I was quite touched that some of the group decided to wait at Liverpool Street for my train in order to thank me. A first timer Rachel had suffered an adverse reaction to her boots and had dashed into Boots in Liverpool Street to buy a fetching pair of pink slippers. This was a memorable walk. One that I will definitely repeat at some stage. Rob

Sat 25 Sep 2010 "A walk with the rabbits on Watership down" c.21ml.

Start Overton stn in Hampshire 8.45. Depart London Waterloo 7.50. Return train 17.18. A walk in the hills of North Hampshire. Picnic lunch. Bring sufficient food and drink as this is open country with few facilities. Map OS Exp 144. Parking available at the station. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

A group of 8 stalwarts gathered at Overton station for the first "last minute walk". The walk had only been put on in the last week and advertised on the website. We had lovely sunshine nearly all day despite the cold wind but it encouraged us to make good pace. We started beside the Portals factory which makes the paper for all our bank notes, and then slowly headed up into the hills to join the Wayfarer's walk near Hannington. This is a glorious series of green tracks, rolling hills and grand views. Over Watership Down but no rabbits to be seen anywhere, maybe they were all at a management meeting? We crossed the A34 at Seven Barrows and saw a memorial to a maiden flight made by Geoffrey De Havilland from that spot in Sept.1910, a century commemoration. Our picnic lunch was in a splendid hillside with a huge view looking towards Beacon Hill and not a building to be seen. On to Grotto copse and then farewell to the hills as we headed south through fields and woods and a return along the Harrow Way belt to Overton. 22 miles in just over 8 hours and we had been in the countryside all day; no villages and only a few houses and farms. A very good day for the end of summer. Jerome

Sat 18 Sep 2010 Polegate Circular 21ml.

Start Polegate stn 9.35. Depart London Victoria 8.17. Please phone leader for route a few days before. Likely return train from Polegate 5.30pm. Please bring picnic. Ldr Clare Kirkbride

Sat 11 Sep 2010 Chappel Beer Festival Walk 22ml.

Start Colchester stn 09:00 Depart London Liverpool Street 08:00. A morning walk around Colchester is followed by a pub lunch at the Forresters, and an afternoon walk to Chappel and Wakes Colne. After the walk there will be an optional visit to the Chappel Beer Festival at the East Anglian Railway Museum with choice of 450 Real Ales. Buy return tickets to Colchester. Ldr Rob Myers

Summary:

15 people including 5 from Essex/Herts gathered at Colchester for the start of the walk. The morning began with a walk along the River Colne passing through Castle Park and the now defunct port of Hythe to the pretty village of Rowhedge where we had a drinks break. We then followed the Roman River passed the village of Fingringhoe to Friday Woods where we headed back to the town centre via the military part of the town. The service and food were excellent at the pub stop at the Castle Inn and refreshed we started the afternoon with a brief tour of some of the town's highlights. 3 walkers who had opted in advance to do the morning only departed at this point. The afternoon's walk passed through Hilly Fields and Cymbeline Meadows and joined the Essex Way at West Bergholt. Finally the walk went through Aldham to finish at Chappel where we admired the Chappel Viaduct quoted as being the second biggest brick built structure in England after Battersea Power Station. At the station 3 further people decided to head for home and the remaining 9 of us went to the Chappel Beer Festival. The beer festival wasn't too crowded and we stretched out on the grass and enjoyed sampling several beers as well

as tucking into some excellent food. First time visitors to the festival were surprised how good the venue was. People started to drift away throughout the evening with the last 3 of us, who lived fairly locally, staying to 10pm. Rob

Sat 4 Sep 2010 Ardingly and Weir Wood circular 24ml.

Start Balcombe stn 8.21. Depart London Bridge 7.42. A walk through West Sussex via two reservoirs, The Ouse Valley Way and The High Weald Landscape Trail. Lunch stop at West Hoathly. Map: OS Exp 135. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

Twelve of us set off from Balcombe Station nice and early that morning. There was still a lot of moisture at ground level with the morning dew and what appeared to be the aftermath of an overnight rain shower. We walked due south from the village of Balcombe, crossing the railway line that runs down to Brighton and back up to London. We soon joined the Sussex Ouse Valley Way, south east of Ardingly reservoir and carried on heading into the morning sun along the valley to return to the railway track that we had recently crossed to the north. This time though, we walked underneath it in magnificent style as this was the Ouse Valley Viaduct no less. It really is a magnificent monument in the landscape and its warm, mottled brickwork looked fabulous on this crisp sunny autumnal morning. We soon reached the banks of Ardingly Reservoir where the usual watersports were taking place near the dam on its southern shores. We followed the waterside path that led us round the lake towards the north and west and almost back to Balcombe itself, but we soon turned eastwards again and walked on in the direction of Wakehurst Place and Tilgate Wood. It was just in this area that we took an opportune moment for a great morning break by the waterside at the peaceful northern extremity of the reservoir. Skirting the ancient woodland in this area to our north and with great views looking south towards the Downs, we soon found ourselves at the county showground at Ardingly and then down into the village itself where we encountered one of the few busy roads on the route. After crossing this we descended sharply down the valley to the east of the village and then soon picked up the High Weald Landscape Trail that allowed us some excellent walking through delightful woodland and some warm open fields with good conditions underfoot for this time of year. We kept ourselves on this long distance path until we reached Philpots and then broke off towards Chiddingly and then due east to our lunch stop at West Hoathly. With almost fifteen miles done and having had a really good rest in their sunny beer garden at the pub we continued our way north through more thick woodland up to the old steam railway line of the Bluebell Railway that runs through Sharpthorne just to the south. Now joining the Sussex Border Path for a very short distance we soon reached our most north easterly point on the route only to cut back sharp west, through Bushy Wood back to the High Weald Landscape Trail. Passing the magnificent Gravetye Manor we pushed on west to cross Ardingly Road just south of Selsfield Common and then down a very long winding track that made for excellent walking at this stage of the day. This took us along the bottom of Paddockhurst Park and through Great Wood in the late afternoon sun back to Balcombe where we pushed hard in the last few miles to successfully reach the station just in time to catch the once hourly train. Mike

Sat 28 Aug 2010 "The Western South Downs" 22ml.

Start Winchester stn 8.40. Depart London Waterloo 7.35 (arr 8.37) or 7.39 (arr 8.51). Circular walk covering parts of South Downs Way, Monarchs Way, Itchen Way and Kings Way. Picnic lunch at Cheesefoot Head. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

15 gathered at Winchester station representing a cross section of LDWA groups; 3 from Thames valley, 3 from Surrey, 1 from Wessex and 2 from the canine club. The leader began with a short guided cultural tour of the city, cathedral, college, and ancient city walls. We headed north along the Itchen Way through pleasant fields a trifle muddy from the recent rains, but we were fortunate in having clear skies and sunshine for most of the day. A break at Itchen Abbas and then we left the valley and steadily climbed up into the south downs to reach our picnic lunch spot in a field at Cheesefoot Head with good views over to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, according to our Wessex member. A long track south on the Kings Way and a short sharp climb to join a Roman road and the Monarch's Way to Owlesbury and the church in a typical quiet village setting. The final section took us over the rolling hills of Hazeley and Twyford Downs with Winchester appearing directly in front. But there was still some way to go as we skirted St. Catherine's hill and then a long stretch by the Itchen, the last mile in particular seemed rather lengthy but we all made it back to Winchester in good spirits having covered about 22 miles according to the leader but our feet, the general level of tiredness and the GPS suggested that we had done 24 miles.

Sat 21 Aug 2010 Chiltern Choice c15ml.

Start Wendover stn (Chiltern Rail) 9.45. Depart London Marylebone 8.57. Via Dunsmore, Hampdens, Bledlow, following Icknield way and Ridgeway via Ellesborough and Coombe Hill back to Wendover. Pub lunch Gt Hampden or Lacey Green. Hilly and quite possibly muddy. Ldr Steve Singleton will replace Julian Mason at last minute notice

Summary:

Five of us met at Wendover station to walk a route hurriedly planned by the leader the evening before to visit as many as possible of the places mentioned in the walk description in 'Strider' as we could fit into a 15 mile walk. The weather forecast was for light rain, but the morning was dry, though dull and cloudy. From the station we set off along the B4009, then bore off left on the Ridgeway to climb to Combe Hill. We descended to the church at Ellesborough, then headed south to climb Beacon Hill. We carried on south to pick up the Ridgeway again and followed it past Chequers Knap to Upper Cadsden. We could have stayed on the Ridgeway over Whiteleaf Hill, but instead followed the path across the golf course to pick up the Icknield Way at Whiteleaf. We followed the Icknield Way round the outskirts of Princes Risborough, before leaving it on a footpath to Looseley Row. We climbed to the windmill at Lacey Green, then took the footpath to Lily Bank Farm and turned left to the Pink and Lily for lunch. Most walkers had brought packed lunches, but we were all driven inside the pub by a heavy rain shower. By the time we were ready to leave the sun was shining. We returned past Lily Bank Farm, then attempted to follow a track through Monkton Wood to Great Hampden. We misplaced the track but made it to Great Hampden OK. We carried on past Hampden House and Little Hampden Common to Dunsmore, then it was back to Wendover Station, arriving at 16:11, in perfect time for the 16:13 train back to London. Thanks are due to David Wise, who knows this area of the Chilterns very well, for keeping the leader on track when he was unsure of which way to turn! Steve

Sun 15 Aug 2010 East Croydon to Oxted 20+ml.

Meet East Croydon stn 9.00. A walk in Surrey through rural countryside but also some less delightful urban walking! Lunch at the Tudor Rose, Old Coulsden. Tea stop at Godstone. Ldr Dave Williams

Summary:

After last year's debacle it was a major surprise to find that 21 poor souls plus 2 dogs had turned up at E. Croydon. They were greeted with the news that because of a refurbishment the lunch stop had been changed and it would now be a very late lunch. Unfortunately this news did not go down too well to say the least! The walk proceeded at a modest pace past Riddlesdown & through Kenley & Old Coulsden before climbing up onto Farthing Downs. We stopped to admire the famous 'heaven & hell' mural in Chaldon Church before continuing onto the NDW & at last reaching the Harrow at Chaldon where an excellent lunch was enjoyed by all. There then followed the shortest ever stretch between lunch & tea, a mere 3 kms. But it was the undoubted highlight of the day. The tea stop at Godstone was laid on courtesy of the Royal British Legion in honour of the 65th anniversary of VJ Day. We were treated to a scrumptious spread & we lingered longer than intended but no one complained. From there it was a short walk to St. Peter's Church at Tandridge where we admired the old oak tree and paused at the grave of the Captain of the Amethyst (Yangtze Incident of 1949). We finally reached Oxted without further incident and the leader had hopefully gone some way to restoring his battered reputation! Dave

Sun 8 Aug 2010 Circular around Caterham 24ml.

Start Woldingham stn 8.58. Depart London Victoria 8.25. A walk through the Surrey Hills via the Vanguard Way, the North Downs Way and the London Loop. Lunch stop at Chelsham. Map: OS Exp 146. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

Starting just north of the M25 at Woldingham Station, thirteen of us began our Sunday walk at almost 09.00 exactly. With the weather forecast predicting a good day, we were not so surprised when the sun began to shine quite fiercely early on in the walk. Fortunately, most of the climbing on this fairly hilly route was in the early stages of the walk before the more penetrating heat that we had later in the day had set in. Despite the North Downs Way being so close to the motorway south of the Caterham Valley, we were still treated to the delightful views looking south into Kent, Surrey and Sussex in the distance and into the sunny morning from the North Downs ridge. Walking towards the east for a short while we soon made our way up the steepest and longest climb of the day back over the downs just north of Oxted to join the Vanguard Way. Now skirting Woldingham Village itself, we left the long distance path for a while to reach our most easterly point of the route at Beddlestead House. As we travelled back, now towards the west we soon found ourselves in more urban surroundings as we walked between Chelsham and the northern limits of Warlingham. We sauntered through the peaceful grounds of All Saints' Church only to find ourselves amongst a Sunday boot fair very shortly after. The steepest gradient of the route was now to be found as we approached Kenley, creeping round the side of the old quarry in the woodland there, where the cutting through the chalk hills allows the railway to snake its way up into London. Slowly and carefully descending the very steep, slippery chalky slope to reach the A22, we now passed that main road and almost immediately another railway line to tackle another hard climb up onto Kenley Common where the views behind us looking back to the wooded hills and the chalky cliff face were fantastic. It was now well past noon but enjoying the fabulously clear and sunny day we finally reached the Wattenden Arms in a quiet spot between Kenley and Old Coulsdon near the Aerodrome. After lunch, we continued our way south and west, following the London Loop past Old Coulsdon and into Happy Valley where the grass looked so parched and so much of the undulating terrain around had a dry, yellowing feel to it, so typical of late summer. Now having picked up the Downlands Circular Walk we reached what was for me one of the true highlights of

the day in the form of the Church at Chaldon, where we stopped inside for a while to admire the amazing 12th century wall painting. This was a delight! After a nice rest under the shade of the trees in the churchyard we continued our way south towards the main ridge of the North Downs through fields of maize and wheat. Finally reaching the North Downs Way, we had great views of Reigate, Redhill and South Merstham when looking south west with the motorway beneath us in the haze. We were now travelling back towards the Caterham Valley to the east along some ancient tracks and with a sense of history all around. The tree cover that we had for much of this section made it a refreshing time after so much open and exposed terrain that seemed to characterise much of this route. Reaching the A22 we crossed back over, several miles to the south of where we made our crossing earlier in the day at Kenley. Finally, at Winders Hill we left the long distance path to make our final push north through some beautiful rolling cornfields that seemed to glow in the early evening light and gradually make our way down through the 'Rookery' into the valley that winds its way back up towards Woldingham and the station. Mike

Sat 31 Jul 2010 Greensand Way Linear Walk Part 4 19ml.

Start Oxted stn 9.30. Depart London Victoria 8.53. Frequent return trains from Sevenoaks to Charing Cross. Lunch Emmetts Gardens (National Trust. Ldr Susanne Waldschmidt. This is the fourth of a series of walks Susanne will lead over the next few years covering the entire Greensand Way.

Sat 24 & Sun 25 Jul 2010 Summer on the Downs - Plumpton Green to Eastbourne Linear 62ml (100km).

WARNING: UNSUPPORTED WALK. All participants must imperatively register with Mike prior to undertaking the walk. We won't accept anyone who just turns up at the start without having previously been duly selected for this walk, as it involves an entire night walk without any support provided whatsoever. Start Plumpton stn 9.45 Saturday. Depart London Victoria 8.47. Finish at Eastbourne stn on Sunday morning. A 100km day and night walk on the Sussex Downs. Early trains on Sunday from Eastbourne back to London and Plumpton. Picnic lunch on Saturday. Main stop at Rottingdean (25ml) for evening meal and provisions. Plumpton stn is easily accessible back from Rottingdean for those who want to come for just the day walk (25ml). For those who wish to continue to Eastbourne please remember a torch. Please remember enough food for the whole walk. There's no pub at lunchtime unfortunately but an outdoor lunch at Balmer Down instead! Free 24 hour parking at Plumpton stn for drivers. Maps: OS Exp 122 and 123. Joint walk with LDWA Kent. Ldr Mike Ratcliff.

Summary:

OK, so weekend social walks are generally supposed to be easy going, fun affairs with not too much stress or strain along the way. Absolutely, but why not just occasionally do something a little more ambitious. That was basically what I started to think roughly nine month's ago when the thought arose to try and devise a longer summer walk for the group on the South Downs. Something a little more testing. Well, maybe not quite a hundred kilometres testing but certainly more than the usual twenty to twenty five miles that we all enjoy most weekends. Looking at the old OS explorer maps of the eastern end of the South Downs, I found it terribly hard to decide which areas to include and not too include, knowing what lovely walking many of the paths and tracks in that region provided. Trying to come up with a route that included all my favourite bits was just impossible without the mileage getting ridiculous. Ridiculous? Well how can we ever define ridiculous? I wasn't sure so the more thought I gave it, the more happy I was to

just let it be and accept that if I wanted to add a longer walk to the programme in my favourite walking area, I might as well make it really long and a hundred kilometres is such a nice round number. So I decided that this would be my goal and in the end I settled on a route of exactly one hundred kilometres (sixty two miles), starting from Plumpton Green and ending at Eastbourne with a main stop at Rottingdean at twenty five miles. With there not being any spaces left in the programme around the summer solstice when I would ideally have liked to walk with the most daylight, I got the best slot I could which was Saturday July 24th. In hindsight this was a great choice as the weather we had over this weekend was superb, especially on the Saturday when eleven of us set out from Plumpton Station at 09.45. I had planned the route to have a 'dropout' option for people who wanted to come along, but only for the day with our usual distance of twenty miles or so. So a happy eleven was a good start, though how many would really want to join me for the long haul all the way to Eastbourne I didn't really dare anticipate too much until we actually left Rottingdean and were walking into the night. But Saturday morning was fine and bright and we soon covered the couple of miles or so south from the station to reach the base of Blackcap and the prominent South Downs ridge forming a dramatic horizon that dominated our view south and the whole area north of Brighton. After a vigorous climb up onto the South Downs Way, we travelled west to Ditchling Beacon where shortly after we left the main hilltop track to walk south into the heart of the downs near Lower Standean and Stanmer Down. After continuing south for some time we skirted the northern end of the site of Sussex University at Moons Corner to swing north up to Waterpit Hill and Balmer Down where we enjoyed a fabulous but windy picnic lunch on top of the highest point in the area with fantastic views of the sea to the south and the unmistakable graceful sweep of Firle Beacon in the East. The gleaming white cliffs at Seaford Head and the Cuckmere Valley were just visible in the far distance. For those of us that would be walking all the way to Eastbourne we could now see most of our hard work to come in stark technicolour in front of us. After lunch we soon rejoined the South Downs Way to walk south and cross the A27 near Lewes. Shortly after crossing the railway line running parallel with the road, we endured the long but gradual climb back up into the hills near Kingston and continued to Swanborough Hill where the sun was now very strong but visibility superbly clear which made for such an enjoyable afternoon with more views of the sea and the myriad of colours that leap out at you from the hills on summer days like this. Continuing on down to High Hill we were now approaching the northern limits of Rottingdean and a well earned rest. The White Horse in the centre of town just near the sea front served as a superb venue for those whose day's walking was complete and wanted some refreshment before the journey home as well as the six of us who planned to tackle the remaining thirty seven miles through the hills and along the coast to Eastbourne. After an hour or so in the pub we said our goodbyes and our group of eleven became just six. But half a dozen is a nice number and still makes for a good group on any occasion. So we carried on along the seafront at Telescombe in fast changing but still positive conditions with the light still strong but definitely now feeling like afternoon.

We eventually left the front to climb up to Telescomb Tye, Fore Hill and Mill Hill before descending to the valley at Southease which forms the last major gap in the South Downs ridge before swinging down to Eastbourne. The next nodal point on our journey would be at Southease itself where we crossed two major roads, the River Ouse and a railway line all in the space of a few hundred metres. With the light now fading, the radio masts at Beddingham Hill were beckoning us eastwards and up the long winding climb of Itford Hill. Now back on high ground we were also back in what I tend to think of as the Downs proper with Firle Beacon sweeping down to the north and the lights of Newhaven beaming bright to the south. That Saturday night we were especially lucky as a gorgeous, almost full moon soon rose and kept us company with an effervescent presence. After turning due south off the South Downs Way we descended over Blackcap

Hill down to Stump Bottom where we turned back up to Gardener's Hill and back north towards Bostal Hill and the Bopeep car park. After this long climb back up through the dark, crisp night to reach the ridge we soon found ourselves at the trig point at Firle Beacon, coincidentally at almost exactly midnight. The circuitous route that we were taking allowed us only a very short time back on the top with us soon descending down to the old coach road that runs parallel with the downs for several miles to Alfriston. This ancient byway is under tree cover for much of its length and at that time of night with the moonlight beaming through the leaves from the cool clear sky, the atmosphere was quite unique for us six walkers. I guess it was around this time with well over half the distance completed and the aches and pains of a very long distance walk starting to creep in that we now thought more about the coming morning and the final push over the hills to Eastbourne. I knew that we would soon be back down at the coast at Seaford but even that still felt like quite a long way off with another hard climb rapidly approaching and a weariness now setting in that maybe all overnight walkers will experience at some stage. Finally reaching the outskirts of Alfriston after our mammoth push down that never ending flinty track, we made the gruelling climb back up to the South Downs Way near Black Patch though after probably less than a mile of walking west we turned off the line of summits to take the Green Way, another old bridleway that took us on an undulating route south through woodland and farms towards the coast. With the intense neon lights of Newhaven Harbour seeming almost tangible in the early hours of that Sunday morning we walked towards them with the smell of 'civilisation' drawing us in. We soon found ourselves passing the old church at Bishopstone and then soon down on the seafront at Seaford itself. I now realised for sure that we were making excellent time on this trip as I had always anticipated that we would have seen the dawn by the time we rejoined the coast at Seaford. Continuing darkness however was all we had with only the sound of the sea and the very faint outline of the horizon made visible by the moon. The growing lights of the town also added to the strange atmosphere of this very sleepy place as we walked eastwards towards the towering mass of Seaford Head that dominated the murky skyline. Now needing a serious rest we crashed out on the tourists benches by the beach at the eastern end of the seafront by the famous Martello Tower that sits solid and strong, guarding the town at the base of the cliffs. Dawn! After we had all rested our stiff and aching bodies by the sea with some of us even grabbing a few moments sleep, we pushed our way up the rising chalky outcrop that culminates in the summit of Seaford Head, over to the other side with the beautiful panorama of the Cuckmere Valley opening up before us. The shocking white ripples of the Seven Sisters trailing away to the far horizon under the fresh new light of dawn. The walk following the South Downs Way up to the Golden Galleon at Exceat was rather tedious though it was lovely to turn round after crossing the River Cuckmere and to aim for the first of those great coastal peaks in front of us. The river was very low, the earth very dry and the morning air was still quite cool and fresh though the climb up to the finger post at Cliff End soon got the blood really pumping hard again. And so we traversed the hills one after another with the sea to our right and a bright pink strip of morning light piercing through the petrol grey coloured cloud across our view to the east. Reaching our final rest stop at Birling Gap we made a special effort I think to take stock of the situation and savour the moment with the knowledge that our long hard journey was nearly at its climax. We lay there on the stony grass bank by the car park with the morning air now warming up and the day now fast establishing itself. With the last efforts at foot surgery and other remedial action complete, we rose from our resting, sprawled postures for our final push up to the Belle Tout Lighthouse and on towards Beachy Head. Very, very weary now with the finish now almost in our grasp the great sprawl of Eastbourne soon came into view as we crept round the side of the hill above Whitebread Hole with the sea more grey now and a thick, dark low cloud rolling in from the south. All that now remained was the formality of walking from the base of the hill

and the terminal point of the South Downs to Eastbourne Station. It was a joy to have finished but certainly a greater joy to have persevered to walk through the night and gain such a unique experience in such a wonderful place. Mike

Sat 17 Jul 2010 Hassocks to Shoreham by Sea c24ml.

Linear walk over the South Downs. Start Hassocks stn 9.27. Depart London Victoria 8.26 direct or London Bridge also 8.26 and change at Haywards Heath for 9.17 to Hassocks. Buy a return ticket to Shoreham by Sea. Drivers may also wish to park at Haywards Heath and catch the 9.17 train to Hassocks as there are no direct return trains from Shoreham by Sea to Hassocks. There are frequent connections via Brighton which take slightly longer. Pub lunch in Upper Beeding or bring a picnic. Ldr Margaret Romanski

Sat 10 Jul 2010 Alton circular 22ml.

Start Alton stn 09:38. Depart London Waterloo 08:30, change at Woking. Two return trains per hour. Hangars Way to pub lunch at Hawkley then return by a different route. Map OS 133. Ldr Lonica Vanclay

Summary:

20 walkers met up with me at Alton railway station and we set off to Hawksley via the Hangars Way. The forecast was for very hot weather - so we walked at a steady pace and what with the breeze and shade we all survived the heat admirably. Lovely simple pub - Dave was impressed that the pub had 6 real ales - it was certainly quiet so we definitely contributed a fair proportion of their takings for lunch that day! Then via lanes and more open countryside back to Alton. 2 caught the 5.45pm train by a whisker - the rest of us were pleased we had time to enjoy an icecream before boarding the next train half an hour later. Lonica

Sun 4 Jul 2010 Battle to Hastings 20ml.

Start Battle stn 10:38. Depart London Waterloo 9:17. Along the 1066 Country Walk and the Saxon Shore Way. Lunch in Icklesham. Map OS Exp 124. Ldr Peter Buchwald

Summary:

1 dog; 3 women; 7 men

*We set out briskly from Battle station
Walking westward in the Conqueror's steps
Through forests green and rolling meadows
Talking of history in the bright sunlight.*

*Our wonderful small dog had a great time
Jumping over stiles and running happily along
Just pleased to be with us on his lead
At lunch we tethered him so he could rest.*

*We drank good beer and had good food
But alas! an old witch spoiled our fun
We left the pub in trepidation
Continued our walk with reconsolidation.*

*Past a village church, through orchards,
An old windmill and a military canal
To hills where fires were once lit
Guiding the ships into old Hastings town.*

Peter

Sat 26 Jun 2010 Fishersgate to Ferring Linear 25ml.

Start Fishersgate stn 9:03. Depart London Victoria 7:47. Finish at Goring by Sea stn. A walk along The South Downs via Fulking Hill, Truleigh Hill and Highdown Hill. Lunch stop at Washington. Maps: OS Exp 121 & 122. There's no parking at Fishersgate Station. Drivers can use the residential streets around the station for parking. Shelldale Road or Manor Hall Road just to the north of the station seem the best. Bring plenty to drink! The forecast for the weekend is hot and sunny and the vast majority of the walk is very open and exposed up on the South Downs with only Washington (Lunch Stop at 15 miles) to top up fluid! Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

Probably the hottest day of the year so far was in store for the ten of us who set out from Fishersgate Station at 09.05 this particular Saturday morning. Starting in the urban sprawl of Southwick that stretches almost continuously west from Brighton, we soon left the town behind to ascend rapidly up towards the main ridge of the South Downs at Fulking Hill, just west of Devil's Dyke. With beautiful views looking north towards Surrey we swung left to walk the famous track that stretches west along the chalk ridge towards Amberley and eventually all the way to Winchester. However our mission for the day was far more modest with Goring by Sea as our target, back down at the coast. We ascended and descended the undulating hills with the hard chalk and even harder heat all around making progress rapid but tiring. We soon reached Truleigh Hill with its enormous radio masts and then descended one of the main valleys that dissect the downs where the River Adur passes through, soon to reach the sea near Shoreham. After walking through the district of Bramber and reaching a common section of track with the Monarch's Way, we were now approaching Chanctonbury Hill with its timeless, grand hill fort standing so mysterious but alluring as ever. Surely one of the most highly charged points in the region! After a pause to take in the moment at this magical place we were then greeted by our first views of the village of Washington below us to our right as we continued the final stretch of our morning's walk. The Frankland Arms gave us a well earned lunch stop and a chance to refuel and cool down with the fierce heat and humidity of the day now at its most intense. After more than an hour of rest and recuperation and a good deal of lounging in the sun with drinks, we continued our way on with a fairly brisk ascent back up into the hills near Sullington. Approaching Chantry Post, an old and familiar junction of the South Downs Way just east of Amberley, we finally said farewell to the beautiful long distance path that had provided us with our route for most of the day and made our final descent of the chalk ridge, now travelling south towards the coast. Passing by numerous ancient tumuli and equally ancient field systems, the historically charged landscape with its many ghosts started to flatten out as we re-crossed the Monarch's Way to pass through the quaint old village of Patching with its fabulous church. Crossing the A 27 for the second time that day we proceeded towards our final Hill of the day with arguably some of the most awe inspiring views in the area. At Highdown Hill we didn't just find ourselves amongst the ancient earthworks of another exquisite Iron Age hill fort but were confronted by a shock of blues and greens of the Channel gleaming at us through the clear afternoon air, now free from the humid haze that had characterised much of the morning's walking. After twenty five long and sweaty miles, we now made

our way from Highdown with a short walk down to the station and our train taking us back along the coast. Mike

Sat 19 Jun 2010 Redhill circular 23ml.

Start Redhill stn 9:15. Walk eastwards along the Greensand Way. Visit famous musicians' graves at Limpsfield church. Return along North Downs Way to Redhill. Regular trains to/from London Victoria and London Bridge stations. Return possible from Merstham stn instead of Redhill (to save walking the last 2 miles through the outskirts of Redhill on roads). There are fewer trains from Merstham to London but it is an option. Pub lunch at The Barley Mow, Tandridge. Maps Exp 146 and 147. Ldr Sally Adams Sally's mobile # has changed since the Strider publication. If you need to contact Sally, please email the walks secretary to ask for her new number.

Summary:

The walk was fine....well, at least I hope most people enjoyed it! We had very mixed weather...sometimes very sunny...and at other times, downpours of rain! I must have put my coat on and off at least 10 times! We had 28 walkers. They all kept up pretty well...a lovely bunch of people and a few newcomers....actually, there were quite a few 'first timers!'. Great! We stopped at a pub called the Haymakers.....it was fine except that some people had to wait a while for their meals...probably longer than usual because there were more of us. People said it was quite cold sitting outside on the tree stumps! We visited the famous musicians graves at Limpsfield, then went up on the North Downs and the weather turned beautifully sunny as you can see in the pics. We ended at about 6pm at Merstham where most people took the train to London. Don't ask me how long the walk was...I dont have a clue...I am no good with calculations as you know! Ask one of the walkers! Sally

Sun 13 June 2010 Arundel circular c25ml.

Walk over the South Downs. Start Arundel stn 9.26. Depart London Victoria 8.02. Pub lunch at Cricketers Duncton. No sandwiches available - meals c £9/£10 or starters as snacks or bring a picnic. Ldr Margaret Romanski

Sat 12 Jun 2010 Up For The Cup 12ml.

Start Charlton stn 1.00pm. Depart London Bridge 12.28. A Saturday afternoon stroll, ending up in a local hostelry to eat, drink and watch England v USA. Walk along the Thames starting at the Thames Barrier and on to the City. Finish at Smollenskys on the Strand. Check Social events to book for dinner. Ldr Kathy LoRaso

Sat 5 Jun 2010 "Brighton Rock" Circular 24ml.

Start Brighton stn 9.00. Bring picnic lunch or there is a small open air cafe barn at Saddlescombe where we will stop which does light lunches, snacks, teas. Bring freedom pass if you have as the last 3 miles are a road walk in Brighton and buses are available. Another long summer day with several hills to climb. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

This was my 50th walk as leader of an LDWA social walk (22 with London group) and as if to celebrate this event a record crowd of 29 turned up on a hot and rather sticky day. The walk had promised a long day with many hills and this was certainly the case. An early start through the suburbs and parks of Brighton and Hove and the first long slow

climb up to the Devil's Dyke for a first break. An unusual descent right through the middle and then a climb up into woods before the descent to Poynings. A flat section lead to the base of Newtimber Hill and the steepest climb of the day. Several people found this to be quite a challenge and mobile phones were very useful to slowly gather up straying sheep. Lunch was in 2 parts, a picnic on the ridge and then snacks below at Saddlescombe where a caravan in a barn was delighted to serve such a crowd. More climbing followed over Cow Down and into Pyecombe and then up to the iron age fort on Wolstonbury hill. There was lots of activity in the hills in such fine weather and we saw hang gliders, exhibition bikers and large balls for people to roll down the hills. We carried on up to the Jack and Jill windmill and now on the south downs way to Ditchling Beacon. Brighton was always to our far right and now we finally turned south and descended through some lovely green valleys via Standean and then a final ridge passing the Indian war memorial and so into the urban jungle. The group was by now well stretched out but I trust we all made it back to the station either on foot, by bus or taxi; the leader saying goodbye to most of his flock at a bus stop. An eventful 23 miles. Jerome

Mon 31 May 2010 Lewes Circular 20ml.

Start Lewes stn 9.58. Depart London Victoria 8.47. Southwards beside the Ouse to Southease, then inland uphill to Telscombe and Pickers Hill, lunchtime picnic 45 minutes at Kingston in the valley. Jugg's Track north uphill to Housedean and Blackcap, descend to Offham and Lewes. Possible tea stop in Cliffe/Lewes. Map OS Exp 122. Ldr Clare Kirkbride

Summary:

The weather was a pleasant compromise between the dismal Bank Hol rain of two days ago and the heatwave of the previous weekend, ie dry and cool with a breeze from time to time. 18 walkers met at 10am at Lewes station and walked almost immediately onto the river bank southwards to Southease, then via Rodmell to the crest of the Downs where we stayed till beyond lunch above Kingston. We descended to the footbridge at Falmer, then up Long Hill to Blackcap where the "front-runners" set the excellent example of how to take a nap. Numbers began to drop thereafter, as walkers left the group while we walked down to Offham then into Lewes (past the public lido!); only 6 walkers made it to the Lewes Arms (an excellent discovery, serving food till 5pm), and 3 onward to the station. Clare

Sat 22 May 2010 Ham Street to Rye Linear 25ml.

Start Ham Street stn 9.41. Depart London St Pancras 8.42. Change at Ashford. Train users buy returns to Rye . A walk through east Kent into East Sussex via The Saxon Shore Way, The High Weald Landscape Trail, The Sussex Border Path and River Rother. Lunch stop at Wittersham. Map: OS Exp 125. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

An extremely warm day actually saw some of us beginning the walk with jackets on as the cool low cloud that characterised this barmy May day slowly dissipated to reveal a hazy but warming sky over Hamstreet in Kent. Sixteen of us began the walk from this quite remote station in south Kent heading southwest following the Saxon Shore Way towards East Sussex and the coast. Starting the walk on relatively high ground we soon began the very gradual decent down towards Romney Marsh via the tiny village of Warehorne and eventually through Appledore passing the fantastic old church of St Mary's up on the hill just south of Kenardington, looking out southwards for eternity towards the Channel. It's truly amazing to think that this spot, so far inland today was

the very shoreline itself when the church was built! With our route running roughly parallel with the Royal Military Canal until Appledore we then swung due west, leaving the Saxon Shore Way and traversing the modest but beautiful hill of Chapel Bank and then on to the National Trust site of Smallhythe Place. With the sun now hanging almost at its highest point and the temperature in the mid twenties we proceeded due south via the High Weald Landscape Trail towards our lunch stop at Wittersham on the Isle of Oxney. This so called 'Isle' is an appropriate name as although fairly low lying itself in comparison with much of the region, it towers above the surrounding country of the supremely flat Romney Marsh like a miniature range of mountains. Wittersham however, proved an excellent choice of stop, especially on a muggy day such as this that couldn't help but make us feel hot and weary no matter how much you drank. As is so often the case with pubs, unless you are reasonably familiar with the place, they're always rather hit and miss but in this case The Swan in this village was a massive hit. An excellent pub that bent over backwards to make us feel welcome and gave us excellent food, drink and service! After leaving the pub we almost immediately passed by the splendid Norman church of St John the Baptist with the sun glowing behind its silhouette giving it a strangely ethereal presence. Now heading southeast we descended quite dramatically down to the real marshlands near Iden to pick up the Sussex Border Path running alongside the River Rother. Swinging south the river joins the Royal Military Canal that we left much earlier in the walk far to the north. Now reaching the final stages of the walk we left the towpath and headed onto the most open and exposed section on our walk which took us across the almost featureless plain of East Guldeford Level. Featureless except for several rather striking features - that of the enormous wind turbines that together form the wind farm that has become such a distinctive coastal landmark - visible right across the region since being erected just a few years ago. With the sand dunes on Camber now well in sight we then headed due south towards the beach where the sea suddenly appears in dramatic style, the waves only becoming directly visible as we reached the crest of the dunes and began to descend to these famous sands. After some well deserved ice creams and lots to drink at the kiosks on the seafront, we promptly began our final push back to Rye. Crossing the golf course and rejoining the River Rother, this time walking upstream we approached the ancient Cinque Port with the sun now more mellow, sitting quite low in the western sky creating an attractive silhouette of the citadel as evening drew in. Picking the pace up over the last mile or so we managed to reach the station just in time to catch the 18.56 train back to Hamstreet and London which was packed. The train carried sixteen hot, tired but happy walkers I hope! Mike

Sun 16 May 2010 Hitchin Circular 18ml.

Start Hitchin stn 9.21. Depart London Kings Cross 8.52. Lunch in small cyclist's cafe or bring a picnic. Two fast and 1 slow return trains per hour. Ldr Kathy LoRaso

Sat 8 May 2010 High Weald Woodland c. 20ml.

Circular from Robertsbridge stn. Start 9:45. Depart London Charing Cross 7:45. Morning via Darwell reservoir to Brownbread street and Ash Tree Inn pub for early lunch or picnic. Return over Brightling Down. Return trains at 32 past the hour. Map OS Exp 124. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

A group of 10 and a dog braved the prospect of a long journey due to rail repairs and ominous weather warnings of showers and rain. The reality turned out to be much more pleasant; the rambling bus journey to the start was through pleasant countryside and

although we had intermittent drizzle, with colourful ponchos going on and coming off, there was no solid rain. One of the nicest things about the London group is the variety of interesting walkers one meets and this time it was good to meet up again with a multi-addiction mentalist. Anyway, on to the walk which went southwest, passing close to Darwell Reservoir and down to the amusingly named hamlet of Brown Bread Street for lunch. This was the only habitation we saw all day apart from isolated farms, as the route was in woodlands and across open country with fine views which even the low clouds could not deprive us of. The afternoon was considerably longer with a section of interesting gates and stiles to test the physical and mental ability and agility of us all. Eventually over Brightling Down with a second view of the Gypsum conveyor belt, the obelisk of Jack Fuller's folly, and the splendid pile of Stocknersh manor with its lake to return to Robertsbridge. It was, as is often the case with this leader, a generous 20 miles, probably more like 22 miles, but everyone enjoyed and that after all is the purpose of walking. Jerome

Sun 2 May 2010 Polegate circular 22ml.

Start Polegate stn 10:1 (Meet at the ticket barriers on the station concourse). Depart London Victoria 8:47 or London Bridge 8:11 and change at Brighton & Lewes. Along the Cuckoo Trail briefly, then through Abbot's Wood, taking the Vanguard Way to Chiddingly (late lunch), Wealdway to Hellingly, part of the Cuckoo Trail skirting Hailsham back to Abbot's Wood and Polegate. Brisk pace. 45-minute picnic lunch; tea stop, time permitting. Estimated time of return trains departing 6:00/6:30. Pretty as a picture in deepest Sussex. Map OS Exp 123. Ldr Clare Kirkbride

Summary:

There were ten of us to start the walk at Polegate station, as well as someone else enquiring about joining the club, as she is moving to the area and keen on walking longer distances. In persistent drizzle, we walked up the High Street, along a residential avenue and joined the Cuckoo Trail straightaway. Usually shared with cyclists and dog-walkers, the path was strangely deserted along the disused railway, called the Cuckoo Line; now there are more dunnocks and blackbirds though a cuckoo was heard last week. We saw swifts too. Still raining, we walked through Abbot's Wood, admiring anemones, bluebells and the earliest of the ransome. The going was skiddy underfoot but not sinky. Each of the many stiles was defective in an entirely individual way, unstable forwards, backwards, sideways, upwards, downwards, but all were negotiated without a slip; every farm gate was mastered and replaced as found. We emerged from Bramble Wood, and found a bridleway leading across the Norman site of Michelham Priory, and found ourselves in the village of Upper Dicker. Avoiding visiting both the pub and farm shop, we crossed fields in thickening rain along the Vanguard Way to emerge at the hamlet of Golden Cross, where the welcome was first class, "Don't worry, rain's only water!". We were well fed and watered, then moved on swiftly to keep warm. Briskly down the road past Farley Farm, home to the English Surrealists to Chiddingly through the picturesque churchyard and across more fields with high-spirited but friendly horses in one field, and a group of Shetlands complete with suckling foal in another. Past mouth-watering properties, moats, duck-houses, one rhododendron in full vibrant magenta bloom to Gun Hill. At last the weather relented as we began to turn southwards, with views of the South Downs. Past Hellingly's ancient church and towards Hailsham where we declined the bus. The rain stopped at four o'clock. Some sped down the Cuckoo Trail to catch the five o'clock train; others strode in the hope of tea, but the (salaried) staff had no intention of serving us at the Old Loom craft centre, so we made our way into Polegate and took refuge in "The Dinkum" pub. It was full, but tea was available, which was warm wet and welcome as well as £1 each but did not tempt us to a second cup. Tired and dry

at last, we were ready for the next train, with more than one of us making the resolution to replace our waterproofs. Clare

Sat 24 Apr 2010 Selling, Chilham and Wye Circular 25ml.

Start Selling stn 9.50. Depart London Victoria 8.22. A walk round East Kent via the Stour Valley and the North Downs Way. Lunch Stop at Wye (15.5ml). Map: OS Exp 137 and 149. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

The sun was shining brightly on this particular Saturday in late April, even before the walk had begun. This was the first day since last summer that gave me the early confidence to set out in shorts and T shirt with a feeling of certainty that I wouldn't be needing anything extra for the entirety of the walk. And so it turned out. Kent has for many generations been spoken of as the garden of England and having lived in the county for most of my life I sometimes support this claim and at other times question it with the presence of two motorways and many large urban areas but this particular walk from Selling hopefully gave us sixteen walkers at least a little taste of why this term of reference originally came into being. Initially heading south east we quickly crossed the railway track that had carried most of our group down from London earlier that morning and soon dropped south into Chilham where we passed through the grounds of the beautiful Norman Church there in the north of the village. In almost every direction we looked that morning we were met with views of some sort of agricultural process taking place and in this part of the country it's of course fruit growing and hops that dominate the gently undulating landscape. Before even reaching Chilham it felt as though we had passed through several miles of orchard with barely seeing any other evidence of human habitation or activity. After passing through Chilham we immediately crossed the River Stour and continued our south easterly trajectory up onto the North Downs, initially through woodland and then onto a lovely open sweeping crest along the ridge of hills immediately south of Denge Wood. It was by this time that the lack of shade was starting to tell with the sun now surprisingly fierce for a mid spring day. A taster of the summer to come? We soon took our morning break on the side of one of my favourite hills in an area known as the Blue Downs with excellent views looking north back towards Chilham with the unmistakable pale stonework of Chilham Castle clearly visible, shining in the sun. We pressed on towards Wye, now taking a more southerly direction past Eggringe Wood and up onto the Crundale ridge that stretches several miles down towards the North Downs Way with the village Crundale itself visible below us. The walking in this area always feels good in different ways with excellent conditions underfoot and a sense of elevation that never quite seems to diminish with the openness of the Kentish countryside rolling off into the distance in all directions. Finally reaching the North Downs Way on the Broad Downs near Hastingleigh we reached our most southerly point of the route. Swinging sharply north we proceeded towards the Wye Downs with the sharp drop of the ridge now dramatically evident to our left. The town of Ashford now dominated the view of the landscape stretching out beneath us and with the sun now more to the west it really created quite an ethereal panorama that afternoon as we approached our lunch stop. Finally reaching the church at Wye after passing through the now sadly deserted Wye College we disbanded as a group for an hour to make best use of this pretty town. The Co-Op store did excellent trade that day as many of our group stocked up on extra fluids for the remainder of the walk and the pubs proved a very relaxing place to rest with a cool drink in the afternoon sun. After gaining an extra member of our band, seventeen of us now continued in a more due northerly direction, soon to ascend our steepest climb of the day back up onto the North Downs ridge on the other side of the valley. Finally reaching the summit of the ridge on the eastern edge of

King's Wood we took the by-way north along the edge of the tree line which formed the longest single track of the day. Here we were treated to a truly magical view of Canterbury Cathedral just visible, glinting in the sun through the slowly swaying branches of the trees directly around us. Eventually descending the downs near Dane Street we were almost back within a stone's throw of Chilham. Continuing our way towards Shottenden we were now very much back in orchard country with a field of friendly lambs to greet us just south of the village. Passing just west of the locally famous hill known as 'The Mount', we wound our way through Perry Wood with several ancient earthworks still very evidently emerging from the woodland undergrowth. Finally making our way through the tiny village of Selling, we turned due east to head for the station with the still glowing but sinking sun now warming our backs. Mike

Sat 17 Apr 2010 Forest Way 27ml.

Start Loughton stn (Central Line) 09:00. The Forest Way is an LDP which follows the footpaths and ancient green lanes between Epping Forest and Hatfield Forest. Pub Horns & Horseshoes, Harlow Common. Forest Way LDP ends at Takeley Street, from where there is a short but attractive walk to Stansted Airport for train connections back to London and buses elsewhere. Map OS Landranger 167 Ldr Rob Myers

Summary:

Twenty walkers and two dogs turned up at Loughton in glorious Spring sunshine to walk the Forest Way LDP. Our numbers were augmented by 3 locals who were treating the walk as a sponsored challenge having raised £1500 in their local pub. I was concerned when they turned up but fortunately they turned out to be strong walkers. From Loughton we went into Epping Forest swiftly leaving established paths and climbing up to Loughton Camp. This was an old Iron Age Fort containing caves where Dick Turpin allegedly hid out. We took compass bearings through the Forest admiring the beautiful oak, beech and hornbeam trees. On leaving Epping Forest we travelled on forest tracks, minor roads and ancient green lanes passing isolated farmsteads (some of which were mentioned in the Domesday Book). We reached Epping Long Green an impressive ancient droveway which extended eastwards all the way to Rye Hill passing through the attractive village of Epping Green. From there we crossed Latton and Harlow Commons to arrive at our lunch stop at the Horns and Horseshoes. We seemed to have the pub virtually to ourselves and were served promptly. It was good to be able to eat and drink outside so early in the year. After lunch we passed through the villages of Matching Tye and Matching. At Matching we had a water stop beside the 12th Century Church and the Marriage Feast House which was built by the vicar in 1480 for brides to spend the night before their wedding. From Matching we proceeded to Hatfield Heath where some of our party departed and the remaining walkers frog marched me to the ice cream shop. The raspberry ripple I had was delicious. Refreshed and cooled down we reached and crossed Hatfield Forest where the Forest Way ended. From there it was a further 2 miles to Stansted Airport along a couple of footpaths and a quiet road. The airport was shut down due to volcanic ash so it was virtually deserted when the remaining 15 of us walked in past astonished security staff. When I caught the coach back to Colchester the driver told me that I was only the fifth passenger he had carried all day. He was surprised to discover that I had walked all the way from Loughton to catch it. Rob

Sat 10 Apr 2010 A promenade from Pangbourne 22ml.

Start Pangbourne stn 9:01. Depart London Paddington 8:18, change at Reading. Lunch at the Red Lion, Upper Basildon. Ldr Steve Singleton

Summary:

Because of an accident on the railway at Slough, trains out of Paddington were delayed. Eight walkers, including the leader, travelling by car or other train routes, were at Pangbourne Station for the start time of the walk. Another six walkers were on the way, on a train expected at about ten; in the meantime Nicole had improvised a walk in London for the rest of the group. As the first part of our walk was a loop, we would be passing close to Pangbourne at about a quarter to eleven; directions were phoned through to the group on the train for a rendezvous at Tidmarsh Church, and a map left at the station. It was a fine day with lots of sunshine and little wind; the sunshine over the previous few days had dried the ground so that there was little mud. The route took us from Pangbourne to the outskirts of Purley, and then down to the River Pang at Tidmarsh for an elevenses stop in the churchyard, where we met our missing six walkers. We then carried on to cross the M4 and go through the village of Bradfield. We crossed the M4 again and made our way to the Red Lion at Upper Basildon for lunch, arriving there at about a quarter to one. Order for those who chose to eat at the pub had been phoned through in advance, and service was fast; we were able to leave by half past one. We followed a meandering route with several hills, finally climbing Streatley Hill and descending into Streatley. We crossed the river and had a tea stop by the refreshment kiosk at Goring Lock, before following the Thames Path back to Whitchurch and going back across the river to Pangbourne Station just in time for the 5:17 train. Steve

Seven of us (3 LDWA members and 4 non-members, who were trying LDWA), improvised a 22ml walk on the Capital Ring. Most of us walked CR 6 to 9 (Wimbledon Park to South Kenton via Richmond, Brentford, Brent Valley, Greenford, Horsenden Hill, Harrow on the Hill and North Wembley, finishing at Northwick Park). nic

Sat 3 Apr 2010 Glynde circular 20ml.

Start Glynde stn 10:14. Depart London Victoria 8:47, change at Lewes. Southwards to the South Downs Way, along the crest of the downs, lunching in the Cuckmere valley, then west to Cradle Hill and Norton village, afterwards north to Firle and Glynde. Brisk pace. 45-minute picnic lunch; tea stop, time permitting. Return trains 22 min past the hour. Glyndingly beautiful scenery compensating for glindingly undulating route. Map OS Exp 123 but 122 would be useful if you intend to drop out for an earlier return train. Please phone leader for any further information. Ldr Clare Kirkbride

Sat 27 Mar 2010 Cooling and the Hoo Peninsula Circular 22ml.

Start Higham stn 8.43. Depart London Charing Cross 7.39. A walk round the Northern end of the Grain Peninsula, via Cliffe Fort, Cooling and the Saxon Shore Way. Lunch stop at Cooling. Map: OS Exp 163. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

On the last day of British Winter, London LDWA tackled an area of North Kent rarely visited by walkers, even during the kindest of summer months. The flat marshes of North Kent seem to culminate on the Isle of Grain that appears to project itself out into the Thames Estuary, almost reaching out over the water to Essex. The bleak, desolate exposure of the terrain made itself clear soon after heading out north from Higham Station just before 09.00. Fifteen of us rapidly passed through the tiny hamlet of Church Street and the ancient site of a Benedictine Nunnery as we descended onto the flat reclaimed land of Higham Marshes and then on to Cliffe Fort where the old Napoleonic structure still stands solid, grey and weathered, defending the mouth of the estuary, looking across to the Essex shore where the docks of Tilbury were clearly visible on this

beautiful clear morning. Flotsam and jetsam of varying ages and origins had scattered all along this stretch of coast like confetti as it always is and walking through the gravel port at Cliffe Creek gave the early stages of this route a real feel of the historic and industrial heritage of this unusual landscape. As we gradually swung round to take an easterly direction we continued to hug the coast by staying on top of the old sea defences wherever possible, allowing ourselves spectacular views over the estuary to the industrial heart of Canvey Island due north and eventually Southend to the east. For many miles and really a good proportion of this walk we didn't see another human soul with only a few sheep and the decaying, skeletal remains of old military structures for company that had braved the elements at the furthest reaches of this barren peninsular for goodness knows how long. With the spring sun now really very warm and bright with just the occasional fleeting cloud to hamper the glow, we passed Blyth Sands in the shallow waters to our left as we continued eastwards to Egypt Bay where we stopped for a well earned rest after a good few flat and easy miles. Making excellent progress by now we finally turned south to head inland and away from the waters edge for the last time. Heading for the main ridge of hills on Grain we ascended Northward Hill to reach our most easterly point of the route and joined the Saxon Shore Way, making a sharp turn to the west and into the Woods at High Halstow's famous RSPB Nature reserve. Along this stretch of the route were treated to some truly breathtaking views of Essex, the Thames Estuary and the foreboding marshes made famous by Charles Dickens lying flat, still and open beneath us. Eventually reaching Cooling we stopped at the Horseshoe and Castle pub for our lunch break with the satisfying knowledge that we had almost fifteen miles and two thirds of our walk completed behind us. Unfortunately it was at this same happy time that the weather started to turn against us and the light showers that were forecast for that day started to materialise. With lunch complete and our bodies well rested we continued under the darkening, brooding clouds coming in from the south and west and the surprising chill of the rain on an otherwise very mild day. Ascending back up to higher ground we continued travelling west through a number of quite remote farms and some very old looking orchards through the heart of the Hoo Peninsular towards Great Chattenden Wood. With the sweeping views of open terrain now pulling our eyes south we could see the Medway conurbation sprawling out beneath us and the River Medway itself meandering its way to our left, eastwards round the bottom of the Grain peninsular, eventually to meet the Thames in the wider estuary way in the distance behind us. Now entering the final stages of our walk we could faintly hear the rumble of the A2 in the distance and the village of Higham now coming into view. This area is littered with many small, old chalk quarries, many of them obscured with surrounding trees and it was approaching one such feature when we were greeted with our final great view, possibly the most comprehensive of the day, looking north again, actually allowing us to see most of the terrain of our whole day's walk in front of us. After twenty two miles we finally approached our destination of Higham Station with the clearing sky fittingly treating us to the days last burst of sunshine. Mike

Sun 21 Mar 2010 Hurst Green Circular c20ml.

Start Hurst Green stn 9:25. Depart London Victoria 8:22 or London Bridge 8:41 (change at East Croydon). Return trains 6 min past hr. Map OS Exp 146. Lunch at The Bell Inn, Outwood. Ldr Nick Marshall

Sun 14 Mar 2010 Eastbourne circular 20ml.

Start Eastbourne stn 10:13 (Meet at the ticket barriers on the station concourse). Depart London Victoria 8:47. New route. Brisk pace. 45-minute picnic lunch; tea stop, time permitting. Estimated time of return trains departing 6:00/6:30. Map OS Exp 123. Ldr

Clare Kirkbride

Summary:

14 walkers strode out from Eastbourne station, including Gill from Eastbourne and two, Ann and Roy, who drove from Essex. Clare undertook an intricate route as a change from the usual circular via Jevington, and we enjoyed mild sunny weather in the morning with clear views as far as Selsey Bill. Nearer, there were calves and lambs but few spring flowers. It was dry underfoot almost all the way. We crossed Gildredge Park and the golf course, descending to Cornish Farm, ascending steeply to Belle Tout, recently renovated as a prestigious B&B. Later, via we passed the red barn on Went Hill which has been re-painted a luminous vermillion. We took the path southwards from Crowlink to Flagstaff Brow to the coast, following the remaining Sisters, and lunched at the café at Exceat (prices steeply hiked, soup now £4.90). After lunch, the sky clouded over and the wind picked up. We passed through West Dean and Friston, descending to East Dean. At the Sheep Centre, the 6 fastest walkers set out independently with a view to catching the 16.55 train, and we followed, spending 20 minutes in the dark interior of the pub at the top of Beachy Head. We took the SDW to town and the usual shortcut up Staveley Road to the station. Most walkers regrouped with 10 minutes to spare in order to take the 17.55 to London, the advanced party having enjoyed a walk along the prom. Gill cycled home, and Clare lives near enough to walk from the station. Roy's GPS recorded 19.5 miles at the town hall, so the round tour from the station was not less than 20 miles. [An additional loop along the river north from Exceat then via Charleston Bottom would have added 3 miles and necessitated the 18.55 train, so was omitted.] Clare

Sat 6 Mar 2010 A view of the Medway Circular 20ml.

Start 8.45 Sole Street stn Kent. Depart London Victoria 7.58. Long morning via Wealdway, Shorne woods, Cobham Park with lunch c1.30 at the White Hart in Cuxton or picnic. Expect mud. Aim to finish for 16.49 return train. Joint walk with LDWA Kent. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

21 of us gathered at Sole Street for what turned out to be the first walk of Spring, lovely sunshine and despite the keen north east wind, a couple of brave souls walked in shorts. Quite an international entourage with India, Sweden, France and Scotland all being represented in the group. North west on the Wealdway and into the large newly created nature reserve of Jeskyns with its many carved wooden statues. A week of sun and wind had done an amazing job on the ground and the expected mud was only infrequently met, as Dave W would say. A circuit round Shorne Woods passing close to the Hand and some views over the Thames estuary. After a break at Shorne Ridgeway we followed the Darnley Trail through Cobham Park, passing the Mausoleum, and although we were only a short distance from the lunch stop, the leader made lots of loops. This gave the opportunity for some fine views over the Medway from the open country above Cuxton. The White Hart has been renovated but unfortunately they forgot to renovate the customer service. The picnic group also had some entertainment as we found ourself in the middle of a wedding party in the churchyard. A shorter and more direct afternoon south along the North Downs through woodland and then Wealdway north on the lovely valley to the picture postcard Luddesdown Church. An easy day, in fact a doddle as one member would say, just under 19 miles and for once with this leader we did not have to run to catch the train. Jerome

Sat 27 Feb 2010 Linear Amberley and Arundel 23ml.

Start Pulborough stn 8:51. Depart London Victoria at 7:32. Finish at Amberley stn. A walk in West Sussex via Arundel Castle, Kithurst Hill and the South Downs Way. Lunch stop at Arundel. Train users buy returns to Amberley. Map: OS Exp 121. Very wet conditions. Expect a bit of wading. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

This was a walk that was as wet as possible that didn't see a drop of rain all day. Sadly however, the evidence of the downpours over the previous few days were all too evident from the start of the walk. Having to make an immediate diversion from Pulborough Station to avoid extensive flooding in surrounding fields, fourteen of us walkers were forced to take a short stretch of the A29 heading south from the town towards Coldwaltham and the River Arun which had burst it's banks in several places. Finally back on track near the ancient Roman station on Stane Street we headed due south to cross Amberley Wild Brooks which forms a natural flood plain just north of the town itself and of course on a day such as this we experienced the flooding all too well that makes this place such a rich haven for birds and other wildlife, having to wade along a barely recognizable track for some considerable distance. Eventually reaching the main village of Amberley we had by now earned a good mid morning rest in the local churchyard, soon to continue our way back to the River Arun and south again towards Arundel. A very straightforward route and a simple undertaking at almost any time but not today! Much of the Monarch's Way and the low lying fields around Houghton were completely submerged with only the tops of stiles just making themselves visible by popping their heads above the waterline. The B2139 proved to be the only available route to take us south towards Arundel Park , and when our group did eventually descend the valley back to the river the path was still deeply flooded in areas forcing us to do our fair share of scrambling through the woodland towards South Stoke. Finally reaching Arundel via Offham, we were greeted by the splendid views of the towers of Arundel Castle rising majestically above the town in the winter sunshine and we enjoyed a well overdue lunch stop in the town centre, with our group spreading out into a range of pubs and cafe's along the High Street. The afternoon saw our route head into terrain of a dramatically different nature. Heading north and east up into the South Downs via Warningcamp and another stretch along the Monarch's Way we were treated to some spectacular views looking west in the surprisingly clear and mild air near Perry Hill. After several openly exposed and undulating miles we gradually ascended to the main ridge of the downs running west to east, joining the South Downs Way itself at Chantry Post. Swinging round to take the route travelling west we now began our final push back to Amberley along that truly awe inspiring track heading for Winchester . Thankfully for us though we had just a few more miles to complete - beautiful ones too including a traverse of both Kithurst Hill and Rackham Hill with lovely views to the north with the Greensand Hills and North Downs ridge just faintly visible on the horizon. Despite missing our desired train by just a few minutes, for the majority of the group, this proved quite a stroke of luck as we spent our last hour out together with alcohol, caffeine and a log fire in The Bridge Inn just next to Amberley Station with night now drawing in. A day to remember! Mike

Sun 21 Feb 2010 Petersfield to Rowlands Castle c22ml.

Start Petersfield stn 9:43. Depart London Waterloo 8:30. Pub Lunch Ldr Margaret Romanski

Sun 14 Feb 2010 East from Sevenoaks

19 miles. Ldr Lonica Vanclay

Summary:

What better way to spend Valentine's Day for those of us who love walking than a good walk - and 20 likeminded souls joined me. Hardy souls too - for the sleet and rain at the start boded a cold and bleak day..... However an hour or so in the skies began clearing and by afternoon it was just right for winter! The willows and snowdrops promised that spring was not far off; the mud reminded us it was winter. The pub's roaring fire and tasty food refreshed us and the conversations sustained us up and down the rises, in and out the forests, across the fields and through the orchards. Lonica

Sat 6 Feb 2010 Wivelsfield circular

20 miles. Ldr Clare Kirkbride

Summary:

20 walkers met Clare at 0911 at Wivelsfield station from starting points as far afield as Eastbourne and north London. A fast pace was sustained all day, 3.8 miles/hour in the first part of the morning on the flat plains of Wivelsfield and Ditchling, modified to 3.4 miles/hour uphill to Ditchling Beacon for 11.30am; over the latter part of the morning and during the afternoon's return to Wivelsfield, 3.6 miles/hour, the overall day's average speed. The mileage was 20 miles, despite modifications to the route in order to avoid the submerged parts experienced a fortnight ago. The going underfoot was soft, rarely disastrously so, but equally rarely were the footpaths free from moist mud. The weather was kind, an early chill giving way to a mild and sunny day with superb views over the Weald almost to the North Downs and, southward, to the sea, Brighton racecourse, and the Seaford golfcourse [can't be sure - got home without my map!]. Fauna was not much in evidence: neither lambs, birds nor even the three fields alpacas passed in the autumn; we did meet any number of horseriders in the neighbourhood of Ditchling. Breaks were taken at the foot of the South Downs before the 130m ascent to the Beacon, lunch at the Half Moon, and tea at the Cock Inn in Wivelsfield Green. We were back in the vicinity of Wivelsfield station at 1630 and most walkers took the 1653 train back to London. Clare

Sat 30 Jan 2010 Westhumble to Ockley

22 miles. Ldr Mike Ratcliff

Summary:

Our walk in Surrey on the 30th January was our final trek of a very tough walking month with snow and ice blighting our terrain on and off for the previous few weeks. This however was a perfect day to be out and spectacularly beautiful with a crystal clear blue sky and crisp icy air that remained mercifully still right through until dusk. Conditions underfoot were predictably easy going on such a chilly day with many of the footpaths and tracks utterly frozen allowing a nice firm floor to eat the miles up. Twenty of us set off walking from Boxhill and Westhumble Station at around 08.25, immediately climbing sharply the chalk hills up to the crest of the North Downs ridge. We continued westwards with wonderful early morning views looking south to the summits of the greensand ridge, with Leith Hill and Holmbury Hill being prominent among them. The low January sun and frosty air made much of that morning feel quite charged with atmosphere. Descending the North Downs saw us turn back on ourselves and continue east towards Westcott before which we swung south and down what appeared to be an extremely ancient track that meandered through some lovely woodland and up into the greensand hills. Arriving at our lunch stop we went on to spend well over an hour at The Plough Inn who were hardly expecting such a large group at that time of day - well ahead of schedule at

11.40! They did however provide us with a very warm, comfortable and cosy stop with a log fire and good food. Nicely rested and with the sun now simmering just past it's peak, we set off to climb up sharply towards our peak of Leith Hill. Blessed with such fabulous visibility, the Thames Valley and central London was clearly visible to the north and east and further on at Holmbury Hill the South Downs seemed to be spreading their undulating mass across the southern horizon forming a beautifully alluring silhouette. A crazily steep descent of Holmbury Hill was surely a bizarre memory that many of us will take from that day although thankfully we all made it down safely. A more flat and fragmented walk on the lower level terrain saw us push on through a patchwork of fields, farms and private estates, passing through Forest Green, Jayes Park and finally to Ockley itself with the first sense of dusk just starting to set in as we reached the station, well in time for the penultimate train of the day, taking us back through the hills and woodland of Surrey towards London. Mike

Sat 23 Jan 2010 Windsor Winter Wander

20 miles. Ldr Jerome Ripp

Summary:

The real title of this walk should have been "LDWA takes over Windsor" as 32 of us gathered from all corners: visitors from Thames Valley group, Essex and Herts group, some new faces, some regulars and possibly even some gate crashers. If this carries on we will need bouncers. A rather grey but fairly mild and dry day with only small areas of mud and most of the walk was on fairly easy tracks or grass. The morning circuit took us North West along the Thames passing a wooden "friendless church" and a visit to Dorney Lake recently built by Eton College and the venue for the rowing events in the 2012 Olympics. A sweep round the Thames and then inland passing the medieval pile of Dorney Court where the first pineapple in England was grown and soon after passing the aptly named Pineapple pub. Then along the recently created Jubilee river, a flood defence system for Windsor and now a bird sanctuary. Pretty soon the castle beckoned us and we were back in Windsor and Eton for the first circuit in our figure of eight. It says a lot for the discipline and organisation of the leader that this large motley crew was rounded up, after lunch in various local hostelrys and cafes, in just one hour. On through Eton College and its playing fields and then the Thames path south via Datchet to Old Windsor. Finally we found some contour lines as we marched into Windsor Great Park and did a wide loop round to our group photo by the statue of King George on Snow Hill. The castle seems just ahead but its a mirage as it is nearly 3 more miles to the end. We all made it and the train having covered 32.9 km at an average pace of 5 km per hour according to a metric enthusiast with GPS. Jerome

Sun 10 Jan 2010 Another ham and venison wrap 20ml.

Start Wimbledon stn (main hall) 9:00. Wimbledon Park and Common, Thames Path and Richmond Park. Pub lunch in Richmond. Brisk pace. Ldr Andy Shoesmith

Summary:

11 of us set out from Wimbledon station at 9am. Fortunately an overnight thaw had made the pavements much safer and aided our way to Wimbledon Park, past the Tennis arena and on to Wimbledon Common. From there, we were almost exclusively walking on snow. We headed across Wimbledon Common, to Robin Hood Gate, entered Richmond Park, up the hill and around Isabella's Plantation, with a number of deer sightings, including a pretty large group, with some impressively antlered males. Then to Ham Gate, on to Ham Green, past the pond and through the housing estate to get to

Teddington Lock. By this time most of us were feeling pretty warm, having layered up to cope with extreme cold. The snow made walking harder than usual, but we pushed on, to make sure we got to our lunchstop on time. From Teddington Lock, we followed the Thames Path. The only snow-free bits were where the high tide had flooded across the footpath. Our lunch objective was the Roebuck pub, at the top of Richmond Hill, so appetites were heightened by the final pull up the steep slope. The food was well received, as were their excellent beers. Service was quick, so were out well within the hour. We were reduced to 9 after lunch (they definitely left the pub). From the Roebuck, we headed straight back into Richmond Park, where I managed to take a different route to that I intended. I blame the snow, which changes how everything looks. We headed close to the northern perimeter of the Park, past East Sheen and Roehampton gates. We then followed the Beverley Brook back to Robin Hood Gate. Then back into Wimbledon Common. This time we went past Putney Vale, then to the Windmill, across the golf course, back to Wimbledon Village and down the hill to the station.

Sun 3 Jan 2010 East Croydon to Caterham 17ml.

Start East Croydon stn 9:30. Lunch at Fickleshole. Ldr Peter Buchwald

Summary:

*We walked out along the Vanguard Way
As Croydon City was waking up in sun
Twenty two brave men and women
Led by a sick man, coughing and wheezing.*

*We passed the water tower near the park
Climbed Croham Hurst with its suburban view
Crossed icy magical dark woodland places
Where some lollards were nearly left behind.*

*We lunched at the White bear in Fickleshole
Then set off again through country lanes
Passed Epicure's Garden where lunatics
May once have revelled in the country air.*

*We returned to a more genteel place
A neatly manicured golf course, a public school
Then up a hill along the North Downs Way
And back to Caterham in dark suburban streets*

Peter