



Surrey Group

# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2009



## Items for Newsletter

The Newsletter is published three times a year, February, June and October. Reports of past events, letters, and other items should be sent to the Editor one month before the publication date of the next Newsletter. Preferably they should be sent by email or typed, but manuscript will be accepted.

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Visit the group website at [www.ldwasurrey.co.uk](http://www.ldwasurrey.co.uk) to see more pictures of events, links to other groups and organisations, an archive of past events and lots of useful information

## **Editorial**

The summer season promises some delights over and above our usual ones. Towards the end of July there is the Guildford Walkfest and the group is organising three walks as part of this celebration: a Haselmere to Guildford night walk which covers part of the Semaphore Towers route, a 12-mile walk based on Newlands Corner and a 15-mile linear walk from Dorking to Guildford. In August there is the final stage of the Downsman revisited and the final stage of the Semaphore Towers. Also in August we again visit an old winter Tanners route with the Eastern Exploration, which, in a sense, compliments the Western Exploration, walked in April. We go out of our usual walking area in late June and enter the Thames Valley area with a walk based on Reading and in August we are scheduled to "Tread New Territory" with a walk starting east of Dorking. On 23<sup>rd</sup> June there occurs one of our most delightful social evenings, the Midsummer Walk/Supper. A short evening walk gives the group an appetite for good food and conversation. Looking slightly further ahead, the annual weekend break takes place at the beginning of October and is based in Swanage. This is an area that the group have not visited before and so new delights await us.

As will be seen, this newsletter contains a first; a walk report in verse. I wonder if anyone else will risk all and write a report in verse?

## **LOUISE CARTWRIGHT 1946-2009**

We write with great sadness about Louise who died on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2009. The cancer which had been in remission for 13 years returned early last year, Louise never gave up the fight but eventually she was overwhelmed.

Louise and husband Tony have been LDWA members since 1973. In the early years she completed 9 Hundreds and many challenge events, sometimes accompanied by her young sons Colin and Matt (now in their 30's)

Louise went on to help organise several Challenge events and marshalled on many more. At one time she was Chair of the Surrey Summits committee, and it is said that some of us only attended for the homemade cookies she provided at each meeting.

The Surrey group in particular has much to thank Louise for; when Barbara Blatchford retired 'up North' she and Tony took over the running of the Midsummer Event, always an enjoyable evening walk followed by a splendid supper back at their home in Guildford. Also, for a few years now Louise has organised the Group's Christmas walk and dinner, latterly taking us back to our roots at The Hurtwood Inn in Peaslake.

In addition to all the time Louise gave to the LDWA she also had a demanding career. She taught and organised courses for the students at Farnham College, leaving there a few years ago to take up a new challenge as a Life Coach eventually setting up her own business which she greatly enjoyed, taking her last course only 2 weeks before she died.

Notwithstanding all her accomplishments and hard work it is Louise the person we will miss most. We always enjoyed her company on social walks, she was a good listener and happy to chat and to help you out if she could. She loved life, a good book, her family and many friends and we will miss her terribly.

Our thoughts are with Tony, Colin and Matt and the rest of her family.

*Pat and Dave Challenger*

## **A Stane Street Stroll      Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March**

Fifteen familiar faces assembled at Ryka's Car park at the bottom of Box Hill for this genial amble. With confidence entrusted in our navigator, friend and leader, Elton Ellis, and the promise of a good pub to punctuate our physical exertions, our cheerful band set off at a brisk pace towards Juniper Hill with Harry, the corgi, at the helm.

Soon on the Stane Street route, Elton stopped us all and explained the significance this road held when the Romans built it in about 50 A.D. to connect London and Chichester. The Roman engineers chose to curve the route across the chalk hills rather than take the straight route, on muddy clay. They made a hundred yard clearing on each side of the road to deter ambush on passing legions and other travellers. While Elton inspired our imaginations with his narrative, the sun shone through the yet unclad trees and we enjoyed the warmth of a good winter's day. Carrying along the now more modest track, Gerda's attention was caught by the glitter of a £20 note, a token from a more recent traveller. Not all our footpaths were selected by Roman engineers, and inevitably muddy tracks with large murky puddles had to be negotiated, a source of enhanced pleasure for the corgi. As we progressed from Tyrrell's Wood to Langley Vale, we could see Epsom Racecourse in the distance, with the recent memories of the Winter Tanners and the race against time to complete the walk before nightfall. With no thought of time to hinder us, we came across Banstead Heath to *The Sportsman* at Mogador where already other visitors and their dogs had seated themselves both in and out of doors. A good and varied menu satisfied all our appetites and at 1.00 pm our leader raised our merry band to their feet for the final 6 miles back to our cars.

Yet more delightful landscape was in store for the afternoon with a long gentle climb from Buckland to the top on the North Downs Way above Brockham. As we all gathered by the bench near the buried horse, we voted to redirect the walk past the National Trust shop and café at the top of Box Hill where we joined Saturday afternoon revellers for a cup of tea. Our final happy descent down the grassy slopes towards the Burford Bridge Hotel with its breathtaking views towards Norbury Park and Westhumble formed a fitting climax for a relaxing Saturday.

Our thanks go to Elton for an enjoyable walk

*Juliet Eberle*



## **London Parks Perambulation Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March**

When three people approached me on my maiden outing with the LDWA asking if I would like to write up the walk, I realised that this was possibly more a right of passage than a privilege.

I have long heard my mother, Gillian Bull, talk about 'my LDWA lot' and admired their exploits from a safe distance. But curiosity got the better of me, and a 16-mile London walk sounded achievable and probably the easiest initiation opportunity I would get. The group of eighteen walked a roundabout, circular route from Waterloo station through the London Parks and summited on Primrose Hill.

I live in the Swiss Alps, working as a teacher, and only a few weeks earlier I had been driving a group of fifteen-year-old boys to keep up with me on a three day cross country ski trip. Surely, in comparison, this would be 'a walk in the park'! However, living at altitude transpired to be no advantage, as the stamina required is the ability to put one foot in front of the other for hours, and cross country skiing is relatively effortless in comparison to pavement bashing. My teenage boys would have derived some pleasure from my suffering! At home we have just had a four-month winter. I have not seen our lawn since early December and spring is some way off at our altitude of 3500 feet. I needed a good dose of colour. The London parks are a feast for the eyes with their cheerful drifts of yellow daffodils, blossom trees like vanilla and strawberry ice cream and brightly coloured beds of primulas. In addition, heady wafts of magnolia, hyacinth and narcissi occasionally caught the breeze. We also enjoyed a good dose of British weather with sunshine, showers and even hail.

London is the richest city in the world in terms of history and culture. Most of the group had done the walk a few times before, but for me it was a reminder of London's incredible depth and variety: moving war memorials, gilded gates, the anticlimax of the Diana fountain, the fascinating history of our glorious past captured on the Albert memorial, the fairy tale delicacy of the Peter Pan sculpture to name a few, and more green space than any other city in the world. And just when I was feeling I'd done it all, we arrived in little Venice with its colourful canal boats, for lunch and the traditional group photo on a bridge.

We also briefly became embroiled in the G20 demonstrations. Disappointingly, Richard did not give the speech he had been rehearsing so loudly on the train, which satirized the moaning about most of the problems that blight life in the 21st century. But although the problems are very real, there is something uplifting about being reminded that freedom of speech is a privilege those living in Britain enjoy.

But equally interesting for me was putting faces to names and finally meeting my mother's friends. They are formidable, feisty and very friendly. I also needed a good dose of Britishness and they provided it: humour, stoicism and warmth. Not only was it a wonderful, stimulating and challenging day out but also I felt honoured to be in the company of my mother's 'LDWA lot'.

Thank you so much to Molly and Elizabeth for a wonderful walk and to all of you for your company.

*Philly Clarke*



**Lunch in Little Venice    London Walks Perambulation**



**It must be somewhere in my bag!    London Parks Perambulation**

## An Epsom Downs Circuit

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April

We were in for quite a surprise today because this Epsom Downs circuit started in Nonsuch Park several miles north of 'the gallops'. What is more, we began by heading off in a northerly direction following John on a conducted tour of the park, first in an orderly fashion along nicely manicured paths! .... We really are softies in Surrey! But then we encountered rougher tracks so that we could view the site of the old palace, before leaving by a western gate to cross the busy A24 to reach the relative peace of the woodland surrounding the village of Ewell.

I must admit that for many years I've driven past the gates of Nonsuch blissfully unaware of its significance when, over 450 years ago, Henry the Eighth built the Palace, in the middle of the Park, to be used as convenient 'changing rooms' after he had spent a strenuous day rampaging around his new deer park after game.

We continued on, leaving the village, and following, for the most part, along the course of the Hogsmill, a tranquil stream that meandered first west, then south across Horton Country Park towards Stamford Green where we stopped for lunch.

Suitably refreshed, in the afternoon we passed the site of the original Wells, famous in the seventeenth century for the "most popular medical drug in all England".-Epsom Salts. For this reason Epsom emerged from being an obscure hamlet and became famous throughout Europe as the first recognised spa town and for the much publicised medicinal value of its mineral springs.

The route then took us along the well-kept tracks of Epsom Common and Ashtead Common to cross the A24, again, through Ashtead Park, past St Giles Church to Thirty Acre Barn This is a stud farm and a famous home of several Derby winners in years gone by.

From here we turned north east to Langley Vale, up onto the Downs passing close by the new grandstand and onwards to the top near Tattenham Corner where we stopped for a very welcome cup of tea.

After tea it was all downhill as we crossed over the grandstand road and through the immaculately kept greens of Epsom Golf Club. We passed Epsom College and some very affluent residences, no doubt inhabited by wealthy accountants of the turf and the like. Returning back into the Park we got temporarily lost in some unfamiliar undergrowth, but soon our intrepid leader came up with the right compass bearing and led us all safely back into civilisation and the right car park.

Many thanks to John Stovell for such an interesting journey back through time suitably enhanced with some historic gems of Olde England.

*John Lay*



## Mervyn's Milford Mysteries Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March



During the course of the day we were able to be suitably enthralled with the mysteries that, in their turn, became apparent, as we were led through the deep woods and copses that make up part of the beautiful Surrey countryside that exists just a few poles to the south of the busy A3.

Mervyn told me that he had recced the route three times until he had found one that included many tracks that we have all come to expect and enjoy so much; you know the sort of thing, that deep, squishy, squashy, squelchy stuff where you sink up to your knees in mud of the highest order; Mervyn obviously knows this particular neck of the woods like the back of his hand.

These muddy tracks were cleverly interspersed with several miles of meadow sheep runs and heathland tracks of springy turf which, by their very nature did a thorough cleaning-up job on our boots so that by the time we arrived at the 'Wheatsheaf' in Grayswood for lunch they were in quite a respectable condition and I was allowed in with the rest of the party to enjoy some excellent ham, egg and chips and 'draught speckled hen'.

Suitably refreshed we continued onwards in the afternoon through the deep forestry of Frillinghurst Wood where there were several newly constructed ashwood bridges, on one we all posed for what has now become the ritual 'bridge photo' taken by Dave with his usual 'candid camera' skills; another one for the gallery.

Passing through the Sydenhurst Farmyard we began circling around Chiddingfold and the 'Wintertun Arms' to eventually start heading back on a sort of northerly path that went past Noddings Farm and through the playing fields of King Edward School.

Soon after this we heard the very welcome jingle of an ice cream van at the end of the lane Yes! Eureka! .... talk about good timing and organisation! Mervyn had done it again for the afternoon tea stop.

After this it was just a short stroll passing Chichester Hall and back over Milford Common, picking up part of the Punchbowl path en-route to return to the carpark that we had left just eight hours previously.

Thanks Mervyn for yet another great day's walking taken at a sensible pace with a classic inn to round it off quite handsomely.

*John Lay*

## Western Exploration



## **Western Exploration      Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup>**

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> in the Mini Winter Tanners Social Walk series. The original plan when I started the series was to use it as a spin off from my cataloguing old Winter Tanners routes in case they were needed for recycling in the future. In practise these mini social walks have been devised in their own right as a product of my desire to make up, what is in my opinion, the best route using the lovely tracks and open spaces I have discovered in my search to make the Winter Tanners variable. In particular it gives me an opportunity to utilise some of the footpaths etc I like which, for one reason or another, have rejected using on the Winter Tanners. The cataloguing project seems to have been put on hold.

The Western Exploration was loosely based on the 1992 Winter Tanners but only 6% of it actually coincided with the 1992 route. That 6% did however include the point of the title in that it visited the furthest point west ever trodden by any Winter Tanners participant in all the 32 events held so far. I make the statement on the basis that even the most imaginative of route description interpreters would have great difficulty in getting lost to the extent of going even further west.

One feature of the walk is that it went near to but missed out St Martha's summit and Newlands Corner, both visited on many social walks so I thought I would use some of the lesser-used paths in the vicinity of these two popular beauty spots.

17 came to the Silent Pool Car Park. The route took a low level westward direction with the North Downs and then The Chantries as a backdrop to the right including a circumnavigation of St Martha's summit. At the outskirts of Shalford the route turned north to climb Pewley Hill - the furthest west point of any Winter Tanners. After going along Walnut Tree Bottom (a parallel valley track to the main Newlands Corner ridge Track) the route descended Clandon Downs for the lunch stop at the Bulls Head, West Clandon where we enjoyed very good service and delightful sunshine in the garden.

The morning had been pleasantly warm but misty with the sun breaking through just before lunch. When I arranged the weather I particularly delayed the lifting of the mist to hide the view of London on the descent to the A246 but I got a complaint from one person who apparently wanted the view of London.

After lunch the route went to East Clandon then back over the North Downs to Gomshall and continued south almost into Peaslake. Part of this section was from a short cut route I had devised for the Horsley Experiment which nobody used on that walk, so on the principle of when a child does not eat the rice pudding for lunch it is served up for supper, that short cut had to be served up on a subsequent walk. I particularly cleared a short section of footpath of brambles and gorse for the Horsley Experiment short cut and my insistence that this be used for the Western Exploration thus creating a diversion to the logical route confused one of Surrey Groups leading experts on Central Surrey geography.

The Tillingbourne at Gomshall was the scene for the mandatory bridge photo. In the morning I asked a gentleman from the Engineering Company for permission to go on their private land (south bank) to take the photo. I also asked him to arrange for the bridge railings to be given a lick of paint and the grass to be cut but he had not done what I asked by the time the photo was taken just after 4 o'clock.

The total distance of the route was 22 miles with the option of deciding at Gomshall to take a short cut to bring it down to the 20 miles advertised. Eight decided to take the short cut but left to their own devices they decided to short cut my short cut. So that is another shortcut not used which will have to be served up on a future walk.

The means of getting back to the Silent Pool Car Park was via a footpath in Albury Park then an escape by the permissive use of their drive. The permissive use of the drive is conditional to visiting the old Saxon Church but as far as I am aware, only four of the short cutting short cutters actually conformed.

The 5<sup>th</sup> walk in the series is the Southern Exploration on 26<sup>th</sup> August. This could be said to be a fantasy on my part in that it is sort of based on a Winter Tanners that never was. The furthest point south that a Tanners Marathon has gone was in 1973 but as this was before the birth of the Winter Tanners there was no equivalent prelude route-proving event for that route. It will also, for the first time in this series, go outside the area I regard as Winter Tanners Territory so I can include a little gem which is out of reach of a 30 mile route starting and finishing at Leatherhead - however elastic the measuring.

*John Westcott*

**Reminiscing of Blossoms in the Park**

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April**

The alarm bell rings  
On this April morning  
I reach for the Strider  
As the day is dawning

And lo and behold  
With pride and with valour  
We are finally led  
Into a valley of colour

I rub my eyes  
It's no longer dark  
The words emerge  
Blossoms in the Park

Out come the cameras  
While we all stand and grin  
In front of the blossoms  
Did we get every one in?

Better get up  
The starts nine-thirty  
Best not be late  
Lest the leader gets shirty

Lunch at the pub  
A well deserved stop  
Then ice cream later  
At the Windsor Park shop

Quite a crowd gathers  
At the start point: Wick Lane  
All appear to be smiling  
There's no prospect of rain

In the depths of the Park  
A huge herd of deer  
We heed the warnings  
Don't get too near

So off we all set  
Through woods, across leas  
What a joyous morning  
As sunlight beams thru the trees

Onwards we stride  
Into mid-afternoon  
Alas I now fear  
The finish will be soon

On wards we march  
At a reasonable pace  
Category: social  
We're not in a race

Thanks to our leader  
To Gillian Bull  
Who commands quite a pace  
For one who's so small

As a mile or so passes  
Now circling the lake  
Not a blossom in sight  
Is this a mistake?

So forgive my doubts  
I beg your pardon  
As we finish for tea  
At the Saville Garden

I question the leader  
Of this 16-mile feat  
But Gillian assures us  
Were in for a treat

***Martin Matthews.***

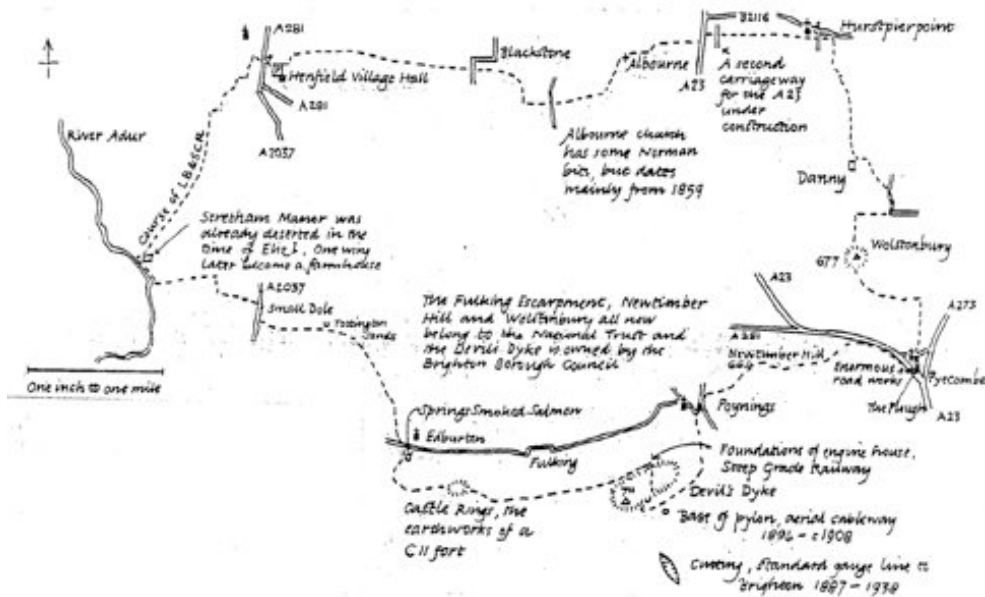
**We are finally led / into a valley of colour**



**In the depths of the park / A huge herd of deer**



**Pyecombe Perambulation Saturday 25th April**



The skies were clearing following early morning rain as 3 (yes THREE) of us set off on another of Tony Youngs' South Downs walks on what turned out to be a bright and breezy day. We left Henfield on a short stretch of the Downs Link path as far as the River Adur. We then made our way, via Small Dole to Edburton for the first of the day's climbs up the Fulking Escarpment. Once on top of the Downs we passed Castle Rings, the site of a Norman Motte and Bailey and then followed the South Downs Way to The Devil's Dyke. From there we descended to Poynings and then up and over Newtimber Hill to our lunch stop at Pycombe. The pub here has been much tarted up since my last visit on Tony's 1991 walk of this route. From Pycombe a steady climb took us to the summit of Wolstonbury Hill with it's wonderful 360° view. From here we descended steeply and made our way north to Hurstpierpoint and then west to return to Henfield enjoying good views of the South Downs on the way.

Thanks to Jackie and Ted for turning up and to Tony Cartwright for joining me on the walk out in early April. Where were the rest of you?

*Dave Challenger*

