

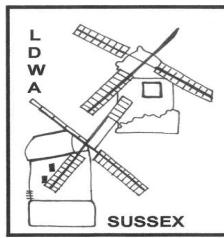
Long Distance Walkers' Association

SUSSEX GROUP



NEWSLETTER

July 2014



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1. Chairman's Chat

It's around the end of February when one first starts to notice that the days are getting a little longer and indeed Spring may be on its way. Thoughts begin to turn to easy walking through the lush Sussex countryside with trees in full leaf, short-sleeved shirts, shorts, walking shoes (not boots!), lots of water, sun cream lotion and sunglasses. Then suddenly you are back in February 2014 in the mist of the wettest winter on record. Streams are torrents, the flood plains look like seascapes and many paths are either under water or just a quagmire and simply impassable. Irrational thoughts take over – this will never, ever dry out!

Despite this, and quite remarkably, the severe wet conditions of the early months had little or no impact on our walks... and of course it did eventually dry out. We have also been lucky so far this year to avoid the very worst of any poor weather on the day.

The first six months of 2014 have gone well. Another successful South Downs Marathon took place in April (see below). Thank you to all who contributed to make it run so smoothly. Especial thanks are due to Chris and Shirley for their hard work.

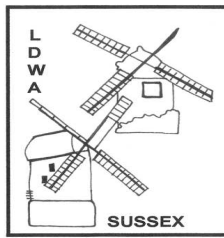
The Group's walks have also gone well with overall numbers up from last year. It's good to see some familiar faces coming along on a regular basis. We have for some time now lacked a 'core' group of walkers that regularly turns out. Not everyone can attend all the walks but I hope we have started to turn this round. Thank you to those who have attended and in particular to those who have made some quite long journeys across the county to be there.

Working with the Samaritans to provide two routes for their 'National Sponsored Walk 2014' proved to be an interesting diversion from the norm and let's hope it may have encouraged one or two participants to join us. We have also been working with Eastbourne and Wealden Councils to provide two walks as part of their Walking Festival later this year. This is new for both them and us, so let's keep our fingers crossed that all goes to plan.

We now have a walking programme in place for the rest of the year which is on the website and will also be in the August edition of *Strider*. Thank you to those who have agreed to commit quite far ahead to lead a walk.

Happy walking.

Trevor Beeston - Chairman



2. Group News

LDWA Sussex Committee for 2014

Chairman: Trevor Beeston	E: beestont@aol.com
Treasurer: Shirley Greenwood	E: shirleygreenwood@btinternet.com
Secretary: Anthony Mitchell	E: anthonyemitchell@btinternet.com
Challenge Events Organiser: Chris Baines-Holmes	E: chrisbainesholmes@btinternet.com
Walks Organiser: Trevor Beeston	E: beestont@aol.com
Newsletter Editor: David Weatherley	E: diweatherley@gmail.com
Webmaster: David Hodge	E: david@weavingtree.co.uk
Member: Gillian Aitken	
Member: Chris Coates	

There still remain vacancies on the committee. Should anyone like to join please contact either the chairman or the secretary.

Committee meetings

Your committee has met twice since publication of the previous newsletter, most recently on 10th July; information elsewhere in this newsletter summarises the main topics discussed. The meetings were held at the traditional venue - the *Trevor Arms* in Glynde, a hostelry that our chairman continues strenuously to deny forms part of his property portfolio...

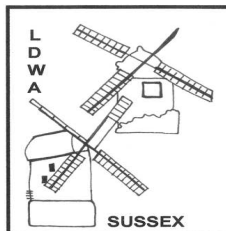
Membership

As at 30th June, 197 LDWA members had elected Sussex as their Primary Local Group with 174 further members nominating Sussex as an Associate Group.

Website

The new website went live in February and so far reactions have been positive. The pictures that are being posted seem popular and if you have taken any you wish to add to the site just send them to photos@ldwasussex.org.uk and I'll put them up.

You may not be aware but the website also contains features to help us manage the South Downs Marathon, for which we used ID cards this year for the first time. We ran the manual system in parallel but the fact that anyone with Internet access could follow the progress of walkers proved to be of great benefit. The results were also available at the click of the mouse at the end. Our confidence in the RFID system is such that it will be the primary recording system for SDM2015.



If you are planning a walk and would like a companion, post the details on the 'Ad hoc walks' page that is there for all to use.

If you have any suggestions for improvement to the website, please contact the Webmaster using the link on the 'Committee' page.

David Hodge - Webmaster

3. Challenge Events

South Downs Marathon – 27th April 2014

When this event was first mooted its title was chosen to allow the Group to locate it anywhere in the South Downs area. For the first couple of years it was based in South Harting. Problems with the venues and the fact that most of the marshals lived in East Sussex necessitated a move eastward. This year saw the fifth occurrence of the East Dean-based event. Over those years the route has been refined and extended to its current form, 27.8miles and 4000ft of ascent.

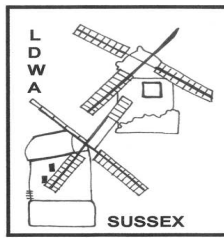
The number of starters has remained constant, between 70 and 80, with the exception of 2012 when 103 started. That year's event took place on April Fool's Day – was that significant? The entry limit is 150 – the event has always covered its costs. Much discussion has taken place about this apparent 'lack of interest'. Many of the participants, both runners and walkers, hold the event in high regard. The route is much admired for its variety, its views and the challenge it offers. They are also complimentary about the marshals, the food and the organisation. One theory is that the location of East Dean village hall – regarded by all to be a superb facility – is somewhat remote and (a long way) south of the M25. Curiously, the 50 mile Sussex Stride, held in September 2013, based in Rottingdean, exceeded its 150-entry limit. Its position as one leg of a Triple Challenge obviously helps – in the opinion of some the Stride may now be considered an 'Extreme Event', thus attracting a wider customer base.

Notwithstanding any of this, your committee considers the SDM to be the Group's flagship event. It works, it is manageable, it covers its costs and is rated highly by those with the good sense to enter it. No changes are planned save for a minor route alteration through Alfriston.

Contrary to a bad weather forecast the 2014 event took place on a bright, windy day, with sunny intervals and just the odd bit of drizzle drifting through. After a short delay, while the Hall was cleaned after wedding reception, the well-oiled machine that is the SDM swung into action. By 10:00 seventy souls had departed. This year a new computerised progress reporting system, designed by David Hodge, the group's computer whizz, was being tested. The results were excellent and the system will probably be used on the 2015 event. The first runner was back at East Dean at 14:49, having completed the route in 4hours and 48 minutes. Five retired and the rest, save one, were home and dry within the 10 hour limit, the one arriving at 1945 – a valiant effort.

My thanks to all the helpers and to all those who took part. The 2015 event is scheduled for Sunday 28th March – see you there!

Chris Baines-Holmes – Challenge Events Organiser



SDM2014 Feedback

Hi Shirley,

Thanks for your email. I was very pleased to finish the walk and by the end my blisters were really sore. I started the day very tired after a hard 5 day's walking in the Lake District over Easter I hadn't realised quite how tired I actually was. I was not too sure if I could make CP 3 by 17:00 as the blisters were already beginning after CP 2 but I managed it by 8 minutes and was then determined to finish even if it was after 19:00. I may not have finished officially but in my own mind I am happy with the outcome.

When the sun came out towards late afternoon the views were beautiful, in particular the view of Alfriston in the valley and the hills beyond bathed in sunlight highlighting a wonderful mixture of greens and yellows.

I maybe back next year depending how close Easter and the SDM are.

Mike

(Mike was the last finisher)

Just to say thank you to you and all your team for another great South Downs Marathon.

Even the weather sorted itself out as it was looking pretty dire when I checked earlier in the week but on the day, looks like the promised 'thunderly downpours' went elsewhere. I went through a few of them on the way home and was very thankful to be in the car and not up on the SDW - wipers going full throttle!

I really appreciate all the hard work which goes in to organising this event and thank you to your checkpoint teams - always so welcoming...and offering Marmite sandwiches at Glynde - just what I needed on the day!

I hope the new technology behaved and made keeping tabs on us all easier!

There will be a full write up on the event in my next Strider article.

Best wishes,

Tara

Thanks for a tough but brilliant event on Sunday. I'll be back for more next year! Not sure my legs are too keen though!

Regards,

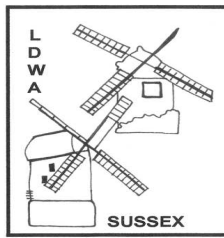
Jane

Please can you thank everyone for a really excellent event and for letting me be a part of it. Loved the views and all.

Have written up the event here: <http://www.tyregirl.com/the-adventures-of-tyre-girl.html>

Many thanks,

Rima



I took part in the SD marathon again and what a lovely day it was. My running buddy today said he always chooses this event, because he loves the fact tea is served in proper cups, food is on china plates and proper cutlery. He did also mention the organisers were pretty ok as well - always smiley, which I will 100% agree with.

We set off and stuck together for first 20miles or so, enjoying the fantastic clear views and great route. We were quite complacent having done this event a number of times, so you tend to know where you are going without looking at RD. I was lagging behind with less fresh legs. I had asked buddy to carry on and meet me at the finish, which was fine. He was never that far ahead of me, normally in sight but lost him at one stage, I turned left as RD had told me - no buddy in sight. I got to next c/p and they had not seen buddy, I was first through - strange as he was faster than me!

I continued up on SDW and turned above Long Man of Wilmington. I obviously then skipped a few VERY IMPORTANT words, like, GO PAST Trig point, then turn right. I failed to do this and turned right after first gate keeping fence on my right, as instructed and continue downhill (forgot/misread the 'stay on the ridge' bit). I ran down quite some way and was not recognising my surroundings, got to 2 gates and as hard as I tried, I could not make my surroundings match the RD! After wasting even more minutes I decided to backtrack UP the field again.

On my way up I noticed something I had whizzed past going downhill. A sheep with her head stuck in 'sheep proof fencing!' Only a sheep could do that. I went over to her quietly, visualising her panicking as I got close, trying to pull backwards and her head coming off. She stayed calm 'ish' as I covered my RD with a large flint so it did not blow away, carefully negotiated climbing the first fence with 2 strands of barbed wire on the top to get to her. Her twin lambs lying beside her seemed unaware of their mothers plight. She was well and truly STUCK!! She had obviously been there some time as the skin on her neck was pretty raw. Down on my hands and knees, I was trying to force her backwards through the tiny square of fencing she had become trapped in, her bottom was backed into thick gorse.

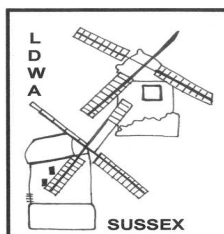
As much as I tried to push her backwards, flatten and fold back her ears. She would not budge. As much as I pushed her, she pushed against the fence and me with all her weight. Her eyes were rolling either way and she was grinding her teeth. Her fleece was wound round the wire and tight round her neck. Help, what do I do?? If I leave her - she WILL die, horrible way to go and very smelly, dead sheep. Pondered on what to do, as I was off route I was not going to see any runners to assist.

I heard a noise, stood up and saw to my utter disbelief and relief, there was girl cycling up on her mountain bike with 2 dogs in the same field as the sheep. I called her; she stopped, tied up her dogs and pushed through the gorse. It probably took us another 5 minutes as she pulled on sheep's fleece from behind, I pushed from my side and flatten ears, sheep resisted with all her might - then our magic worked, she was free and ungratefully trotted off to greet her twins.

This left me to continue up the field and try and backtrack to where I could find my place on the RD and landscape, leaving me to finish the last few miles. OK, so I had done 29.45 miles and lost a lot of time, but one 'silly' sheep was there to live another day. And never have baked beans on toast tasted SO wonderful.

Thanks for a great day,

Jackie Barker



4. Sussex Group Walks

Walks Programme - 2014

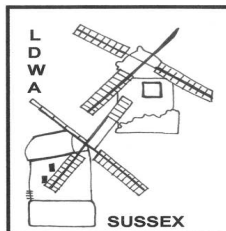
Date	Walk	Start/Finish	Mileage	No. Walkers
11/01	Great Parks of London	Regents Park		17
08/02	Jerome's Common Appearance	Midhurst	19	11
23/02	Firle in February	Firle Bostal	18	24
09/03	Mid Sussex Ouse Cruise	Cuckfield	18	20
23/03	Lewes Circular	Lewes	18	21
12/04	South Downs Marathon Highlights	East Dean	21	21
11/05	Balcombe, The Bluebell Railway	Balcombe	18	17
24/05	The Angmering Assist	Angmering	18	10
08/06	Summer Saunter to Stoughton	Cocking	19	12
21/06	Weald do it Anti-clockwise	Blackboys	19	10
06/07	Circular from Edenbridge	Edenbridge	20	8
20/07	Many Views of Cuckmere	Alfriston		
03/08	Horsted Keynes	Horsted Keynes		
16/08	Arundel & the Downs	Storrington		
07/09	Limits of the Known Universe	Union Street		
28/09	Downs, Cliff & Forest*	Eastbourne		
04/10	Wealden Circular*	Burwash		
11/10	Jerome's P2P Appearance	Pulborough		
02/11	3-Ringed Circus	Lancing		
16/11	Circular from	Washington		
14/12	Washington Christmas Walk	Alfriston		

*Organised by the Sussex Group for the Eastbourne & Wealden Walking Festival - full details from www.sussexwalkingfest.org.uk. The number of spaces is limited and entry (IN ADVANCE ONLY) is via the website.

Summer 2014 Half-Year Review

8th February - Jerome's Common Appearance

After 6 weeks of heavy rain it was time for our first "rural" walk of the year. 11 hardy souls arrived a Stedham Common car park on a day beset with further warnings of more rain, gales, hail and other weather delights. Would we be walking or swimming? Within a few yards of the car park we were in a swamp; a squally shower arrived and that set the tone for the day. Despite all these challenges, the group showed great spirit, with lots of jovial banter to keep us going as we slithered along in the mud. A tour of Iping and Stedham Commons and then a long climb up to the top of the South Downs; a descent to the south followed by another climb up and descent to Cocking for a well earned lunch. The loop to the east of Midhurst after lunch meant we would encounter streams that had become raging torrents. We finished just in daylight at 5pm having covered 19miles although the effort involved in the terrain made it seem considerably more. Thanks very much to Jerome who will be back leading another walk for us in October.



23rd February – Firle in February

No rain today but how much more windy can it get?! Amazingly 22 turned up at the Firle Beacon car park. Fighting to stand upright in the southerly gale we headed east to soon drop down off the hill to find calmer conditions. Taking to the lower path towards Alfriston it was mainly good walking despite some good mud in places. We climbed up to Windover Hill (which certainly lived up to its name) before descending back into Alfriston for lunch. The group had swollen to 24 as we headed towards Seaford, then swinging back towards Firle with the last hour spent walking back with the strong wind on our left that you really had to lean into at times. Many thanks to Sima for leading the walk with the highest attendance since I have been involved with the group.

9th March - Mid-Sussex Ouse Cruise

This was the first of our two walks in March. It was great to see 20 turn up on a gloriously sunny morning at the Cuckfield village car park. Unfortunately, Chris was not feeling great and felt it would not be sensible to be far from civilisation for a whole day. Taking the reins, we set off northwest passing through Whitemans Green and then Staplefield for a stop on the village green. Heading east through the Mid Sussex countryside to reach Ardingly village for lunch. After lunch we skirted the southern tip of the Ardingly reservoir before spending time for a photo opportunity under the magnificent Balcombe viaduct. A good route.

23rd March – Lewes Circular

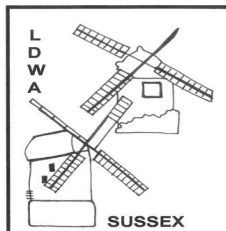
Our second walk in March saw 22 set off from Lewes railway station on a route that turned out to be an interesting figure-of-eight. Soon reaching the river Ouse we travelled south along the riverbank to the bridge at Southease for a quick stop. Onto Rodmell then up to the South Downs Way and along the ridge towards Brighton but dropping steeply down to Kingston village for lunch. After a well-earned stop it was back into Lewes through the town then up a steep path to cross Lewes golf course and on to Mount Caburn. Four went back via the dewpond, the others via Glynde. A most enjoyable day. Thanks to Clare for devising and leading the walk.

12th April - South Downs Marathon Highlights

This year's South Downs Marathon (SDM) Challenge Event took place at the end of April, which provided the opportunity to run a traditional Marshal's Walk once the clocks had gone forward. However, given that there appeared little appetite last year for the 'marshals' to walk out the 28mile route, it was agreed that this year we would trial a led walk over a slightly shorter 21mile version in hope that it would attract more interest. It was therefore very pleasing to see 21 start out at East Dean on a dry day. Calling the walk 'South Downs Marathon Highlights' we set off along the SDM route making our way out to the coast and traversed four of the Seven Sisters before continuing on the South Downs Way to Litlington. Diverting up towards High and Over to soon reach Cradle Hill. Rather than drop down into Norton and go onto Glynde as per the SDM we headed straight for Bo Peep to reach the South Downs Way again before dropping down into Alfriston for lunch (something that wouldn't be had on the main event itself!). After lunch the route was substantially that of the SDM passing above the Long Man and eventually down to Jevington, before climbing again and then heading south to return to East Dean. Consideration will now be given to including this walk again in next year's programme in advance of the SDM 2015.

11th May – Balcombe, The Bluebell Railway

In November 2012, the weather had taken a turn for the worst. The 7 who turned up at Balcombe station were in for an interesting day trying to cope with the conditions and the paths that had turned into rivers. Those that survived all agreed that the route was a good one and



should be enjoyed by more. Wind forward 18 months and it was great to see 17 start out for a re-run of this walk. It wasn't raining this time but was rather windy. Our route took us via Ardingly, Wakehurst Place and onto Horsted Keynes for lunch. After lunch it was through Ardingly College, around the reservoir and back to Balcombe. We crossed the Bluebell railway and our timing was impeccable as to be trackside to see the steam train and its passengers pass by at that very moment. Thanks Dave for devising the route and leading from the front.

24th May - The Angmering Assist

Last year we had been approached by the Samaritans and asked if we could provide two long-distance routes for their 2014 National sponsored walk. We duly complied and devised a 30 and 16 mile route including written route descriptions. In recognition of this we included in our own programme a version of the shorter route (which turned out to be 17.5 miles). On the same day as the LDWA 100, with the weather forecast not looking very good at all, 10 started off from Worthing Rugby Club in Angmering. The weather turned out to be fairly kind with just a 5-minute minor shower before lunch and 20 minutes of rain afterwards before the sun came out. The route was broadly north Worthing through woods and open downland utilising the Monarch's Way with a lunch stop in Findon. The highlight was towards the end of the walk when the magnificent views of the coastal strip from the Seven Sisters to the Isle of Wight could be seen from the top of High Down. Thanks to Chris for leading and for his work with the Samaritans on the day.

8th June - Summer Saunter to Stoughton

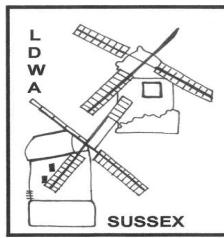
12 gathered at the beginning of what turned out to be a glorious June day. We set off along the SDW before turning down into the shade of the forest. Up and then down again into Singleton and with the sun high in the sky and near perfect clear day we reached the top of the Trundle to experience views of Goodwood, the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. Then onto Kingley Vale known for its twisted and ancient yews and which are among the oldest living things in Britain. The very steep climb out of the vale was rewarded with more great views towards the coast. Lunch was taken in the village of Stoughton. Returning back through the West Dean estate to reach the SDW and eventually back to the car park. Thanks to Lisa for the route and leading on a great day out.

21st June - Weald Do it Anticlockwise

Unfortunately Dave was unable to lead his walk on this the longest day of the year but that didn't stop 10 of us starting out at Blackboys on another glorious June day. Taking a route north we followed the Vanguard Way north west before turning west and into Ashdown Forest. Dropping south we reached the village of Fairwarp for our lunch stop. Still warm and sunny we headed back southwest through classic Wealden countryside with its hay meadows to pick up the Wealdway and back to Blackboys.

6th July - Circular from Edenbridge

There was rain in the air as we arrived at the car park. For the first time for a while we put our wet weather gear on as we started out southeast of Edenbridge before turning north towards Four Elms. The rain had stopped and the temperature had risen and the coats were soon off. It was only the long wet grass that prevented early removal of any waterproof trousers. Coming up to 11 o'clock and an ideal time to stop at the Bough Beech Visitor Centre, tea and coffee all round. We then set off up towards Ide Hill for a brief water stop and great views. Then after nearly 14 miles we reached Limpsfield Chart for the lunch stop and a drink in the Carpenters Arms. That left just a pleasant 6 miles to enjoy in the afternoon to get back to Edenbridge.



Thanks to Manfred for devising and leading the walk in what turned out to be a lovely day after a dampish start.

Thank you to all who have participated in the walks so far this year and I hope you can join us on future walks. Particular thanks are due to those who agreed to put together some excellent routes and for leading them.

If you would like to lead a walk for the group in future (starting next year now), please contact me at beestont@aol.com

Trevor Beeston - Walks Organiser

5. Other Events

Walking with the Samaritans – National Walk 14th June 2014.

As part of their on-going fund raising operation the Samaritans organise an annual charity walk. Responsibility for the 2014 event fell, at rather short notice, to the Worthing branch. The chief organiser of the event, Jayne Herring, is a member of the LDWA and in June 2013 Jayne contacted our chairman, Trevor, with a request for assistance with the walk.

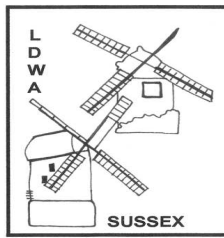
The requirement. The requirement was for two routes, one of 30 miles, the other of 16 miles, both based on Worthing Rugby Club at Angmering and sharing some checkpoints.

- The longer route was soon established by Trevor, leaving the Rugby Club to pass under the A27, then to Arundel and on to Amberley to pick up the SDW. On to Washington via Kithurst Hill then south to Findon Valley and home through Clapham Village.
- The 16-miler departed from the longer route east of Arundel, continued via Michelgrove to re-join the 30mile route at Findon.

As with most events of this nature each route was dictated, to some degree, by the need for road access to the checkpoints.

Once the routes were agreed the task of writing the route description could commence. As the target audience was expected to have less experience in route finding than the average LDWA eventer, grid references were provided only for checkpoint locations and compass bearings were not included. We were told that the routes would be marked with red & white tape and the route description would only be available on the day of the event. Bearing all this in mind it was decided to write the description in early 2014 –coinciding, as it turned out, with the start of the Wet Season.

The route description. Writing a route description is a fairly long-winded and tedious affair and, as it is all about the detail, has to be undertaken in small bites. Access to the route was mainly by the two-car method. Public transport was also used as, unusually, the whole route was accessible by train or bus. By and large the rainstorms were avoided but the mud, particularly in the woods, was a hazard. Even the path diversions had diversions! Both routes were tested



on 24th May, the longer by our Secretary, Anthony, and the shorter, with a few additions, as a group walk. The route descriptions were delivered on 28th May.

The event. After two weeks of dry weather the heavens open on Friday 13th June. Saturday was a day of little wind and occasional, very heavy, showers. The walkers left the Rugby Club at 7.30am and were soon en-route to CP1, the bacon butty stop. As promised, both routes had been marked with red & white tape the previous day.

My job, on the day, was to be the 'back marker' on the 30-miler between Arundel and the Findon Valley. One of the tasks of the back marker is to retrieve the red & white tape, even when it is attached to thistles and stinging nettles. The route along the SDW seemed particularly well marked. I continued happily until informed that (a) a Centurion event was under way, a 100 mile run between Winchester and Eastbourne, and (b) I was "interfering with their route", since it too was marked with red & white tape. One Samaritans' entrant took the route marking to heart, ditched the route description and was finally found near Lancing. Any complaints about persistent red & white tape on the SDW should be directed to the Centurions!

Conclusion. 40 entered the 30 miler and 150 the shorter walk. There were a number of retirements due to the mud and rain but in the end all came safely home. The evening finished with a fish supper and a lady singer. The Samaritans had really good feedback about the route, the organisation and the friendliness of all involved and I was made very welcome on the day.

The Sussex Group doesn't really have a 'charity profile' and there is absolutely no reason why it should – we are, after all, a walking organisation. We happily accept entrants on our events who use them to raise money for charity – remember the 'tyre lady' on the last Marathon? It was good, on this occasion, to give something back.

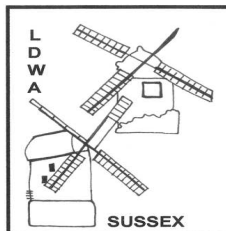
Chris Baines-Holmes - Events Organiser

Sussex Group support to other groups

In the coming months we will be lending support to other groups by manning (*is this PC? – should it be 'personning'?*) checkpoints on their Challenge walks:

- Nutley checkpoint on the Wealden Waters event (Kent Group), 26th – 27th July
- Abinger Common checkpoint on the Surrey Tops (a KSS Triple Challenge event organised by the Surrey Group), 20th & 21st September

Details of these events are included in *Strider*



6. Miscellany

Why didn't the Normans didn't wear shorts?

There is no reference to the wearing of shorts in Norman times and it seems members of this hardy martial race seldom ventured outdoors with legs uncovered. Perhaps they were nesh¹ or, more likely, perhaps their experience of deer hunting had endowed them with a healthy respect for *Ixodes ricinus*...

In the final years of the 11th century the ruling Norman elite began to establish extensive chases and deer parks throughout the newly conquered country to indulge their passion for deer hunting. With its diverse scenery and extensive wooded wastes Sussex provided ideal for this purpose and by medieval times the county was dotted with parks, mainly in areas of poorer soils – the clays of the Weald and the clay-with-flints of the heavily wooded western Downs.

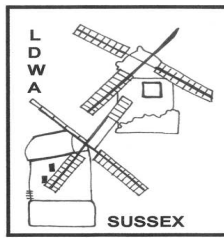
Fast-forward nearly a millennium. During late spring this year there was a minor explosion of articles in the national press warning of the dangers of Lyme disease; specialist periodicals catering for those engaging in a range of outdoor activities – for example angling, golf and walking – carried similar material. Why all the fuss? Firstly Lyme disease can leave the sufferer with serious arthritic, neurological or heart problems and in some cases has proved fatal; secondly the number of cases reported within the UK has risen sharply in recent years. And what has this to do with the Normans? Well, the usual way for a human to contract Lyme disease is via saliva transferred when bitten by a tick (*Ixodes ricinus*, an arachnid) that has been infected by a host deer.

Until recent times the problem of infected deer ticks was confined to continental Europe but it is now a serious and growing problem in much of the UK. This is due to increasing populations of deer and ticks (the latter partly via annual westward migration of avian hosts), and to our climate becoming more suited to ticks (i.e. warmer winters and wetter summers). We are fortunate to live in a wonderfully scenic part of the country and to be able to wander through Downland and Wealden countryside – but we need to remember that Sussex is home to several deer parks and to many unconfined herds of deer that roam widely. Even town dwellers need to take care – around 10 years ago a near neighbour of mine came close to death after contracting Lyme disease from an infected tick on a golf course in Tunbridge Wells. He still suffers occasional bouts of crippling arthritis.

Tick bites are a potential problem for much of the year but the times of highest risk are during spring, when over-wintered nymphs seek a meal, and autumn when adults prepare to lay eggs. A hungry tick climbs onto a leaf, twig or frond and latches onto clothing, skin or fur as its victim brushes past; the food of interest is human or animal blood and is usually sought from warm, hidden areas of the body. The bite is usually painless and so the tick often remains in place undetected, gorging for up to 48hr before detaching itself. Treatment of Lyme disease is problematic, since there is no effective vaccine, and the best approach is to take sensible precautions before, during and after walking:

- Think carefully about wearing shorts when walking in terrain where brushing through thick undergrowth is likely;
- Use approved insect repellent on exposed skin;

¹ Editor's note: Nesh *adj.* (used north of Watford) excessively susceptible to feeling the cold



- After walking check your body carefully for attached ticks (and if a dog walker regularly check your animal);
- Remove ticks immediately and very carefully – clumsy removal can leave the head embedded – by means of tweezers or, preferably, a specialist tick tool.

As ever, Mr. Google is a rich source of information and advice for those who wish to know more...



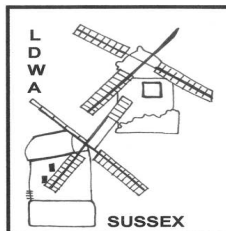
Picnic* in Patagonia – A Cautionary Tale

(*Picnic *pik'nik*, *n.* a packed meal eaten outdoors or an occasion when such a meal is eaten)

One of the less considered hazards of this walking business is the packed lunch. Although unlikely to fracture limbs – only molars – or lead to hypothermia, the packed lunch can be a hotbed of biohazards and packaging malfunctions. Had the chef-de-sandwich been following the latest EU hygiene regulations – blue gloves, no sneezing? Had the ingredients been within their sell-by dates? Having created this example of alfresco haute cuisine many B & B's pack it in a sliver of cling film, thus rendering it prone to major damage during the emergency extraction of waterproof from rucksack at the beginning of a sudden squall. While the biohazards may be beyond one's control the simple provision of a rigid lunch box should provide protection in the rucksack.

A hazard that can be encountered when the picnic is being consumed is intervention by members of the animal kingdom. The London Parks appear to be populated by starving squirrels and pigeons. Kinder is famous for its ravenous sheep. Boring evolutionary theory – when the original trespasses took place on Kinder in the 1930s, sandwiches, if there were any, were probably wrapped in newspaper². The middle class protesters, of course, would have had their cooks use greaseproof paper. Since then have the sheep learned to recognise cooking foil (visually?) and all manner of plastics?

² Editor's note: In those days in the Kinder area of the High Peak, newspaper, once read, was consigned to the outdoor privy; little was available to wrap around butties...



This phenomenon is not restricted to the UK. In the Pyrenees vultures, hitherto invisible, appeared the moment the lunch stop commenced. Fortunately, they never dropped below about a thousand feet.

My scariest encounter with the picnic predators took place in Patagonia, on the edge of the Torres de Paine range. In an attempt to avoid the near continuous gales that blow in that part of the world we had settled some fifty feet below a long ridge to eat our lunch.

I have to explain here the nature of what we had been given to eat. For some reason the descendants of invaders from the Iberian Peninsula cannot make decent bread. Or cakes or pastry or cornflakes. Sure, there are good 'artisan' bakers in Spain but not in Patagonia. The bread is without substance, flavour or colour. These characteristics are reflected in the spread and the cheese – words desert me.

As we attacked this repast one of the party noticed two black dots in the far distance, just above the ridge. We watched fascinated as the spots grew, soon to be identified as a pair of Andean condors. They rode the wind with just a few movements of their flight feathers, looking left and right. Suddenly they spotted us, looked at each other, then one of them, probably the female, retracted her wings a little and began to descend in our direction. Her legs, with their enormous talons, came down like air brakes and the angle of descent increased. By this time we had stopped eating and sat frozen to the spot. On she came, lower still - took a final disdainful look, extended her wings, retracted her legs and whirred over our heads, probably much higher than we imagined, and soared back to her mate.

The Andean condor is primarily a scavenger rather than a raptor. Although very big – the wingspan can reach 5 feet 10 inches - it has a weak sternum and is better suited to gliding on thermals than to power attacks. Likewise, the talons are large but designed more for walking on than attacking prey. It is also a bird with impeccable taste – one look at our Patagonian Picnic and it fled.

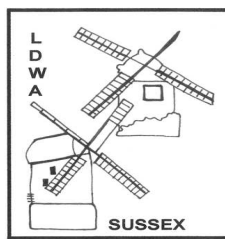
Bon ap  tit.

Pathtrekker

Discounts

It might have slipped the attention of some readers that the princely  13 annual LDWA membership fee confers the benefit of discount shopping with a number of retailers, for example Blacks, Cotswold Outdoor, TGO Magazine. To see a list of discount opportunities look under 'Membership', then 'Discounts' on the LDWA website – as ever the list is not fully up to date, for example it includes the late lamented Peglers of Arundel.

To view details of the discounts offered, usually 10% or 15% on full price items only, you will first need to login with your LDWA membership number.



Nah then, tha' mun be kind!

In the 14th century Geoffrey Chaucer established the basis of the Middle English tongue at a time when the dominant literary languages in the country were French and English. The latter was divided into a number of dialects employed in different parts of the country; of these the Southern, Midland, Kentish and Northumbrian were prominent and the Midland dialect, spoken in London and its surrounding area, was the simplest in grammar and syntax. This was also the dialect patronised by the aristocratic and literary circles of the country – the movers and shakers of English society would (very occasionally) cleanse themselves by taking a *bath*, not a *barth*; the grounds of their great houses included *plants*, not *plarnts*, and areas of *grass*, not *grarse*. Chaucer employed the Midland dialect in his work, and in so doing decided once for all which dialect was going to be the standard literary language of the whole of the country. None who followed him considered using any other dialect for any literary work of consequence.

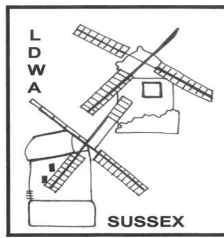
“The best-laid plans aft gang agley”. A recent academic study has concluded that the last bastion of unrecognized discrimination within the UK might be that of ‘accentism’. It showed that many people with strong regional accents suffer from such negative perceptions that they feel forced to ‘posh up’ their speech; accentism is the ‘last taboo’ after the fight against racism, ageism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. So it might soon become for Sussex Group ‘incomers’, for it has been whispered that Group coffers might in the near future be swelled by the simple expedient of levying a RAS – a Regional Accent Supplement.

Hmmm. Just think – your fellow walker might indeed have a seemingly uncouth Midland accent with flat vowels and might well use strange dialect words such as *mither* and *nesh*, but he or she might be struggling terribly with negative perceptions stemming from spending 6 or 7 hours in the company of people with ‘posh’ Southern accents. Please do not succumb to cruel discrimination – set aside your preconceptions and be welcoming... and remember... he or she, seemingly a country bumpkin, might just be an aristocrat or a literary luminary...

The Midhurst Way



The Midhurst Way is a recently developed route that is on our doorstep. It was extended from 19 to 29 miles earlier this year, now runs from Haslemere to Arundel and is described as a ‘short long-distance path’ (!). It is a linear route designed for easy accessibility for those



travelling by rail from London but could be converted into a circular one-day expedition by means of Arundel-Midhurst rail interconnection (ca 90min, with 2 changes).

More details may be found on the national LDWA website or via Mr. Google.

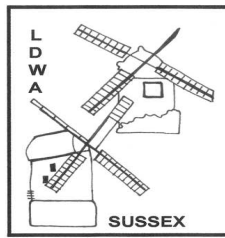
7. 'Your Walk'

Not quite the Bob Graham Round, 10-17 May 2014

Casually reading the Spring issue of Trail magazine I came across the Bob Graham Round in the Lake District: a fell runner 24 hour challenge over 42 summits involving some 72 miles and over 27,000 feet of ascent. Fell runners may well be a breed apart, attempting it in 24 hours, but surely I could do this stretched over 6 days walking? Duly inspired, I secured the bargain return Seniors rail ticket to Penrith and arranged the somewhat less bargain single person B&B nights in Threlkeld (2), Grasmere YHA, Dungeon Ghyll in Langdale, Wasdale Head and Keswick (2).



The first day started slowly, catching a bus into Keswick for the start of the walk from Moot Hall, after the obligatory full English breakfast. It was raining heavily before I even got on to the bus. Skiddaw was the first summit, an easy path, but done in rain and mist. It then got more challenging, route finding in mist across seemingly pathless heather and boggy moorland more reminiscent of parts of the Pennines, to Great Calva. Thankfully the mist cleared on this top, and I could see across to my next cloud-covered summit, Blencathra. This mountain and the village of Threlkeld had just that week found their way on to the national news with the story of how the landowner and lord of the manor was going to sell the mountain to pay some death duties. Reaching the Blencathra summit involved crossing a river that was too deep for stepping-stones, with water over the boots and then soggy for the rest of the day; a somewhat miserable experience. My progress was slow, but encouraged by brighter weather by 5pm. I was on top of Blencathra at 7pm, and uncertain about whether the B&B person had been serious when they said, unsolicited, "If you're not back by 7.30 I'll call out the Rescue". I definitely didn't want the embarrassment of having the Mountain Rescue called out when I was perfectly safe but somewhat slow in my progress. Not having their phone number I rang my wife back in Sussex



from the top of Blencathra and got her to reassure the B&B that I was safe but slow. I got down into the village just in time to miss the pub's last orders for food, as they finished serving early on a Sunday...

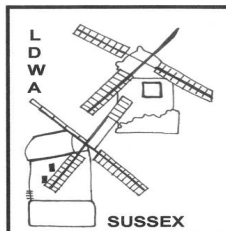
Day 2 was a tough but more straightforward walk from Threlkeld southwards along the Helvellyn range to Grasmere, planned to take in 12 summits. In the event I missed out the last but one, Fairfield, as it would have involved a tough ascent and descent the same way back to Grisedale Hause, in evening mist and drizzle, and settled for a slow clamber over Seat Sandal and then down into Grasmere. I was staying at Butharlyp How Youth Hostel that night, where I had worked as an assistant warden for a few months, some 40plus years previously, during an early version of a 'gap year'. I was intrigued to see what I'd remember of the place and what had changed. The most striking change for me was what was on offer in the hostel shop. I'd arrived too late for dinner (again!) and asked if I could buy a tin of soup. They didn't have food for sale, but I was told there was a Co-op just down the road! (In the event the young woman behind the desk took pity on me and helpfully rustled up some soup from the kitchen). I remembered working in the little hostel shop decades ago selling tins of soup, baked beans, milk, sweets and chocolate etc to the 'members', but now the sole thing they sold was alcohol! A sign of the times and quite a cultural shift for the hostel movement over the decades...

Day 3: I had decided to have an easy day rather than continue sticking relentlessly to the official Round. I was taking too long: coming down off the fells after 8pm on two successive days was too much and I rationalised that it was more important to enjoy my walking rather than drag myself slowly over someone else's route. So a stroll over to Elterwater and a wander along the Langdale Valley to the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel for an early arrival. This missed out eight summits of the original intended route, but I was happy with my choice.

To make up for the easy day, I now planned for Day 4 to tackle Bowfell via The Band, then Esk Pike, Scafell Pike and Scafell en route to the Wasdale Head Inn, and so a reasonably serious day, and pretty much in line with a Bob Graham section. There was also the prospect of meeting a fellow LDWA person, Dave Weatherley, as he was based there for a week's walking with a friend. The most challenging part of the walk was crossing from Scafell Pike to Scafell, with a choice of routes from Mickledore. These had the commentary from Wainwright that '*medals have been won for lesser deeds*' so I guessed it wouldn't be entirely straightforward. I decided to go via Foxes Tarn rather than Lords Rake, as a new route for me. On the descent from Mickledore I was overtaken by a young man who was also attempting the same route to Scafell and we wondered about how much further we would have to descend before finding a gully to clamber up to Foxes Tarn. We did find it, and he raced off (relative to my steady plodding!) and disappeared into the distance. The summit achieved, a long and slow descent to Wasdale followed for me, with legs and knees complaining, and I decided that the following day would have to be another easy day, and the Bob Graham Round proper was something for another lifetime...

Reception at the Wasdale Head Inn had told me that someone had asked twice for me that evening, wondering if I'd arrived. After a quick bath I went down to the Ritson Bar with 10 minutes to go before they stopped serving food (another late day!). I could hear the familiar voice of Dave but couldn't see him, and he was possibly holding forth on the merits of Yorkshire to those who would listen³. I turned the corner to roughly where the voice was coming from, but no obvious Dave, only someone unfamiliar grinning at me and holding out his hand to shake

³ Editor's note: A good guess... he was holding forth on the merits of the High Peak area of Derbyshire...



mine. Taken aback, but being polite I shook his hand, and the familiar voice came from the unfamiliar face: *"Hello Malcolm, you don't recognise me without the beard then"* which was entirely true. Quite a transformation. We had an enjoyable chat as I downed a pint and devoured a bar meal.

The next day was destination Honister Hause, over Black Sail Pass in mist and drizzle, and then delightfully over Wainwright's favourite fell Haystacks, followed by a bus to Keswick for the first of two nights B&B. Keswick turned out to be in the throes of a Mountain Festival, with the potential opportunity to go to talks from Alan Hinkes, Joss Naylor (fell runner and local hero) or Ranulph Fiennes. There were only tickets left for Alan Hinkes, so it was off to catch up on the trials and tribulations of doing all the 8,000 metre peaks. Besides the sobering accounts of how half his peers and colleagues who attempted this feat were now dead, and half of the rest had lost toes, fingers or even limbs to frostbite in their endeavours, it was constructive to hear his explicit view that no mountain was worth losing a digit over. I translated this to no fell is worth wrecking my knees for, as part of the on-going rationalisation over not achieving the challenge I had originally set myself.

My last day on the fells involved taking the bus to Buttermere and walking back to Keswick. Having climbed Robinson and heading towards Dale Head, I spotted a determined looking figure striding in my direction. I recognised him as the chap who had gone down with me from Mickledore and then passed me on the way up to Foxes Tarn on Scafell. He told me he was just about to do Robinson as the last of his Bob Graham Round trip, and obviously and justifiably pleased and proud about it. To reinforce the difference between his achievement and mine, he'd completed it and done it wild camping! I consoled myself with thinking that the extra 35 years or so on my side probably worked a bit against me. I was pleased for him, and genuine in my congratulations. After Dale Head I headed down the ridge to Cat Bells, then caught the launch across Derwentwater as a fitting finale and variation to the week.

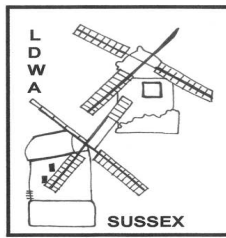
In retrospect, I had had an enjoyable week's walking renewing my acquaintance with the Lake District and at the same time a salutary lesson in tempering my challenges to my abilities. The final triumph was courtesy of Virgin Rail and some lucky connections in London, only five hours from Penrith station back to my house in Barcombe. I'm not sure if my ambitions still outreach my abilities, as my next big challenge is attempting Mera Peak in Nepal in October, at 6,476metres high (21,247 feet), so it's roll on more altitude training (!) on the South Downs and local LDWA walks!

Malcolm Price

Lejog Part 3

(Our intrepid Webmaster is walking the 'End to End' - Lands End to John O'Groats - in sequential easy (hmm) stages. This year the plan was to complete the section from Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire to Milngavie, just north of Glasgow and the start of the West Highland Way).

I got off the train at Hebden Bridge, the heavens opened and it rained for the next 3 hours. Once I got to the reservoirs on the Pennine Way it stopped and it hardly rained at all after that. First stop near Haworth, next night Gargrave. The following day was road walking to get across to Settle as I was walking onwards using the Settle to Carlisle Way. Unfortunately my feet started



to get sore and my right knee was hurting. So the next 5 days to Carlisle were spent walking a bit and using the train a bit.

The Settle to Carlisle Way would make a good walk for a week with a B&B as a base camp and using the railway to get to and from the start/finish of each section. It is not way marked, but uses parts of the existing Pennine Way and Ribble Way. It goes through many villages and there are around 17 viaducts to view including the famous Ribblehead Viaduct (and you might see a restored express locomotive working hard at the head of one of the regular steam-hauled excursions).

After Carlisle I crossed the border into Scotland at Gretna Green then had to stop walking because of the knee. After a stop in Annan and Lockerbie using the train I stopped and came home.

Bits of trivia – Carlisle had the first mainland post box in 1853 (the first was a box in Jersey a year earlier). The town was the birthplace of the mother of US President Woodrow Wilson – he visited Carlisle in 1918.

I plan to fill in the gaps next year using the railway and shorten the stages from Annan (along the Annandale Way) to Glasgow.

David Hodge

8. Vectis Venture, Easter 2015

It is proposed to organise a trip to the Isle of Wight at Easter-time next year, spending 3 or 4 days exploring the varied landscape and luxuriating in the warm sunshine that is sure to bathe the island at that time of year (!). If you think you might wish to take part please visit the LDWA Sussex website and register your interest via the 'Vectis Venture' link.

And finally...

... the Editor is very grateful to those who have contributed material for inclusion in this newsletter. He would be pathetically grateful for contributions suitable for the next (January 2015) edition.