

Long Distance Walkers' Association

SUSSEX GROUP

<http://www.ldwasussex.org.uk/>



A few Sussex dialect words useful to help describe a winter 2019/20 Wealden walk

Clodgy	muddy and wet
Gawm	especially sticky, foul-smelling mud
Gubber	black mud of rotting organic matter
Ike	a mess or area of mud
Smeery	wet and sticky surface mud
Slob	thick mud
Slab	the thickest mud
Stoach	trampled (e.g. by cattle) ground
Stug	watery mud



NEWSLETTER

January 2020

1. Chairman's Chat

It was encouraging that 2019 showed another increase in LDWA membership. The rise in numbers nationally was also reflected locally. During 2019, the number of new subscribers designating themselves as Primary Members of Sussex increased by 55 taking the total at year end to 342. Those that also marked Sussex as their or one their Associate Groups was 131 bringing the total to 523.

2019 saw another busy year for the Sussex Group holding two challenge events and organising twenty two social walks. In line with previous years, the first quarter proved very successful attracting above average attendance on many walks. During this period a varied walks programme provided the opportunity for members to enjoy the countryside across the county from Billingshurst to Rye.

Weather during the first part of the year was mixed so it was fortunate that for our first Challenge Event, the LDWA South Downs Marathon, it was a near perfect May spring day, dry and warm in the sun. 166 entered, 127 started and 123 finished the event. Encouragingly, entries increased from 143 in 2018 but still short of the 180 entry limit. The numbers meant that financially the event provided a small surplus which was set aside to cover replacement of equipment and other expenses required to run the Group.

As with the pattern of previous years the summer/holiday months of June, July and August saw a decline – but only slight - in number of attendees on the social walks. The longer days provided the opportunity for some of the longer walks including a joint walk with the Kent Group.

In September the Group put on its second Challenge, the Sussex Stride, the flagship event that takes place every three years. The route was 51 miles with around 7100ft of elevation gain. The Stride attracted a regular following of entrants, whilst this year there was also a pleasing number of first-timers for many of whom this was a first attempt at a 50-miler. In total 132 entered, 112 started and 99 finished. The weather was warm and sunny until the last hour when there were light rain showers; it was the last day of the 2019 Indian Summer!

Come the autumn and the social walk programme provided routes as far afield as Arundel, Rye and Tunbridge Wells. The 2019 programme culminated with the annual “Christmas Walk”. This year it would be slightly longer than previously, starting and finishing at the Abergavenny Arms, Rodmell. There was then the opportunity to stay for a late lunch and quiz. The new format proved successful with 29 walkers and a similar number for lunch. It was pleasing to see so many faces on the walk that had supported the Group during 2019 whether it be marshalling on the two events, agreeing to lead a walk or just participating in our walks programme during the year.

Thank you to everyone that contributed to the Group during 2019. Particular thanks to Chris Baines-Holmes for his hard work as Events Coordinator, to Chris Coates for his detailed work on producing Risk Assessments for both the South Downs Marathon and Sussex Stride, and to Jane Bates for coordinating the walks programme whilst at the same time being the Group Treasurer.

Trevor Beeston, Chairman

2. Group Social Walks - 2019/20 programme

Date	Walk	Start	Miles	No.
2019				
03/08	Waldron circular	Waldron	18	15
17/08	Back to Beckley	Westfield	20	11
07/09	Harbour and Heights	Seaford	20	10
21/09	LDWA Sussex Stride			
28/09	Tunbridge Wells half circular	Hawkenbury	20	6
12/10	Maresfield Meander	Maresfield	20	9
26/10	Sussex Border Path 8 on 1	West Hoathly	18	12
09/11	Around Arundel	Arundel	20	5
23/11	Rye circular	Rye	15	10
08/12	Christmas Rodmell circular	Rodmell	14	29
Spring 2020				
11/01	First of the year	Firle Bostal	12	28
25/01	Martin's Marvel	Woodingdean	15	
08/02	Steve's South Downs Sights	East Dean	20	
22/02	Walk and 2020 AGM	Milton Street	10	
07/03	A Wadhurst Wander	Wadhurst	18	
22/03	Ouse Valley, Low Weald and Downs	Lewes	20	
04/04	Sussex Border Path Part 2	Scaynes Hill	20	
12/04	Long Man Stride 2 (Kent Group walk)	East Dean	23	
18/04	Burwash Circular	Burwash	20	

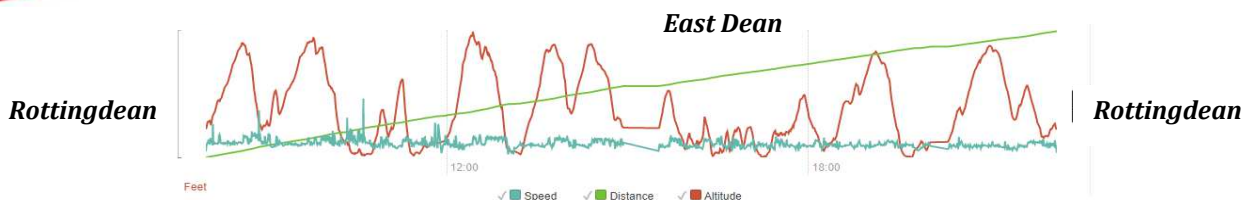
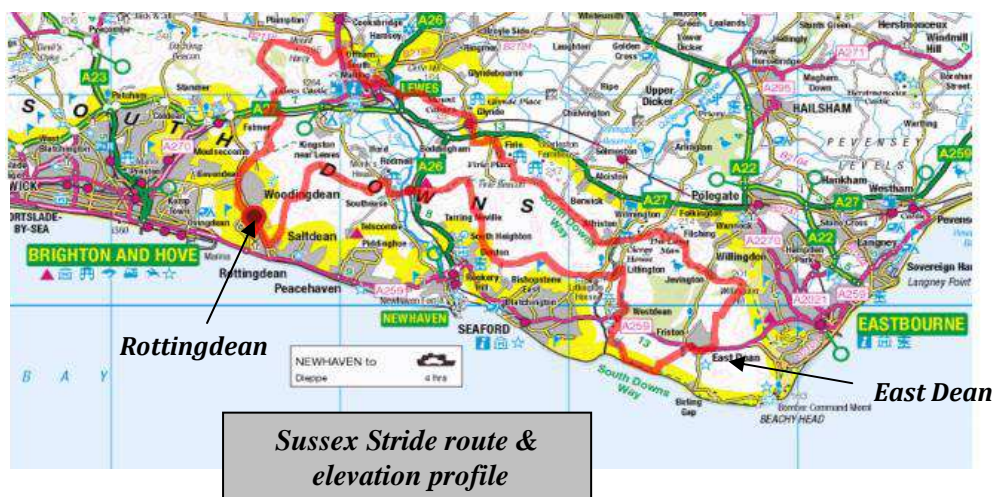
Late changes are sometimes necessary. Please always check walk details via the [website](#)

3. Challenge Events

Recent Events

The Stride comes of age

The Sussex Stride - the 50-mile LDWA Challenge event that we hold in the September of every third year - evolved as a combination of the former Sussex group 'Seven Sisters Marathon' and 'Windmill Walk' events. It was first held in 1998 and so the 2019 version marked the 21st anniversary of what has become a very popular event with walkers and runners alike.



The Stride attracts a regular following, whilst entrants for the 2019 event included a pleasing number of first-timers for many of whom this was a first attempt at an LDWA 50-miler we look forward to seeing them all again next time in 2022.

Four of the 99 who finished within the allotted time had already successfully completed the appropriate KSS Triple 50-mile challenge event (Sussex Stride, Surrey Tops, White Cliffs (Kent Group)) in each of the previous 11 years. This outstanding feat has been recognised by the

A far-flung field ... Norton checkpoint at mile 38



award to each of them of the KSS Triple Platinum certificate, together with a commemorative paperweight to add to their earlier Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for 6, 9 and 12 successive completions. **Congratulations to Andrew Boulden, Chris Pitt, Francis Thomason & David Whitehead.**

Thanks are due to each of those who gave of their time to help with the many and various tasks associated with the safe and efficient planning and organising of an event such as this - marshals, drivers, kitchen staff, HQ timekeepers, first aiders etc; also to each of the entrants without whom the volunteers would have experienced an extremely boring weekend.

Special thanks go to Chris Baines-Holmes, whose superb organisational skills ensured that this event ran smoothly, as in earlier years have a multitude of Sussex Group Challenge events for each of which the buck stopped with him. Chris has now hung up his clip board and is stepping back from the Events Organiser role after more years than he cares to remember - certainly for more than the Stride has been held.

The Stride ... a worked example of a Risk Assessment

This article is an explanation of how and why we do Risk Assessments (RAs) for LDWA challenge events in Sussex. They are prepared mainly as a "duty of care" for our entrants and marshals, but also to satisfy the requirements in the LDWA Guidelines for Events (and as described in Appendix J thereof). The 2019 Stride was the most recent of our events to benefit from one of these exercises.

The HSE and other organisations, e.g. RoSPA, define 5 basic steps in a Risk Assessment:

- Identify the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures
- Record your findings and implement them
- Review your assessment and update if necessary

We have documented this process in a set of Excel worksheets, which are easy to adapt and edit for use on different Sussex Group events. The first sheet is a description of the event, and a guide to the following sections. The main part of the RA is a table, which lists the hazards which have been identified by the main assessor in consultation with the Committee. We then list the possible consequences, and who is affected. Levels are assigned for Probability and Severity for each Hazard, and these are combined to give our first estimate of Risk. Note that in formal assessment, Risk as a

product of both Probability of occurrence, and Severity of the consequences. These Risk values are NOT absolute, all they can do is allow us to compare the risks from a number of different Hazards, and ensure that we put sufficient effort into reducing the major ones.

This risk scoring system was used by others on the LDWA North York Moors 100, held in 2017. It is based on a standard risk assessment matrix, as used in industry and for event planning: however the Impacts of the identified Hazards are defined in such a way that they fit the needs of an organised walking event. The risks arising from the identified hazards are assessed initially with no controls, and then taking account of the control measures that are known to be in place. It is not possible to remove all risk, but we do need to do whatever is practicable for events such as ours. For The Stride we did not identify any High risks, but we endeavoured to take steps to reduce Medium ones to Low wherever we could. Here are some examples of particular issues that came up:

First Aid

There is no legal requirement to provide First Aid cover on events such as ours, and it is not practicable to have qualified First Aiders at every checkpoint. Some LDWA groups do provide First Aid materials at checkpoints on events, but leave entrants to treat themselves so that the group does not itself assume any responsibility.

We did not think it was practicable to provide First Aid cover for the 2019 Stride, but then found that we were required to have a qualified First Aider at Longhill School as a condition (new in 2019) of hiring the hall and kitchen for use as event HQ. We then found that it was considerably cheaper to put one of the Committee through a 3-day course than to hire someone in from the Red Cross, or similar. The added benefit is that we now have a First Aider who will be present at most of our future events.

Regarding First Aid kits, we had one at the Stride HQ, but we are planning to buy additional ones for use at each of our checkpoints on 2020 events: we are going to augment the standard commercial kits, as they do not necessarily contain the things walkers need, for example as lots of tape!

Challenge Events Organiser

For a number of years Sussex group has been very fortunate to have as its Events Organiser Chris Baines-Holmes, a gifted organiser with great experience, but he is now hanging up his clipboard and is stepping back from the role. Working through the Risk Assessment process identified a substantial risk (organisational, not safety) involved in one person having the full set of responsibilities for the complex task of planning and organising events such as the Stride. The Committee has therefore decided to adopt a less risky methodology: the new Challenge Events Organiser role will be that of project manager, working with a small team of group members, each one responsible for planning and organising a specific aspect of future events. The Stride Risk Assessment has been used to identify the range of critical activities and qualities necessary for this team to continue organising events safely.

We are also collating all the contact lists, equipment and food lists, etc. and storing them on a secure server, accessible on a 'need to know' basis to members of the new events organisation team. These will include the Risk Assessments, and also things like procedures for using SiEntries, and the PACER system to record progress of entrants, so that the knowledge is shared.

Driving and Vehicles

Unfortunately, one of the biggest risks on our events is from road traffic. We take great care to minimise use of roads on the route: we identify all road sections and crossings on a separate sheet in the Risk Assessments, and we also consider traffic levels and sight lines. As noted previously, we can't eliminate risk, but we can do our best to minimise them.

The other major concern is that most people drive to events (as do the marshals). It just is not feasible to run events such as ours using public transport instead of cars. The "riskiest" part of any event is probably driving home afterwards, when you may relax and are tired. The only way to avoid this is to not take part, although car-sharing may have some benefit. As organisers, the only risk reduction measure we can really do is to provide a space for entrants to sleep, after overnight completion of the

Stride: but we can't make them do it.... And if you look at the bigger picture, if people don't come to our events, they will most likely be driving somewhere else, so the societal risk level is the same. And of course, all the entrants are getting the health benefits of fresh air and exercise !

Chris Coates, Compliance Officer

Forthcoming Events

Coming soon ...

The South Downs Marathon, 10th May 2020



28 miles in 10 hours
A circular route from East Dean in East Sussex.

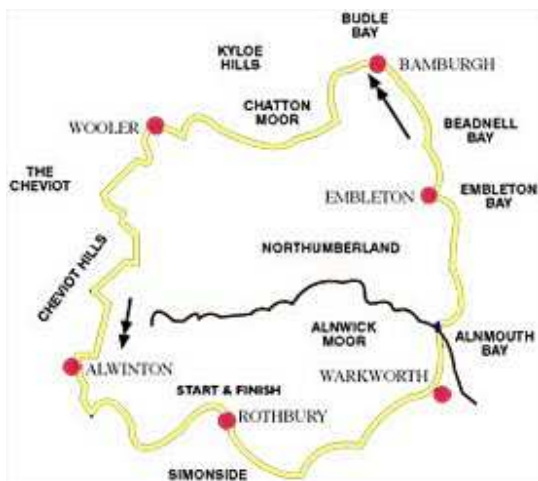
This classic event visits some of the most beautiful countryside in the South Downs National Park, including the Seven Sisters, Cuckmere Haven, Firle Beacon and the iconic Downland villages of Litlington, Firle and Alfriston.

For full details and entry please logon to [Si Entries](#) or visit www.ldwasussex.org.uk

4. 'Your Walk'

The Inn Way to Northumberland

There are five 'Inn Way' walks in the country and the Inn Way to Northumberland was the only one I had not done. It is a 94 mile walk passing 48 Pubs in the North East of the country.



Outline of the route

Unfortunately Mark Reid, who devised these walks, has moved on to other things so his book had not been updated for 10 years and there were times that it showed!

The friend I planned to do it with had to drop out a week before with a bad back so I was incredibly lucky that Gillian Aitken, who used to walk with Sussex LDWA but now lives in Leyburn, Yorks, was able to step into her place and do it with me. We started from Bamburgh and enjoyed our first night in the shadow of Bamburgh Castle. The first day was a 16 mile walk which we accomplished with only one mistake on leaving Chatton ... if only the river hadn't meandered so much!

It was the second day that was the real challenge! We set off at 8.45a.m. from Wooler to get 3 miles done before sitting by a stream at Lanlee and enjoying our breakfast. We proceeded on to find a diversion at Threestoneburn House. Apparently a dentist bought the house and immediately closed all the footpaths going through his garden. Subsequently he had them officially diverted but the waymarks were not clear and it was very boggy. We were never lost because I had this wonderful 'App', OS Locate, but it was often difficult to get back on the path because of the terrain. Our final struggle,

before half way, was a 40 metre scramble down through thick bracken to the track which left me very bruised and battered.

We set off at 3p.m. for the second half and immediately found the book's directions did not work when, to our amazement, a man came up behind us who was doing the same walk. Even better, he was a Guide for Ramblers' Holidays. We thought our luck was in but even he found it difficult to keep to the path and we had to cross a stream without a bridge and climb over barbed wire etc., and my poor companion really didn't like the cows!

It was 6p.m. before we reached the track that would eventually lead us to our accommodation but as



On the coastal path near Craster & Dunstanburgh

the light faded we missed a few short cuts so it all took longer. Our Guide reached his destination a mile before we did and said "Just go there and turn right" ... Foolishly we did, instead of checking the map, and of course we should have turned left! Two miles later, along a forest road, out of the darkness came a huge light. When, eventually, it came nearer it was a tractor towing a trailer. I waved it down and the driver confirmed we were going in quite the wrong direction for Alwinton. I asked if he would give us a lift. He said he only

had one seat ... I assured him we could both fit on it, rucksacks and all, and we reached the Rose and Thistle at 8.45p.m. and were greeted by a very friendly Landlord.

We were grateful that the next day's mileage was only 14 miles into Rothbury. Our Guide caught up with us again and we enjoyed a very nice beer at the Pub in Thropton followed by a wonderful walk along the Rothbury Terraces into Rothbury.

The 4th day was 17.5miles into Warkworth. We made our first mistake by sticking to the flood plain for too long and ended up clambering up through a steep wood to get back on the track. The second problem was that there had been much new development around Warkworth so the instructions in the book were not helpful. However that night we slept in the shadow of Warkworth Castle after an amusing night in a Pub serenaded by 3 elderly men from Newcastle playing Irish music and even Gillian ended up banging the tambourine! From Warkworth we headed for the coast and it was the first day we did not make any mistakes! We saw a cluster of people gathered, plus coastguards, so went to investigate. A big humpback whale had been washed up and sadly died. It was huge. Lying on its side, I thought it was an upturned boat.

Our last day was from Embleton back to Bamburgh all along the coast. We were joined by a friend who had been my vicar here in Eastbourne but now has a Parish in the north east. We were able to walk along the beach much of the way and we ended up back in Bamburgh celebrating with a 'Cream Tea'.

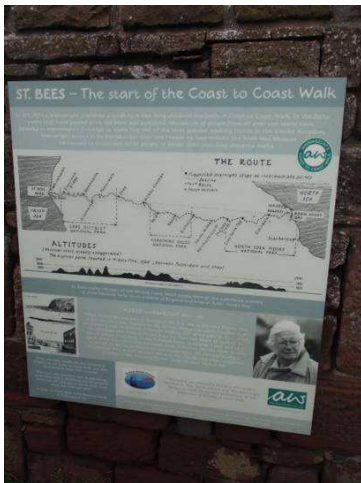
We had glorious sunshine for the whole walk and then enjoyed the pouring rain on the train journey back south.

What an achievement!

Joan Wortley

The Coast to Coast Walk

2019 marked the arrival of a certain significant birthday (one of those with a zero at the end!); how to mark the occasion, I wondered? Fortunately, I had never done the Coast to Coast (C2C) walk, despite its excellent reputation – so that would be the birthday treat! And it would be done in style, organised by C2C Packhorse, with comfy B&B's and luggage transfers. Happily, Dave Weatherley agreed to share accommodation with me, and even provided transport there and back. Jane Bates was also keen, having walked it in disappointing weather some years ago, but would be using their camper van overnight, Roger B providing her transport back-up. And my son John joined us for the first three days, coming in from Hong Kong, which was great. Our collie Meg was keen to go too, but sadly she is getting a bit old now, so only did a bit.



As you will all know, the C2C was the invention of that Wainwright chap, and starts at St. Bees on the Cumbrian coast, ending at Robin Hood's Bay on the east coast 190 miles later, having crossed the Lake District, Pennines and N York Moors. Dave and I stayed the first night at Kirkby Stephen, then on the morning of Wednesday August 28th C2C Packhorse transferred us by minibus to St. Bees. Bit disconcerted to see that the weather had turned cool, damp and windy, after a hot spell down south, with a poor outlook.....

Anyway, we met Jane and Roger, and also more walking chums Steve and Jan Hewett, a surprise for me! - they tagged along for several days. John was on the M6 somewhere and joined us later.

Day 1 was good – fine coast with cliffs, then inland via rural scenes, reaching Ennerdale Bridge after 15m (Shepherds Arms). Dinner in the busy Fox & Hounds, where we started the serious work of testing northern beers...

Day 2 - we started heading into the Lakeland fells properly, up Ennerdale. Sadly, Meg was limping a bit, so joined Jan & Roger for a day's rest. DIY coffee at Ennerdale YHA, then on to quaint Black Sail YHA, inside out of the strong wind for our picnic lunch. What a great place to spend a night! But we have further to go, over the top and down to Honister and on to Rosthwaite (15m). This is my birthday night, so an excellent celebration dinner at The Royal Oak.

Day 3. Ghastly weather! Lashing rain/wind all the way up to Greenup Edge and down to Grasmere. Many becks were in spate, so paddled across. Pretty wet on arrival at Tweedies hotel, but fortunately a short day (9m), having resisted the temptation to go further. Very glad not to be camping....



Day 4 was again wet. Well, Borrowdale is the wettest place in the UK, what do you expect! Today John, Steve, Jan and Meg peel off, so just 3 remaining walkers. At Grisedale Tarn, where we were told a Duke of Edinburgh group were camping last night (ooooerrr missus!), it cleared a bit. I diverted up to St. Sunday Crag and was rewarded with fine views down to Ullswater, with super rainbows. I caught

up Dave and Jane having a cup of tea in a café, great minds think alike! We stay at Glenridding at Beech House. Another short but hilly day (9m). Traveller's Rest PH is good, but heaving on a Saturday night.

Day 5 and the village is buzzing with a big triathlon – lake swim, cycle up some huge pass and run up Helvellyn – good luck lads and lasses! The weather has calmed down a bit, but numerous showers torment us as we climb Kidsty Pike, the C2C standard route high point at 2,500'. We enjoy the views when pausing to don/doff waterproofs. A long descent to Haweswater, where I'm hoping for a nice flat path round the reservoir, but no it's pretty bad and goes on and on. It ends at Burnbank, where we leave the Lakes, into pretty parkland, past the ruins of Shap Abbey. Dave and I stagger late into Shap town, but the chippy is still open, hurrah!! A long 19m day.



Day 6. Joined by pal Mark, so we are 4, for a wet murky day crossing low remote moors. Wisely Jane short cuts to the Orton campsite – the others reach Kirkby Stephen (another night at the Jolly Farmers B&B). But we regroup at the Black Bull for dinner and well-deserved beers.

Day 7. Oh dear, it's the Pennine crossing today. You know, peat bogs and all that stuff.....Nine Standards Rigg has an evil reputation, with a choice of routes designed to reduce erosion (and numbers of drowned hikers). The approach climb is pleasant, but on the top it's raining and visibility is poor. Get out the compass. We follow the normal 'blue' route, which has some nasty boggy bits, but eventually

THE MYSTERIOUS NINE STANDARDS SHROUDED IN CLOUD



Nine Standards Rigg



we drop down into upper Swaledale. Here is the home of minor celeb Amanda the Yorkshire shepherdess, with her 9 kids, and we are keen to sample her cream teas! But alas, all is closed, so no treats today. Boo! After 13m we reach small Keld, and the old YHA now run well as Keld Lodge.

Day 8 is much better – we are sheltered here from the wet westerlies, so wake to a fine sunny morning. The C2C traditionally climbs up to moorland with old lead mines, but sod that, we've had enough of wet hills, and instead take the riverside option. And what a super day it becomes – Swaledale is indeed most lovely. We pass busy Muker country show (that's where Amanda will be today...), even stop for a coffee, and potter into Reeth after a restful 11 or 12 miles, to the Buck Hotel.

Day 9. Another nice day of pleasant walking down Swaledale, to reach Richmond town (12m). As we are early, we go to visit Altberg's boot factory, and get measured up very efficiently. I defer my purchase, but Roger gets a shiny new set, as reward for all his driving about. Later, Dave and I explore this scenic town, with its castle and the fine foss river rapids, before getting a curry.

Day 10. Today we plan to cross the flat Vale of Mowbray to Ingleby Cross, which is 22-23 miles. We had planned to stop at Danby Wiske, but plan B saves a monster Day 11. Wainwright says it's 'tedious' walking, but I enjoyed the quiet lanes. Sadly, poor Dave had battled with digesting the curry and lost, so had problems..... Crossing the A19 dual carriageway was exciting, but we all made it safely. A transfer to B&B at Catterick, just one for a scratch dinner.

Day 11. A lift back to Ingleby (thanks Roger), then uphill away from the lowlands through woods, to emerge on Beacon Hill with fine views ahead to the North York Moors. Here we join the Cleveland Way, a National Trail, so it's very well signposted, with paving slabs across soft bits; the C2C is NOT so designated, and often has no waymarking, a point remarked upon unfavourably by some Americans we had met earlier (we never saw them again after the Lakes..??). I've not visited here before, so found it most enjoyable. Fine weather for walking – dry, not cold or hot, nice surfaces underfoot, great. It needed to be, as we did 21 miles to Blakey Ridge at the isolated Lion PH. Stay nearby at Chop Gate, Buck Inn.

Day 12. From The Lion we continued over the extensive moors until noon, then descended to Glaisdale in the Esk valley. Beggar's Bridge was pretty, with a romantic story. At Grosmont there is the N York Moors railway, with steam engines, and a café to fortify us for the final big hill (Black Brow) with views of the North Sea. After 17m we reach Intake Farm, Littlebeck – a communal dinner around a big table is very jolly, sharing wine with friendly Germans.

Day 13. The final stage! May Beck is a beautiful narrow wooded valley, passing Falling Foss and a strange hermit's cave in a sandstone boulder. The Hawkser village café is closed, so we press on to THE COAST, meeting dramatic cliffs, which we follow atop, finally to Robin Hood's Bay, where the C2C ends at the shingle beach. Celebratory photo's, then into the Bay Hotel for celebratory refreshments, where we meet the Germans again. RHB is a charming little place, almost traffic free with narrow steep side streets to nice cottages. Dave and I are collected, a bit late, for the return minibus transfer back to Kirkby Stephen, for a third night at the Jolly Farmers B&B. After a final excellent full English breakfast, we drive home (Tuesday Sept. 10th).



Conclusions – a great route, I should have done it before, but better late than never! Thank you to those who came along too, making it all so much better.

Rob Foster

5. Future Newsletters

This is the final edition of the newsletter to be produced in the current format. Sussex Group news and information will in future be communicated to members by means of more frequent short newsheets, together with postings on the Group website.

Grateful thanks go to those who have contributed material to this and earlier newsletters.