

Spring 2013 No.453



Walking

*The Gazette and Record of
the Surrey Walking Club*



Strollers at The Devils Punchbowl on the Farnham Circular on
8 December *(photo John Elrick)*

L to R: Jenny Caddy, Gail Elrick, Freddie Knight, Nicole
Carbonara, Jill Goddard and Chris Ketteringham

President's Report 2013 – Nolan Simmons

In my second term as President, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a happy and healthy 2013.

First I must congratulate Mark Easton on being nominated as President of the Race Walking Association and wish him all success for the year.

We also have other committee members who have been elected to various positions in other Clubs and organisations:

Pam Ficken – Her 2nd year as International Chairperson of Race Walking Association

David Hoben – Walking Secretary of Veterans Athletic Club

Sandra Brown – Captain of the Centurions

Chris Flint – Hon. Secretary and Merchandising Officer of the Centurions

Richard Brown – Treasurer of the Centurions

Kathy Crilley – Ass. Secretary and Web Master of the Centurions

It should be seen as a feather in the cap of Surrey Walking Club, that so many of our members have been appointed to significant positions in other organisations. My apologies to anyone who I have omitted.

I would also like to thank our secretary Peter Hannell who represented the club at the English Athletic meeting. He reported that a great number of athletes from various clubs attended and made their voices heard. As a result an agreement was reached that there will be only one level of payment for road and track.

The Olympics have now come and gone but the legacy seems to be very low key. Many athletic clubs have not seen any increase in numbers. As a race walking club one sees the same adults and young people competing repeatedly. There is only a very limited uptake from the younger generation. The sport needs someone with another brain wave, like the London Marathon, to inject interest in the sport once again. The strolling side of the club is doing well with numbers and I hope this will continue. On the whole the club members, and especially the racing members, have been successful over the past number of years and I know we will carry on this tradition.

Welcome to Gazette no. 453 – This is your club magazine. As Editor I welcome any contributions. Letters, news, comments, photos or reports which could be of interest to other club members are all welcome. Any material Emailed to the editor would be welcome. Thanks for all contributions especially the reports of strolls which have always been popular with readers. This magazine is also accessible on our website www.surreywalkingclub.org.uk .

New Member

We welcome new member Guy Barnes

Obituaries

Molly Bryant

We have learnt of the recent death of Molly, who older members will remember as the wife of former long time Strolls Secretary, Wally Bryant. Molly was a staunch supporter of the Club for many years. Some may remember the legendary teas which she supplied when Wally was leading a stroll in the Wimbledon area. She frequently attended Gazette Nights and was later made an Honorary member.

Mike Rowlands

Mike was primarily a runner with Ranelagh Harriers but an interested and occasionally active race walker with Surrey Walking Club. He passed away on 27th December having been diagnosed with cancer not very long before. He was only 67 years of age.

He joined the Club in 1993 and usually appeared for the Surrey County Track championships.

50 Years Celebration Supper

A supper will be held at Blackheath & Bromley HQ, Hayes on Saturday 1 June to celebrate 50 years of Club membership for Keith Fraser, Peter Crane, Stan Saunders, Pat Browning and Malcolm Wishart. For further details and bookings, contact our Social Secretary, Trevor Sliwerski.

RACE REPORTS

3 November –Alec Potton Addington 7 miles, Selsdon:

The second winter Club race, the Alec Potton Memorial, promised the rain and cold winds but in fact the race was held in relatively mild conditions. With 12 Club members out and 9 visitors the field was reasonable. There were several close groups but some were isolated and among these was the winner Mark Easton taking his 30th victory and leaving the rest behind by 5 minutes as he lapped two thirds of the field. David Crane walking up to his recent good form was third and part of the chasing group to finish only 3 seconds behind second place. 5 minutes back, Shaun Lightman successfully pulled away from another group of 5 which included Paul King and Peter Hannell. The winner of the handicap, Peter Crane had a good race to get a fair distance away from his usual company with Dave Delaney struggling this week.

1.[6] **M.Easton** 58.05 2. S.Allen (Barn) 63.20; 3.[5] **D.Crane** 63.23; 4. P.Ryan (Ilf) 64.05; 5. M.Fisher (Redc) 65.10; 6. J.Hall (Belg) 67.39; 7.[3] **S.Lightman** 68.27; 8. R.Penfold (Steyn) 69.06 9.[2] **P.King** 70.56; 10.[7] **M.Harran** 71.58; 11.[9] **P.Hannell** 72.11;12. **C.Flint** 73.46; 13.[8] **I.Statter** 73.47; 14.[1] **P.Crane** 76.45; 15. T.Gilliam (Belg W) 77.40; 16.[4] **D.Hoben** 79.48; 17. G.Legon (Bex W) 79.48; 18. D.Maskell (Vets) 79.52; 19.[10] **D.Delaney** 80.03 20.[11] **K.Crilley** (W) 87.00; 21. B.Hercock (E&H) 90.12.

The position in square brackets show the SWC Handicap positions

Under 17 5km: 1. L.Legon (Bexley) 27.51.

Mixed team match 3 scoring 1 SWC 11 pts Belgrave 30 pts

27 October – Cambridge Harriers 5km, Bexley:

The first of this winter's Cambridge league races was held in cold, windy and slightly wet conditions. The weather and the hilly nature of the course probably depressed times by around 30 seconds on average but did not put off the participants of whom there were almost 40 including the younger age group races. It was good to see that such a large number were not put off by the strict judging which is deliberately applied to these races to give aspirants to the higher levels of the event some experience of the standard required. In fact there were no disqualifications indicating a high standard of racing. Perhaps it was not a coincidence that Paul King, whose style is always good had by the far the best race to finish less than a minute behind Shaun Lightman, who was unable to match last week's performance. The Club had four out with Chris Flint and David Delaney both walking satisfactory times under the difficult conditions and if their positions were rather lower than usual this was a reflection of high standard of the relatively large field.

1 A.Wright(Cov) 20.55; 2.C.Corbishley (Med) 24.14; 3. F.Reis (If) 24.48; 9. **S.Lightman** 29.25; 12.**P.King** 30.10; 17. **C.Flint** 31.27 19. **D.Delaney** 33. 27

17 November– Leicester Yacht Handicap 10 kms

Two visitors from the south invaded this midlands event on the quiet highways and byways outside Leicester, on a pleasant mild November day. The winner of the event, Sarah Lightman, daughter of Shaun Lightman, finished in 67.17 and was rewarded with a personal best and a win in the handicap – obviously following her father's footsteps.

The handicapper did a very accurate estimate of the handicaps on the start line, as the closing stage downhill to the clubhouse saw almost the whole pack of 9 nearly converging at the finish, a difficult result to achieve. Newcomer Kate Hargreaves achieved just under 67 minutes

in her first ever 10k race with a number of climbs, which is a great result and the midlands ladies will need to watch out in the future as she claims more scalps.

David Hoben was the only representative of SWC meeting with a time faster than last week over a much harder course.

(Handicap results in brackets)

1 [2]. G. Smolinski (Leic) 62.43; 2 [4]. S. Pender (E&H) 64.16; 3 [3]. K. Hargreaves (Leic WC) 66.51; 4 [1]. **Sarah Lightman** (Leic) 67.17; 5 [5]. P. Smillie (Leic) 68.01; 6 [6]. **D Hoben** 71.05.

1 December – Cambridge Harriers Winter League 5km, Bexley:

On a Saturday slightly less cold than the sub-zero early morning almost 30 walkers, including a dozen young age groups, toed the line. The main 5km race, under the usual strict version of the rules that applies to this series, saw two under 17s lead the field home – in fact 3 as Heather Butcher, also U17, tied with the second male. While the middle of the field was around normal pace, good conditions being offset extra layers, the youngsters went particularly well while the 5 Club members were all down a little except for another good race from Paul King. The first SWC three home happened, not unusually, to fill three consecutive places from 9 to 11 with Shaun Lightman first home. Having come into the race with a slight injury and starting slowly he came home fast to pass Peter Hannell just after half way.

1.C.Curbishley (M&M U17B) 23.52; 2. L.Legon (Bexley U17B) 26.03; 3. S.Allen (Barn) 26.04; 9. **S.Lightman** 29.04 10. **P.Hannell** 29.52 11 **P.King** 29.58 12. **C.Flint** 31.03 14. **D.Delaney** 34.04

8 December – Surrey Walking Club Christmas Cup 5km,

A typical winter's day saw 24 toeing the line for the Christmas Cup handicap race. The unexpected but very welcome visitor was Lyn Atterbury, flying in from Poland and also generously donating several prizes for both Club and Open events, although unfortunately not racing himself. The overall winner was Ilford AC member, Francisco Reis, from Portugal but second and well justified winner of the handicap was young Guy Thomas from Tonbridge AC. David Crane was first home for the Club and also winner of the Christmas Cup as he tried to hold the young leaders and was dragged to a very good time himself. Shaun Lightman walked evenly and improved on his previous 5kms whereas the rest averaged 30 seconds slower on this harder course. Most Surrey men were in a tight group occupying most of the places from 9 to 17. Dave Delaney and Peter Crane, had their usual battle with Dave coming out on top, although Peter has generally been ahead lately as reflected in their handicaps. David Hoben closed the SWC team but his time was a little off recent performances.

(SWC handicap in brackets)

1. F.Reis (Ilf) 24.52; 2. G.Thomas (Ton) 26.00; 3. L.Legon (Bex) 26.06; 4. S.Uttley (Ilf) 26.15; 5[1]. **D.Crane** 26.25; 6. S.Allen (Barn) 27.03; 7. M.Fisher (Redc) 28.06; 8. R.Elmsley (Steyn) 28.27; 9[3]. **S.Lightman** 29.17; 10[2]. **P.Hannell** 30.19; 11. R.Penfold (Steyn) 30.39; 12[7]. **P.King** 31.10; 13[4]. **I.Statter** 31.39; 14[9]. **C.Flint** 32.11; 15[5]. **D.Delaney** 33.14; 16. A.Martin (Padd W W) 33.20; 17[8]. **P.Crane** 33.31; 18. D.Maskell (Vets) 34.13; 19. D.Stevens (Steyn) 34.31; 20. G.Legon (BexW) 34.43; 21[6]. **D.Hoben** 34.46; 22. M.Barnbrook (Ilf) 37.05; 23. B.Hercock (E&H) 40.09 ; 24. D.Ainsworth (Ilf) 41.10.

Overall handicap: 1.G.Thomas, 2. R.Emsley 3. D.Stevens.

Mixed Team Score: 1.Surrey Walking Club A 42, 2. Ilford 39, 3. Steyning 28.

15 December – Alf Palmer Handicap 5km, Horsham

A field of 23, including young athlete events, turned out for this traditional pre-Christmas event. Under-17 Cameron Curbishley from Medway AC, who is developing quickly into a promising hope for the future, came home 2 minutes clear of second placed Jimmy Ball of Steyning AC, the host club. We had a significant presence with five out and Shaun Lightman first home. It was good to see that 5 of the 8 ahead were Under 20 or Under 17s. Shaun himself has improved each time over the last three races all of which have been at the 5km distance. In relative terms Dave Delaney had the best race while David Hoben improved on his last 5km.

1.C.Curbishley (M&M U17) 23.32; 2. J.Ball (Steyn) 25.30; 3. L.Legon (Bexley U17) 26.16; 7. **S.Lightman** 29.09; 10. **M.Harran** 31.10; 11. **C.Flint** 32.04; 12. **D.Delaney** 33.29; 15. **D.Hoben** 34.37.

26 December – Preston Park 5.5 miles, Brighton

The Boxing Day Walk and Run saw two members in the walk. Ian Richards led off from start to finish. Shaun Lightman went off with Heather Butcher and had a commanding lead at the top of the first of four hills. He finished 2nd in 48m 45s. His fastest at least from 2004. Heather faded somewhat and was caught by Ron Penfold. But in a sprint finish managed to hold him off by 13 seconds. Newcomer Rajab Seruwagi had a race long battle with Dave Delaney. Dave managed to gain a short lead over Raj on the flat but Raj had the power on the uphill stretches. Consequently at the top of the hill on the fourth lap he held a slight lead over Dave and managed to hold a 6 second lead until the finish. Dave finished with a better time than in recent races.

1.I.Richards (Steyn) 44.04; 2. **S.Lightman** 48.45; 3. H.Butcher (Camb H U17G) 54.57; 7. **D.Delaney** 61.35;

12 January – Steyning AC 15km Road Walk

With drizzle and cold winds the almost 10 mile trek up into the hilly lanes was a formidable prospect although the rain stopped during the race leaving a good deal of surface water. However the competitors managed the conditions cheerfully enough and it was the officials who noticed the cold most. The winner, World Veterans Champion Ian Richards, from the home club sped away from the start and reached the High Street finish over 10 minutes clear. Behind him the next four remained close and Shaun Lightman was two or three minutes down by halfway after a conservative start but accelerated on the way back and finished in a good time. Behind him the other two Surrey men became isolated but still pushed on well and were rewarded with improved performances. All together the field arrived at the clubhouse in good spirits despite the cold, misty and damp conditions.

1. I.Richards (Ste) 73.55 2. J.Ball (Ste) 85.37 3. S.Uttley (Ilf) 85.37; 7. **S.Lightman** 89.17; 9. **C.Flint** 98.42; 13. **D.Delaney** 107.54;

10 February– Cambridge Harriers League 5km, Bexley

The 3rd event in this season's Bexley League season saw a small field and of these just 3 Club members. All were outside of 30 minutes both Dave Delaney and Chris Flint getting fair times and Paul King might have expected to be half a minute faster and just break the half-hour. As usual this course is a good test of style and fitness with strict judging and enough hills to reward the fastest with the best relative time and this race saw an excellent time from the winner, the fast improving under 17, Cameron Curbishley, from the local Medway Club.

1.C.Curbishley (M&M) 23.01; 2. F.Reis (Ilf) 23.58; 3.I.Richards (Stey) 24.30; 7. **P.King** 30.29; 8. **C.Flint** 31.23; 10. **D.Delaney** 33.09.

5 January – Surrey Walking Club Open 10km incorporating the Southern RWA Championship, Selsdon

Once again Surrey Walking Club's Open 10km at the beginning of January was used for the Southern Championship which ensured a good crowd of officials, families and supporters, not to speak of competitors of whom there were almost 40. This event marked a new experiment in the A/B rules debate. On entry all competitors chose under which category they wish to race. The Judges tested all competitors in accordance with 'A' rules (i.e. contact & bent knee) but for disqualification purposes the Chief Judge ignored all cards issued for bent knee against competitors entered in the 'B' section of the race, although they were displayed on a DQ board. Only competitors who elect to race under 'A' category rules will be eligible for individual championship medals although teams can include one 'B' category competitor providing that they would not have been disqualified under 'A' category rules.

A lap in front of the rest were the 2012 British 50km Olympian, Dom King, and twin brother, Dan, not far behind both around a comfortable 45 and a half minutes. With various factors reducing the home club's participation SWC could only manage 5th team but this does not take away from a good time by our first scorer David Crane who walked well into 6th individual place pulling away from Hall of Belgrave on the last lap after matching stride for stride for most of the race. SWC's best performance came from Chris Flint finding form after a lean period and almost holding Mick Harran whose time was also above form over this not easy course. Dave Delaney finished well down the field despite a fairly good performance but having started 5 minutes late. He closed up to only a minute behind David Hoben, his only incentive in his situation but without sighting his target. It was good to have a representative in the women's race but she was faced with an uphill task against young opposition.

Men: 1. Dom King (Col H) 45.34; 2. Dan King (Col H) 45.45; 3. I.Richards (Steyn) 52.00; 4. S.Uttley (Ilf) 53.42; 5. S.Allen (Bar) 56.17; 6. **D.Crane** 57.04; 7. J.Hall (Bel) 57.20; 8. R.Elmsley (Stey) 58.43; 9. J.Ralph (E&H) 59.08; 10. S.Bennett (Ilf) 59.44; 11. A.Thomson (E&H) 60.52; 12. S.Allen (Ilf) 61.34; 13. R.Penfold (Stey) 61.48; 14. **P.King** 62.15; 15. M.Culshaw (Bel) 62.24; 16. **M.Harran** 64.00; 17. **C.Flint** 64.12; 18. E.Shillabeer (Ilf) 64.59; 19. S.Pender (E&H) 67.27; 20. J.Taylor (Lought) 68.05 sec; 21. J.Borgars (Lought) 68.47; 22. D.Maskell (Vet) 69.41; 23. **P.Crane** 71.09; 24. **D.Hoben** 72.33; 25. P.Cassidy (Lought) 72.51; 26. **D.Delaney** 73.47(5 min late start); 27. M.Barnbrook (Ilf) 76. 41; 28. D.Ainsworth (Ilf) 84.05.

Teams: 1. Steyning 126 pts; 2. Ilford 124; 3. Belgrave; 5. Surrey Walking Club

Women: 1. H.Middleton (E&H) 61.59; 2. R.Crossan (Belg) 62.25; 3. M.Noel (Belg) 62.29; 4. A.Belchambers (Stey) 64.59; 5. T.Gillam (Bel) 67.08; 6. A.Martin (Padd) 71.04; 7. N.Grimsey (E&H) 73.31; 8. G.Legon (Bex) 75.38; 9. **K.Crilly** 78.13.

Teams: 1. Belgrave 80 pts; 2. Enfield & Haringey 43.

17 February - Leicester 15 miles

The race was out and back, no waymarking, no drinks stations and the course is quite testing being undulating. Our sole representative was David Hoben. The race was won by George Smolinski, and exSWC member Sarah Lightman did an excellent time as part of her build up to the 85 mile Parish Walk in Isle of Man.

Men:

1. G Smolinski (Leic WC) 2.51.47; 2 C Berwick (LWC) 2.51.48; 3.C Vesty (LWC) 2.58.42; 4..**D Hoben** 3.14.04.

Women:

1. S. Lightman (Leic WC W40) 3.00.05.

3 February – London and Open 10km, Victoria Park,

The cold if typical winter weather did not prevent a good field travelling to Victoria Park. Most of the usual competitors from the various clubs were to be seen for this important event although we had one or two missing. The front of the field was very fast with the men's winner, Belgrave's Alex Wright, breaking the course record as did the first woman Neringa Aidityte. The total out, including the young athletes, was about 70 and on this flat but somewhat uneven course times were on average satisfactory but ranged widely from very good to rather poor. Of the five Surrey members only one, David Crane, had a good race as he achieved a personal best. He made a steady start and managed, to beat near rival John Hall from Belgrave who until recently was always well ahead. It was David who contributed most to the team's 3rd place with the other two, Mick Harran and Peter Hannell in the second half of the field. Mick's time after a steady start was not far from recent performances while Peter was well below fitness after an injury break. David Hoben also struggled in an isolated position but was well clear of the rear of the field. It was interesting to see from the results that the number of senior women doing their 5km event was almost that of the senior men with far more new and younger participants.

1. A.Wright (Cov) 41.24; 2. Dom King (Col H) 44.56; 3. J.Ball (Steyn) 52.47; 5. **D.Crane** 55.34; 13. **P.King** (Belg) 63.55
14. **M.Harran** 64.56; 18. **P.Hannell** 66.16; 22. **D.Hoben** 75.07

Teams: 1.Belgrave 74 pts; 2. Ilford 70; 3. Surrey Walking Club 56; 4. Hillingdon 32.

**17 February – Southern Counties Veterans AC and
Veterans AC Indoor 3km, Lee Valley Arena**



Congratulations to Peter Hannell on becoming the M70 champion in this event. After a layoff he was pleased to win an unopposed M70 victory. *(photo Mark Easton)*

1.S.Uttley (11f 1st M55) 15.28.1; 2. J.Hall (Belg 1st M60)
15.49.2; 3. **P.Hannell** (1st M70) 18.13.7.

23 February – Enfield 5 miles, Donkey Lane

The start to this League in January was cancelled due to snow so this week got the season off to a cold start. It was only 2C with a fresh easterly breeze and it felt colder but a field of 43 finished of whom 6 were our members. After the first mile Fabian Deuter and Francisco Reis had a commanding lead. Over the last two laps Fabian drew away to win. A group of five chased, including David Crane. Eventually Callum Wilkinson sprinted past but David Crane did a PB. Shaun Lightman had a battle with John Ralph, Steve Allen and Stuart Bennett. He got the better of Stuart but was beaten by John and Steve. Second claimer Paul King had a lonely race finishing not far from his 50 minute target. Mick Harran had a race long battle with Anne Belchambers and eventually edged her out of 23rd position. Peter Crane and Dave Delaney had a battle with Peter just winning out.

1. F.Deuter (Hill) 39.35; 2. F.Reis (Ilf) 40.27; 3. G.Narviliene (Belg W) 42.00; 5. **D.Crane** 43.09 14. **S.Lightman** 47.31 22. **P.King** 50.22 23. **M.Harran** 51.30; 34. **P.Crane** 55.27; 35. **D.Delaney** 55.29

SUMMER CLUB RACES

5 June Johnson Bowl 4 Mls Norman Park (*This is a Blackheath & Bromley AC Harriers AC event*)

12 June Club and Open 3kms Norman Park

23 July Phil Collins 3kms Tonbridge (*This is a Tonbridge AC event*)

14 August Open 5kms + Jnr. Tonbridge (*This is a Tonbridge AC event*)

STROLLS REPORTS

21 October 2012 – East Horsley to Shamley Green

Conductors: John and Gail Elrick. Distance 20 miles plus.

Torrential rain overnight and a poor weather forecast did not bode well for this stroll but the conductors were pleased to greet nine other strollers at Horsley station on Sunday morning. They were: Don Bolton, Lillian Chelli, Kate Copeland, Paul Lawrence, Joelle Paul, Dorothy Shepherd, Manjinder Sidhu, Corinne Thompson and Dave Williams.

We left Horsley alongside the railway line and across the fields to stop briefly at West Horsley Church whose surrounding land was once owned by the family of Sir Walter Raleigh. Following his beheading in 1618 his head was apparently embalmed and presented to his wife who kept it. After her own death 25 years later the head was buried under the floor of the church's south chapel where it apparently still lies today. As we digested this grisly information we entered the Sheepleas, an ancient wooded area severely damaged in the Great Storm which at the time of the stroll was exactly 25 years ago. The conductors recalled that they had been trekking in Nepal at the time and thought people were exaggerating when they spoke in awe of the "worst storm in 300 years".

The strollers continued southwards to cross over the North Downs Way and descend towards Shere to cross the River Tillingbourne. Ahead of us was an ominously large walking group going along at a very sedate pace and heading in the same direction as us. As we caught them up we were relieved to see them heading away from us into Blackheath Forest and not in the direction of Shamley Green. Our worst fears had not been realised – they were not going to the same pub!

After lunch at the expensive but convenient "Bricklayers Arms" we headed northwards towards Winterfold Hill and

through the Hurtwood to Peaslake and on to Gomshall. Since the closure a few years ago of the Rambler's Rest tea rooms there has been no satisfactory tea stop in Gomshall. As an alternative the conductors distributed tasty biscuits to the group, after which we began the last leg of the stroll up to the North Downs Way and back through the Sheepleas. This final four or so miles was done at a good pace and Horsley station was reached in time for the rail users to catch the 1801 train back to London.



Taking a break on the stroll with John sporting his Club fleece

Rye Circular (with fireworks!), 10 November 2012

Conductor: Claire Kirkbride

Strollers: Susan Cannell & Janette Henderson

Three of us set out in defiance of a gloomy weather forecast in the hope of a good walk before fireworks and the bonfire in Rye. The weather held, though we were in waterproofs all day for warmth rather than against the elements, and the sunset was glorious. Clare changed the route due to the saturated nature of the ground and it turned out to be a rewarding yomp, though lunch was delayed as all the farms seemed unaccountably to have been re-named ... the problem was identified over lunch and the afternoon's navigation passed uneventfully, except for finishing in the dark. However, the path down to the canal was smooth and our torches effective and we trust the occasional motorist appreciated Janette's high-vis sack cover.

High tea at the Indian restaurant in the High Street in Rye appears to be the bargain of the town and was delicious. We felt a bit rushed, as the queue to the restaurant stretched into the street, but took a stroll before standing to wait for the maroon to announce the start of the parade. Sadly, however, Claire had to leave us before the fun began. Visions of 'The Wicker Man' came to mind as the parade, featuring locals in fantastic costumes (a number with blackened faces) and flaming torches passed in front of us, so we kept well away from the bonfire. Seriously though, it was a fantastic spectacle. The participants had made a huge effort with their costumes and music, including making a model of a huge dragon on a float. And the fireworks were some of the best we had seen for a long time. The parade eventually reached the bonfire, which was lit using the torches of the participants (accompanied by firecrackers). Then the fireworks started. Huge crowds made it difficult to find a good vantage point, but everyone was well behaved and we had a wonderful time.

Farnham Circular - 8 December 2012

Conductor: Jill Goddard

On a rare fine day in December, a group of seven Surrey walkers (John, Gail, Jenny, Chris, Freddie, Nicole and Jill) enjoyed a varied walk over the heathlands south of Farnham.

The walk started alongside the River Wey past the renovated Moor Park House and on to Tilford where the river was running impressively high. We left the river and headed across Hankley Common (including above one of the sites used in Skyfall) and then up tracks and paths to Hindhead. The area there has been wonderfully restored since the noisy and obtrusive A3 has been routed through the tunnel. The afternoon's walk took us round the top of the Devil's Punchbowl and down to the attractive village of Thursley and over the common which is now regenerating after a huge and devastating fire in 2006. We passed through Elstead village and re crossed the Wey before heading towards Crooksbury Hill, with a quick detour for a welcome tea stop. As the light disappeared we joined the North Downs Way to return to Farnham. 22 miles.

Godalming circular - 29 December

Conductor: Jennifer Caddy

Participants: John, Gail, Chris, Jill

The last walk of the year featured rain, mud and a revised route. The five of us set off from Godalming station, in the dry, and headed S on footpaths towards Milford station and Witley. After half an hour our period of luxury without rain ended and we made use of the shelter provided by the entrance to Witley Social Club to put on our waterproof trousers. Wind accompanied the rain.

Here the route changed from that advertised. We turned E instead of W in hope of encountering a better sort of mud, less deep, less slippery. This paid off. we stayed relatively clean above the knee and none of us fell over. Continuing past Enton Mill we squelched across fields to Sweetwater Pond and walked on a soggy footpath to reach the A283 in Wormley near King Edwards School. Next to this is the old site of the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences (1953-1995) which is now Bridewell Park, private apartments. The IOS moved to new premises in Southampton (ending 40 years of land-locked oceanography) to become the Southampton Oceanography Centre before being renamed the National Oceanography Centre in 2005.

In 200m along the grass verge we reached another FP and headed towards Hambledon across the common. Joining the Greensand Way we arrived at the church at noon and stopped there for lunch rather than wait until we reached Hascombe as intended. The porch provided better seats and shelter than in the church at Hascombe.

Refreshed, and after a particularly muddy bridleway the sides of which were best negotiated at speed (like the wall of death), we reached a track on which we could walk briskly. We passed Little Burgate Farm and a small bedraggled dog that barked half-heartedly at us. Pressing on uphill on a boggy FP we joined the GSW again, crossed the Hurtwood, cautiously descended the slope, slogged through a water-logged field and reached The White Horse. Outside, was a row of mountain bikes which, judging by their condition, suggested that the riders inside the pub were likely to be muddier than we were. We were almost clean in comparison.

We took off our boots and made our way through cyclists to a table by the fire. Such was the temperature difference between inside and outside, and the humidity in the pub, that my glasses and camera steamed up immediately. The photo that I took of us looked as if we were sitting, fully clothed, in a sauna. The landlord approached and, to our surprise, asked if we'd like to move to a quieter area. The cyclists, though loud, were cheerful and amiable. We were happy to stay put; the noise preferable to the effort of gathering up our damp possessions and moving away from the comfort of the fire.

By the time we set off again, our clothes were less wet and the rain had almost ceased. We stayed on the GSW for half a mile before turning W to pass Langhurst Farm, cross the B2130 and head towards Godalming via Busbridge Woods, Busbridge Lane and the recreation ground. Shortly after 4pm we reached our final refreshment stop 1/4 mile from the station. We sat in the cosy, comfortable, spacious surroundings of the Bel & the Dragon, a converted church, with tea, crumpets and scones. No one had a train to catch so we lingered. It was a pleasant end to the year's programme of strolls.

Future Strolls

Sunday 24 March. A spring-time stroll around Silchester. Conductor Janette Henderson . Start Mortimer station 09:17 (London Paddington 08.30, change Reading). Return trains 19 and 49 minutes past the hour, again changing at Reading.

Explorer 159, approx. 20 miles.

Sunday 14 April. Sevenoaks Circular. Conductor **Dave Williams** . Start **Sevenoaks** station at **09.11** (London Bridge 08.45). Frequent return trains.

Explorer 147. Distance approx. 20 miles

Sunday 28 April. In Darwin's Footsteps (Circular). Conductor **Paul Lawrence** Start **Hayes** station **09.18** (London Bridge 08.43). Return trains two an hour, 28 & 58 minutes past.

Explorers 147, 162. Distance approx. 20 miles

Sunday 12 May. Hook circular. Conductor **Jill Goddard** Start **Hook** station at 09.17 (London Waterloo 08.07). Return trains 23 minutes past each hour.

Explorer 144, approx 20 miles

Sunday 26 May. Godalming Circular. Conductor **Jenny Caddy** . Start Godalming station 08.55 (Waterloo 08.00). Return trains 56 minutes past each hour.

Explorer 145 & 133; Land Ranger 186, appx 20 mls

Sunday 9 June. South Woodham Ferrers to Southminster (linear). Conductor **Gregory Noble** Start **South Woodham Ferrers** station at 09.14 (London Liverpool Street 08.14,

change Wickford).. Return trains from Southminster at 06 mins past each hour, change at Wickford. Get a return ticket to Southminster. Explorers 175 & 176, approx 21 miles.

Sunday 23 June. Great Missenden Circular. Conductors **Gail and John Elrick**. Start **Great Missenden** station at **08:53** (London Marylebone at 08:12). Return trains 19 & 49 minutes past each hour. Explorers 181 and 172 (small part). Distance appx. 20 miles.



Pam Ficken and Ian Statter are two members who did an excellent job serving as part of the 2012 Olympic team.