

Autumn 2013 No.455



# Walking

*The Gazette and Record of  
the Surrey Walking Club*



**Sandra Brown winning the RWA 50kms in  
a World W60 Best Performance**

## **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

My second term of office as President is coming to a close. I enjoyed it but because of my operation and other commitments, I feel I should have been more committed in supporting the club whenever we were being represented.

My successor, I am very sure, will do a very good job.

I am very happy to report that while until, until recently, we got strollers joining the club quite often, but now, this year, we have elected five members who are active race walkers. I would like to give a warm welcome to all new members.

I was very disappointed when we had to leave Monks Hill and find somewhere else. Peter Selby had informed the club that we can use Tonbridge Club facilities, until we found somewhere else more suitable. However, since we are Surrey based, I am happy that we have located accommodation with the Addiscombe Hockey and Cricket Club. This will be on a trial basis. If successful it will be used for our winter events.

I would like to thank all the members of the club, especially the Committee and Peter Hannell, my vice captain, who gave me so much assistance throughout the year.

I wish the club the very best for a successful future.

Nolan

**Welcome to Gazette no. 455** – 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 [p.crane7w@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:p.crane7w@hotmail.co.uk) 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](http://www.surreywalkingclub.org.uk) .

### **Facebook**

We now have a Facebook page. We invite you to join by contacting Mark Easton, our webmaster.

### **We welcome the following new members**

Malcolm & Angela Martin

Dan Maskell

Ken McGivern

Sima Patel

Gillian Morris

Mark Denby

Changes of Address

Steve Till

David Watson

**Congratulations** on their recent marriages to:

Guy and Vicky Barnes

David and Rachel Crane

### **Gazette Night 30 Nov £12.50 6.30 for 7**

Do support our only fundraising Social evening, which helps to pay for the costs of producing this magazine. The auction is great fun and the buffet meal is well worth coming for. Tickets from Trevor Sliwerski.

## RACE REPORTS

### 9 July – Bill Collins 3km, Tonbridge

A warm summer evening greeted the 20 competitors for this annual event in the beautiful playing fields of Tonbridge School. The race, held in honour of Bill, a well-known coach of several international athletes, attracted a good number of youngsters for the 1km as well as seven senior walkers in the 3km. There were only two SWC competitors this year. The frequent turns led to slightly slow times. The winner, Chris Hobbs, however managed a good time whereas David Hoben and Peter Hannell were rather down on times. There were several good performances among the youngsters and as usual the atmosphere was very friendly and enjoyable.

1. C.Hobbs (Ashf) 15.07; 2 L.Legon (Bexley) 15.52; 3. M.Martin (Padd W) 17.18; 4. **P.Hannell** 18.38; 5. A.Martin (Ton) 19.27; 6. **D.Hoben** 21.05.

### 23 July Veterans AC 5 miles, Battersea

The penultimate Vets AC, Battersea Park race for this Summer season was little down in numbers and of these several were taking it easy having 30 or 50km race at the following week-end (see below). With a very fit Spanish international at the front and well among the concurrent running race competitors, the rest trailed a little in the heat. The mid-field was almost entirely Surrey Walking Club with Paul King, Dan Maskell and Peter Hannell close until the last lap when the first two pulled away in a fight to the finish only 13 seconds apart.

1. J.Iglesias (Spain M50) 42.57; 2. P.Ryan (Ilf M55) 44.19; 3. S.Allen (Barn M55) 48.02; 6. **P.King** (M60) 50.52; 7. **D.Maskell** (M65) 51.05; 8.**P.Hannell**(M70) 52.23; 9 **C.Flint**(M65) 54.42; 11. **D.Hoben** (M60) 57.46.

## 27 July LICC 5km, Copthall

The London Inter-Club Competition 5km was held at the new Allianz Stadium, now home of the Saracens Rugby League Club. On this extremely hot and humid day times were in general slower than expected and only young Luc Legon of Bexley had a time above expectation. The six-strong Surrey contingent were led home by David Crane while Shaun Lightman came through after a slow start to finish only one place behind in the men's race. He was closely followed by Malcolm Martin and Dan Maskell in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Further down the field Angela Martin was our first lady home in 5th woman in 33m 39s. Closing in for the club was David Hoben in 35m 47s which represented the best time against recent form. Also competing was surprise competitor, Shaun's daughter, Sarah Lightman representing Leicester Walking Club. She finished in 6th position still feeling the effects of her 85 mile race in the Isle of Man a few weeks earlier.

### Men:

1. F.Deuter (Hill) 24.23; 2. F.Reis (Ilf) 24.47; 3. L.Legon (Bexley) 25.42; 6. **D.Crane** 28.37; 7. **S.Lightman** 30.57 8. **M.Martin** 31.09; 9. **D.Maskell** 31.38; 14. **D.Hoben** 35.47.

### Women:

1. H.Butcher (CambH) 28.37 5. **A.Martin** 33.39.

## 21 July Veterans Inter-Area Match 2km, Solihull

4. **S.Lightman** (VAC/Sy WC M70, 1<sup>st</sup> M60 race) 11.47.7.

## **RWA 50kms and 100 miles Championships**

Addicts of the long stuff had a treat in store on consecutive weekends in late July and early August 2013.

### **27 July Midlands RWA 50 Kms & BMAF 30kms Champs, Coventry**

The venue was the Warwick University Science Park where the roads provided a quiet circuit of 1.4kms. Race HQ was the excellent facilities of Coventry Godiva Harriers' [a club which your correspondent has secretly always yearned to belong to].

The 50kms race had a field of 15, and all qualifying veterans were automatically also entered for the BMAF 30kms. A total of 30 started the 30kms. As the 50kms was a national championship, both events were "A" races, judged actively and constructively by a sizeable presence of judges around the circuit. The combination of races worked well, in this writer's view, ensuring a sizeable field for both events, and avoiding the situation sometimes seen in recent years where falling numbers have threatened the staging of the 50kms. Diary clashes meant that the leading British senior men were not walking, but a quality veterans' field toed the line.

Racing for SWC in both races were Richard Brown, Sandra Brown and second claim Paul King, and Chris Flint in the 30kms.

First overall at 30kms and 50kms was visiting Spanish walker Julian Iglesias. Second at 30kms was Adrian Edwards [Lancs WC], followed closely by Sandra Brown and Chris Berwick.

### **Midlands RWA and BMAF 30kms Championship, Men:**

1.J.Iglesias (Madrid) 2.52.50 2.A.Edwards (Lancs WC)  
3.08.35 3.C.Berwick (Leic WC) 3.12.08 6.**Richard Brown**  
3.28.48 9. **Paul King** 3.32.29 11. **Chris Flint** 3.36.30

### **Ladies 30kms:**

1.**Sandra Brown** 3.12.07

As 30kms-only walkers finished, the field thinned out. Hot and humid conditions meant that several walkers stopped before 30kms or soon after. Of the 15 in the 50kms race, only 7 completed within the 6h15m cut off. Sandra's time is a W60 UK and World age-group best. Richard finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the UK Championship.

### **RWA 50kms Championship, Men:**

1. J.Iglesias (Mad) 5.05.58 2. A. Edwards (Lancs WC) 5.40.16  
3. **Richard Brown** 5.55.18 5. **Paul King** 6.08.59

### **Ladies 50kms:**

1.**Sandra Brown** 5.29.04 [UK and World W60 Best performance]

### **3-4 August RWA/UKA 100 miles Championship, Douglas, IOM,**

The RWA 100 miles championship and Centurions qualifying race returned this year to the IOM where it was held in 1998 and 2006. The IOM VAC team, led by Steve Taylor, organised an excellent event on a half mile tarmac lap at the Douglas National Sports Centre.

The 100 miles race attracted an entry of 95, the highest for many years, while a further 50 walked the "Starlight 20." In addition to our loyal and enthusiastic Dutch and Belgian Centurion friends, participants in the 100 included walkers from the USA, Sweden, South Africa and Australia. Weather conditions were kind, the few showers not amounting to much. The race saw 24 new Centurions among the 36 completing 100 miles.

Following her excellent 50 kilometres the previous weekend a few week's rest might have been deserved but no, Sandra Brown saw this as a mere warm-up for the 100 miles. She excelled again as first lady with a sub 20 hour performance.. Chris Flint was very pleased to finish with the 24 hour limit having not managed this in some recent races. Richard Brown sensibly stopped at some 20 miles and gave welcome help to others, as he had entered a 6-day race beginning the following weekend.

1.R.Gerrard IOMVAC 18.29.40 2. V Lynch IOMVAC  
19.00.51 3. R Callister IOMVAC 19.19.45

5. **Sandra Brown** (1<sup>st</sup> lady] 19.57.50 33.**C. Flint** 23.47.36

**Mark Denby** who has since become a member had a remarkable performance in his first 100 miles finishing in 20.05.33.

## **6 August Veterans AC 5 miles, Battersea Park**

The last of VAC 5 miles saw an average field of 15 with 6 SWC men out. There was a good range of quality with the winner almost breaking 40 minutes but all walkers from third onwards were within sight behind and/or in front of adjacent racers which gave a hard competitive event even if times were limited by the high temperature on a typical warm evening in the park. Surrey's star on this occasion was Dan Maskell who was not only first SWC home but also two or three minutes ahead of previous performances and cut through the field in the middle of the race as he fought to hold faster and more experienced men. While Paul King, Dave Delaney and Peter Hannell were rather down Dan and David Hoben used the competition to their advantage.

1. F.Reis (Ilf M50) 40.09; 2. P.Ryan (Ilf M55) 43.37; 3. S.Bennett (Ilf M50) 48.21; 7. **D.Maskell** (M65) 49.25; 8. **M.Harran** (M75) 49.43; 10. **P.King** (M60) 51.24; 11. **P.Hannell** (M70) 52.36; 13. **D.Delaney** (M70) 56.26; 15. **D.Hoben** (M60) 56.44.

## **24 August LICC 5km, Cophall**

The London Inter Club Challenge meeting included a 5km track walk with 25 out and so good competition in conditions of light rain- ideal for all but the officials. The 3 SWC participants all faster than recently especially the improving Malcolm Martin and getting nearer 10km in the hour all the time and beating Shaun Lightman for the first time even though the latter was on form himself.

**Men** 1. F.Deuter (Hill) 23.28; 2. F.Reis (Ilf) 24.23 3. S.Uttley (Ilf) 26.26; 10. **M.Martin** 29.14; 12. **S.Lightman** 29.53; 13. **M.Harran** 29.54; 14. **D.Maskell** 30.50.

**Women** 1. S.Barnett (E&H) 31.48; 2. **A.Martin** 32.27.

## 20 August SWC Open 5km, Tonbridge

The Open 5kms formerly a track race held in Bromley was transferred to Tonbridge on a footpath in the beautiful grounds of Tonbridge School. There was plenty of Club support and, rather more significantly, quite a few youngsters in the accompanying shorter races. The inevitable twists and turns in this 6 lap course seemed to do no harm to times in general. The field worked hard to achieve good performances with the exception of the leader, Junior International, Cameron Curbishley who was nearer to training pace. Dan Maskell, David Crane and Mick Harran were all up on recent form while Shaun Lightman, chasing David Crane, and David Hoben, in mid-field, both produced especially good times.

1. C.Curbishley (M&M) 24.17; 2. **D.Crane** 27.14 3.  
**S.Lightman** 28.58; 4. **M.Harran** 29.58; 5. **M.Martin** 30.15; 6.  
**D.Maskell** 30.44; 7. **P.Hannell** 31.46; 8. **A.Martin** 32.41; 9.  
**D.Hoben** 33.37c; 10. **D.Delaney** 33.55; 11. **P.Crane** 34.22.

## 25 August Vets AC T&F Championships 3km, Battersea

This championship attracted 13 of whom four were SWC. The conditions were hot and some had raced in earlier races so the outcome was varied and the general trend was for slower times, but the race winner and Shaun Lightman were both about half a minute up. Mick Harran and Peter Hannell were nearly a minute slower than expected. Both Mick and Dan Maskell got past Peter with some ease in the second half while Shaun pushed on well clear in fourth overall. John May was 1<sup>st</sup> M80 as he broke the 25 minute barrier and avoided finishing last just beating M75 Bernie Hercock.

1. J.Hall (Belg 1<sup>st</sup> M60) 15.56.7; 2. S.Allen (Barn Guest M55) 16.38.4; 3. S.Brown (Belg 1<sup>st</sup> W40) 17.01.1 sec; 4.  
**S.Lightman** (1st M70) 17.17.7 sec; 6. **D.Maskell** (1st M65) 18.30.3; 7. **M.Harran** (2nd M75) 18.50.4; 8. **P.Hannell** (2nd M70) 19.08.4; 12. **J.May** (1st M80) 24.48.9.

## **1 September - Southern Counties Veterans League T&F Final, 2km Walk, Ashford:**

Shaun Lightman and Roger Michell represented Blackheath and Bromley Harriers Athletic Club. The overall event consists of two age groups – Over 35s and Over 50s so Shaun and Roger were competing against considerably younger men but still scored useful points for Blackheath with Shaun 2<sup>nd</sup> in the older group while M65 Roger managed fourth in the M35s of the 8 team competition. The pair were not far apart in consecutive overall places with an in-form Shaun coming in less than 10 seconds ahead and not far outside of 11 minutes. Conditions were ideal with a slight breeze, a reasonable temperature and no rain.

**M35** 1. G.Chapman (Oxf M55) 10.27.2; 2. W.Pauzers (Hern H M55) 10.37.9; 4. **R.Michell** (M65) 11.20.

**M50** 1 J.Ralph(E&H M55) 10.45; 2 **S.Lightman** (M70) 11.11;

## **30 August Sarnia 3 kms Vale, Guernsey**

A good sized field of 22 walkers competed in the warm up event for the Church to Church two days later on a 2 lap road course. The Friday evening road walk over 3 kilometres attracted many of the overseas walkers here for the weekend, some taking it a little easier than usual. Malcolm Martin had a close battle with local Terry Bates which could not be separated at the end. Angela Martin walked a good race to be first woman in a new Guernsey allcomers age best time.

### **Men**

1. S.LeNoury (Sarnia) 14.55; 2. P.Lockwood (Sarnia ) 15.43; 3. J.LeNoury (Sarnia) 16.14; 6. **M.Martin** 17.17; 11. **D.Delaney** 20.04; 14. **D.Hoben** 20.18.

### **Women**

**1.A.Martin** 19.35; 2. R.Druckes (Sarnia) 22.09;

## **1 September Guernsey Church to Church Walk**

Less than 36 hours later David Hoben, David Delaney, Angela and Malcolm Martin (both making their debut in this event), lined up for the annual Church to Church Walk. First Surrey walker home was Angela Martin who walked solidly throughout passing 5 miles in 57.49, 10 miles in 1.54.47 en route to first place in the women's race. Angela's time places her 16th on the women's all time list. Having walked together Angela was followed across the line by Malcolm who recorded the same time and together they claimed the husband and wife prize. David Hoben finished in 15<sup>th</sup>. David Delaney was unable to finish due to injury but after a quick check up at the local hospital was able to join the others at the prize presentation later that evening.



**Malcolm & Angela Martin**

**Men:**

1. J.Hobbs (Ash) 3.01.49; 2. J.LeNoury (Sarnia) 3.02.36; 3. J.Ball (Steyn) 3.10.38; 13. **M.Martin** 3.46.52; 15. **D.Hoben** 4.03.29;

**Women:**

1. **A.Martin** 3.46.52; 2. J.LeNoury (Sarnia) 4.04 33

Combined teams: 1.Sarnia 15 pts; 2. Ilford 33 pts; 3. Surrey Walking Club 40 pts.

First Married Couple: Angela and Malcolm Martin.

Newcomer Plaque: Angela Martin.

**14-15 Sept. Roubaix 28 hrs Individual and Relay**

Once again it was Sandra Brown's silver medal in the ladies event as she completed over 200km (127 miles) in 12<sup>th</sup> overall in field of 60. Chris Flint was pleased to comfortably exceed 100 miles while Kathy Crilley, along with two other British women, was 5<sup>th</sup> in the relay event with the Lightening Ladies completing 117 miles. It was good to see former London Vidarian, Bob Watts, completing 94 miles after a long break.

**Men**

1. D.Osipov (Russia) 231.861 km; 2. E.Roze (Amiens) 228.832 km; 3. D.Bunel (Neuilly sur Marne) 226.384 km; 24. **C.Flnt** (M65) 164.942 km; 31. R.Watts (ex-LVids) 150.646 km.

**Women**

1. I.Poutinseva (Russia) 210.158 km; 2. S.Brown (W60) 200.429 km; 3. M.Labyllle (Guatemala) 200.147 km.

**Roubaix 28 hours 3 Athlete Relay Race (14/9):**

1. Les Trois Polonais (Poland/France) 228.831 km; 2. The 3 Amigos (GBR) 194.549 km; 3. Les Bonbons a la Creme (France) 192.189 km; 5. The Lightening Ladies (GBR inc. **K.Crilley**) 187.976 km.

## **11 September Blackheath & Bromley Harriers AC One Hour Race, Norman Park**

The annual Blackheath & Bromley Harriers AC One Hour Race has in the recent past attracted around 25 to 30 runners with a few of the joint SWC members welcomed to take part. This year things were quite different with only one runner taking part as light rain and other factors put off the usual crowd but he was pleased to have the company of three B&B walkers plus two SWC guests. The walkers were not isolated as they formed groups of three and two for the first half of the race. Mick Harran took the lead of the front trio after two laps with Shaun Lightman and Peter Hannell tucked in behind for the first twelve laps briefly leading when the pace slowed from it's very even 2.30 pace. At 12 laps Shaun showed that he had been taking this event easily as he pulled away only for Mick to accelerate after him while Peter tried to hold the steady pace. As Harran had to give up the chase but continued to draw away slightly from Hannell, only just missing his 24 lap target, the three ended equally spaced over 300 metres. Behind them David Delaney started cautiously at the back but caught and passed David Hoben with the latter using the competition to achieve 5.3 miles.

1. **S.Lightman** 9.720 km; 2. **M.Harran** 9.540 km; 3. **P.Hannell** 9.400 km; 4. **D.Delaney** 8.550 km; . 5.**D.Hoben** 8.495 km.

Richard Brown took part in the British Ultrafest 6 day race at Radley College , Oxford where the international field circulated the track with the French winner achieving 533.5 miles or 2,146 laps. Richard was well up in 7<sup>th</sup> with 406 miles (1,633 laps) and first M65 – in the fact first over 60 too.

## **21 September Jack Fitzgerald Memorial 6 miles, Tilgate Park, Crawley:**

Conditions were ideal being overcast, mild and windless for the inaugural Jack Fitzgerald 3/6 mile races in a new venue for walking in Tilgate Park, Crawley. We had six out of the 15 in the main race. Recent British Masters record breaker Ian Richards of Steyning had a comfortable win, with Portuguese international Francisco Reis of Ilford AC and Trevor Jones of Steyning AC doing battle for second and third place respectively. There were six ladies over all distances, Steyning AC's triathlete Joan Lennon had a really good race coming just inside the hour for the 6.4 miles. Our first home was Shaun Lightman, closely followed by the ever improving Dan Maskell whose time was a couple of minutes under expectation. Mick Harran and Peter Hannell were a little outside target time, however Dave Delaney was ahead of recent form Paul Nihill MBE started the race and attended the presentation. Jack Fitzgerald had been a member of SWC for about twenty years, and was a key figure and founder member of Veterans clubs, it is hoped that this dedicated race will be an enduring legacy.

1. I.Richards (Stey) 50.57 2. F.Reis (Ilf) 57.05; 3. T.Jones (Stey) 57.56;6. **S.Lightman** 63.50; 7. **D.Maskell** 64.24; 9. **M.Harran** 66.53; 10. **P.Hannell** 67.13; 11. **D.Delaney** 69.44; 12. **D.Hoben** 74.04

## **22 September – British Masters Championship 3 and 5 km, Alexander Stadium, Birmingham**

This event saw 3 members out for both the 3 and 5 km races. In all but one case the athletes gained gold medals with Malcolm Martin having the best performance in the 3km on Saturday. He improved yet again as he was not far off 17 minutes while wife Angela's better time was for the 5km.

### **3kms Men**

1. F.Reis (Ilf 1<sup>st</sup>M50) 13.57.4; 2. M.Williams (Tam 1<sup>st</sup>M45) 14.05.5; 7. I.Richards (Stey 1<sup>st</sup> M65) 14.22; 6. **R.Michell** (2<sup>nd</sup> M65) 16.49.6; 8. **M.Martin** (1<sup>st</sup> M55) 17.06.6.

### **Women**

1. A.Wheeler (Leic WC 1<sup>st</sup>W55) 16.54.1; 2. M.Noel (Belg 1<sup>st</sup>W50) 17.47.4; 3. C.Duhig (Ryst 2<sup>nd</sup> W55) 17.53.3; 5. **A.Martin** (1<sup>st</sup> W45) 19.11.1.

### **5 Kms Men**

1. F.Reis (Ilf 1<sup>st</sup>M50) 24.17; 2 J.Hall (Belg 1<sup>st</sup>M60) 27.30; 4. **R.Michell** (1<sup>st</sup>M65) 29.27.7; 5. **M.Martin** (1<sup>st</sup> M55) 29.36.3

### **Women**

1. M.Noel (Belg 1<sup>st</sup>W50) 30.01; 2. C.Duhig (Ryst 1<sup>st</sup> W55) 30.49; 3. **A.Martin** (1st W45) 32.39.8.

## **10 August – 44th Dodentocht “Death March” 100k, Antwerp**

Three members made the annual pilgrimage to the province of Antwerp in Belgium to take part in the 44th Dodentocht “Death March” 100k endurance event over 24 hours and recorded successful completions in ideal weather on tracks and byways. Death March so-called as the organisers wanted to create an extreme event which not all could complete. Although this event holds out as being non-competitive, times are recorded but not positions and walkers are always looking for respectable results. The field is large and goes into five figures and the start list for 2013 was the largest ever, with about 400 from the UK. Prominent Centurion Kathy Crilley was pleased to get a personal best especially as her previous best was achieved on an road-only course. Scott Jones after a certain amount of running in the early stages, which is permitted in this kind of event, ended with a time better than the previous two years.

**K.Crilley**15.31.00; **S.Jones** 17.26.00; **D.Hoben** 17.54.00.

## **Club Fixtures**

**Sunday 3 November 7 miles Croydon 2.00pm**

Addiscombe Hockey & Cricket Club, Sandilands CR0 5DB

**Saturday 21 December Christmas Cup 5kms  
Tonbridge 1.00pm**

## STROLL REPORTS

**28 April In Darwin's Footsteps.**

**Conductor: Paul Lawrence**

Strollers (14): Dave Williams, Chris Dent, John Elrick, Gail Elrick, Susan Cannell, Sapphire the dog (trainee, aged 11 months), Corinne Thompson, Marc Domingue, Manjinder Sidhu, Nigel Schofield, Vala West, Dorothy Shepherd, Joelle Paul, Freddie (from USA), Paul Lawrence.

20 miles, 1800ft ascent, circular from Hayes station (Bromley).

Assembling at Hayes station, the 14 bipeds and one quadruped (who had earlier presented her insurance details) set off in some welcome pleasant spring sunshine mainly to explore landscapes and locations linked to Charles Darwin and some of his wealthy Victorian contemporaries. Soon reaching West Wickham Common, the large Corporation of London board forbade 'cursing, swearing... and carpet beating', so strollers took due note. This being not too far from the former HQ of SWC in its early days, past SWC strollers had used routes by local guidebook writer 'Walker Miles' (a pen-name) who had paused just here. Reaching Keston Ponds, strollers examined Ceasar's Well in its circular brick structure, a source for the River Ravensbourne. Viewing the clear bubbling waters, strollers considered re-filling their water bottles, however, enthusiasm for this operation quickly diminished when the conductor noted the pond was used by Darwin as a source to study green algae, and also that the Romans had introduced water snails around here, that still survive. The Wilberforce Oak was soon passed, where in

1878 William Wilberforce conversed under an ancient oak with William Pitt, then Prime Minister, and 'resolved to bring forward a Bill to abolish slavery'. Nearby Holwood House was Pitt's home then and, later on, was often visited by the Darwins, Charles and Emma with their many children.

Approaching Downe village (with an 'e'), a sundial at the church remembered Charles Darwin, an active participant in village life and treasurer of its Friendly Society that met in the now village hall opposite (then the school and evening reading room that Emma kept supplied with newspapers). This being the first longer walk for young Sapphire the dog, on reaching Downe and after greatly enjoying the countryside, it was time for her to be reunited and go home with her other human, John - she perhaps reflecting that she might well have gone for that job with Lowland Search & Rescue after all! At a village house called Petleys, the conductor mentioned that after Charles's death, Emma had moved from the large Down House to this still substantial Downe property, and 'downsized'. This unconscious pun was not lost on the ever razor-sharp wit of Dave Williams – and it was not yet even midday – he suggesting this might have been the first ever case of 'Downesizing'.

Strollers paused to view Down House itself, Charles Darwin's family home for some 40 years following his five-year voyage on HMS Beagle. This was his base during his long search for a scientific explanation of the origins of life in its 'endless forms most beautiful' that led to his landmark work 'On the Origin of Species' written in this very house. Darwin used the varied local landscape with its plants and insects to test his revolutionary theory over many years before he went public, often walking but also taking his carriage around its many paths and lanes. Darwin wrote about his eureka moment: 'I

can remember the very spot in the road, whilst in my carriage, when to my joy the solution occurred to me, and this was long after I had come to Downe'. Strollers may well have passed this very same spot.

Continuing, ahead on a ridge the white-painted Blacksmith's Arms was soon spotted, a welcome sight, as this meant lunch. Strollers noted it sported on its back wall a slightly risqué and amusing road sign with a shepherd and a ewe, warning of 'lonely shepherds'. The route now crossed many chalkland 'dry' valleys – some not so dry – taking paths weaving among country properties in a way that in Freddie's native land of the USA would have been met with sounds of gunshots and shouts of 'trespasser' or worse - to eventually reach High Elms Country Park, the former estate of the Lubbock family's several generations, who were also close friends of the Darwins, and a later ancestor of whom, Eric, became 'Orpington Man' in a 1962 by-election shock. After a short tour of the remains of the remaining Lubbock estate properties and sites, thoughts now turned rapidly to tea, taken at the friendly Green Roof café here, This had been much promoted by Dave en route, so by this stage the natives were becoming increasingly restless. After tea, strollers viewed from a courteous distance the large house in the posh private estate of Farnborough Park where the late Margaret Thatcher had lived with Dennis and their twins. She gave her first TV interview here in 1960 after a maiden Common speech, remarking in answer to a question on her aspirations for higher office 'well I think we'll just try to be a very good back-bencher first'...And the rest is now history.

Returning past Keston Ponds, strollers now instead joined the course of the River Ravensbourne running in dark and shady woods. This tricky section involved many small paths and a

couple of road crossings and unfortunately a couple of strollers became detached, continuing on the wrong path. Once this loss was identified the marvels of modern communications were used to make contact over the aeather. Their whereabouts could not be pinned down, but at least rumours of an elopement were denied. The main group decided that as this was the edges of suburbia and not the wild moors of the north, and the last report of highwaymen hereabouts was now some way in the past, and much more importantly they had a train to catch, the lost souls, who had at least a basic map and compass, could be left to find their own way back. This then meant the conductor had lost just over the normal 10% wastage allowance, but his rejoicing that this might be his last stroll as conductor proved premature, as the SWC top brass soon pointed out there was a conductors' re-training programme to handle just this sort of thing

Meanwhile out there in the dark woods, our missing persons, no doubt by now becoming increasingly disorientated and hoping to encounter a friendly local to guide them on their way, imagined they saw in the distance, yes, it was a shadowy male figure coming the other way towards Downe, a tall elderly man with a white-beard it seemed, but when they looked again he had disappeared...well, could it just have been?...

*Photos taken both on the walk and the recce earlier (with snow on the ground) can be viewed on*

*[https://picasaweb.google.com/111287634139745471912/DarwinFootsteps?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCIW4n52j9cX\\_Qw&feat=directlink](https://picasaweb.google.com/111287634139745471912/DarwinFootsteps?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCIW4n52j9cX_Qw&feat=directlink)*

## 11 -14 July Exmoor Weekend

**Conductor:** Janette Henderson

**Participants:** Susan Cannell, Chris Dent, John & Gail Elrick, Jill Goddard, Sharron Henderson, Joelle Paul, Peter Russell, Dorothy Shepherd and Dave Williams.

This weekend took place on one of the hottest weekends on record. It did not equal for heat Janette's famous Wiltshire Weekend for the club a few years ago but it was close. It was very tough going in the heat, but also that the views were spectacular and, by the coast, almost Mediterranean.

We had some super B&Bs, two of which even provided a carafe of port in the room, so by the third night we had come to expect it and were quite disappointed when it did not appear. How spoilt we had become!

### Day 1

The weekend began in the usual way, with a meal in a local hostelry, namely the Bridge Inn at Dulverton. All bar Jill, who was taking the last bus into Dulverton due to work commitments, met there around 7pm. After the meal, those with a carafe of port in their rooms returned to their B&Bs for a quick tipple before bed. The others in the second B&B had to make do with a cup of coffee!

### Day 2

The next morning also began with a stiff climb to a hill fort, Old Berry Castle just outside Dulverton. The group was pleased with the very civilised start of 9.30am.

After a quick detour to view the earthworks, we then made our way via Higher & Lower Chilcott before descending to join the River Barle again opposite Mounsey Castle, another iron age hill fort. We then joined the Exe Valley Way, past yet another hill fort, and then over the Ridge to Hawkridge village. After a quick water stop and time to admire the picturesquely sited Hawkridge church, we joined the Two Moors Way to Tarr Steps. A light lunch was then taken at the attractive Tarr Farm Inn, with its lovely views over the Steps. Janette had become very well acquainted with Tarr Farm Inn during her 6 week secondment to Exmoor National Park the year before.

After lunch we climbed once more, this time making our way over moorland to the Caratacus Stone on the edge of Winsford Hill. Skirting Winsford Hill we passed along the edge of The Punchbowl, with some spectacular views over the Exe Valley to the NE, before dropping down to Winsford for refreshments (including huge slabs of cake) at the tea room by the old ford.

After tea, we climbed out of Winsford to traverse the valley side above the River Exe before dropping down to join the river at Nethercote and then almost immediately climbing again and getting extremely hot and sweaty. Then over into Withypool, our staging post for the night.

Dropping half the party off at the Royal Oak, the rest made their way to Kings Farm, on the opposite bank of the River Barle and discovered another B&B serving port in the room, and this time with the added extra of homemade chocolates and stunning grounds! The Royal Oak was good too – the bedrooms were lovely and the meal, which the whole group gathered to share in a private room usually set aside for restaurant guests, was very pleasant.

### Day 3

The next morning the conductor had wanted to start at 8.30am knowing it would be a long day, but since the Royal Oak would not serve breakfast before 8am, a 9am start was the only one practical. Again, the day began with a hill, but only a gradual one and along a quiet road, taking us up to the moorland above Withypool. Here we got our first glance of the famous Exmoor ponies, and we would see more throughout the day. Keeping high we took a path along the top edge of the Barle Valley to Simonsbath, along the way taking time to admire the great view of Cow Castle below us.

At Simonsbath we took a break at the pub for a cold drink and to fill up our water bottles. The heat was already taking its toll and this break was extremely welcome, especially since there was nowhere else to get a drink between Simonsbath and the tea stop at Cloud Farm around 4.30pm. At this point we sadly said adieu to Dorothy & Joelle. Dorothy had been suffering from 'fizzy feet' (very painful soles of the feet) and could not go on, so Joelle and she took a taxi to Brendon, the village where we were staying the night and met us in the evening (and, I understand, indulged in a spot of cream tea!).

Taking our leave of Simonsbath, and of Dorothy & Joelle, we followed to Two Moors Way once more to climb up Ashcombe Bottom to Prayway Head and then across Dure Down with some super views all around us. Still on the Two Moors Way, we then descended into the Hoar oak Water valley where we had a picnic lunch in the remains of an old telling house or sheep fold on the side of the valley. There was no shade here but a good breeze to cool us slightly, and no horse flies, the bane of our lives whenever we entered any shade.

After lunch, we continued down the valley to the Hoare Oak tree and then across steeply rolling moorland (cut by streams) to Brendon Two Gates.

Crossing the road, we continued along a broad moorland track to Badgworthy Water (rich seams of Exmoor ponies along the way!). To our left the conductor pointed out a memorial to Colonel RH MacLaren who died here during an explosives demonstration in WW2 (he threw himself onto an explosive device that went wrong, saving the lives of others). This part of the moor was used as a WW2 firing range and is pockmarked with craters.

Later on we made a short detour to one of Exmoor's many stone settings. This one has ten stones in all, but since they are so small, and the bracken was quite high, we could only make out three or four of them.

This is also 'Doone Country', where the novel *Lorna Doone*, by RD Blackmore, was set. The deserted medieval village that our route next took us through was apparently the inspiration for Doone village, even though all but one farm house had been abandoned by the time Blackmore visited it. Sadly, again the bracken was very high and little could be made out of the foundations of the medieval village.

After that it was very easy going (and shaded for once that day!) down the valley of Badgworthy Water. On the way we passed the waterslide which features in *Lorna Doone* and a memorial to RD Blackmore, placed here in 1969 by the Lorna Doone Centenary Committee. This was the first time since Tarr Steps that we had met more than a handful of people on the path, probably because there was a campsite across the river and the 'fleshpot' of Malmsmead, with Lorna Doone Farm, were close by. A little way before Malmsmead, we

made a short detour across the river to have tea and ice creams at Cloud Farm. Again, another welcome break for sweaty, parched walkers. The break included a 'spot which child is the sibling of which' quiz, adjudicated by the parents! I think we got most, but not all, correct in the end..

The final climb of the day was intended to take us up to County Gate (where our taxis would take us back to Taunton the following day) and then along the valley and down to our resting place for the night, Brendon village. Instead, as the time was getting on, and everyone was weary in the heat, a shorter route was taken via Southern Wood to Brendon. This still involved a climb but not as much of a climb.

Again, the party was split across two B&B (neither serving port sadly!) and then met up for an evening meal in the pub. In this case, the pub was a few miles out of Brendon, since the local pub, the Staghunters Inn, had been completely booked out by another large party of walkers. So we had to take a taxi to and from the Blue Ball Inn at Countisbury. Still, it all worked smoothly and the conductor was very pleasantly surprised when the group offered to buy her meal for her – she knew she should have ordered caviar (had it been on the menu!).

Although no port was offered, both Brendon B&Bs offered very comfortable accommodation but those staying at Meadpool House had the better of the two, those staying there being met with huge slabs of cake (and tea) on the patio by the river on their arrival and a much better breakfast. The other B&B offered a rather more old fashioned and basic breakfast by all accounts (putting it politely) but it did have four poster beds!

## Day 4

The next day started bright & early again at 9am, but sadly Dorothy's feet were still too painful so she and Joelle did not walk with us and had another day of leisure on the cliff tops above Porlock Bay before meeting us for tea and taxis at County Gate.

The morning started with a very easy route along the East Lyn to Watersmeet, where the East Lyn meets Hoar oak Water. At this point we crossed the river, after having tried but failed to get the National Trust tea shop there to open the toilets for us) and climbed up to the road and then up beyond the road to reach the last of our Iron Age hill forts (actually, technically, a hill slope enclosure). After that we had a further steep and hot climb to join the Two Moors Way again with some lovely views of the coast in front of us.

Since the heat of the weekend was starting to take its toll on Susan at this point, Jill, who had recedied the walk earlier with the conductor, kindly agreed to take an advance party of all bar Susan onto Lynmouth and then, via the water-powered cliff railway, to the Valley Of the Rocks. The conductor then followed in a more leisurely fashion with Susan and, taking a slightly shorter route, met the rest of the party in the Valley of the Rocks.

Lunch was taken in Lynmouth and after that Susan made her own way, via open-topped bus, to meet us at County Gate for tea and taxis. The rest of the party took the South West Coastal Path towards Porlock (but not as far as Porlock), with dramatic views over the cliffs to our left. Our final site of interest before the end the weekend's walking was on Old Burrow Hill where the remains of a Roman fortlet or signal station are to be found. To get there, though, we had to take

an initially very over-grown and little used steep path up Wingate Combe - the last challenge of the day!

Arriving hot and sweaty (again!) at the National Trust tea shop at Country Gate, there was time for all to have tea and cake (big slabs again – seems like the Exmoor way!) before the taxis arrived to whisk us away and back to the Taunton station and thence by train to London (or Sheffield in the case of Sharron). Again, the conductor was over-joyed to find tea paid for her, since there was money left in the kitty apparently. Thanks all!

### **3 August 2013 Witley Circular**

**Conductor:** Janette Henderson

**Participants:** Carol Buss, Jenny Caddy, Susan Cannel, John & Gail Elrick, Freddie Knight, Leo Kruis, Corinne Thompson & Marc Domingue

The group who gathered at Witley station were rewarded for their early start by a perfect day for walking, with a combination of sun and a cooling breeze. A comfortable pace was set as we made our way via Hambledon Common to the pretty village of Hambledon and then onto Vann Hill and Pockford Farm before we turned our steps west to Chiddingfold. Sadly there was no time to take advantage of the new tea shop which has opened up by the green at Chiddingfold. Instead, a brief water and photo stop was taken by the lily pond (which was in full bloom).

After this we made our way up the hill by the church (handily missing a quick rain shower while walking under the trees) before some of the group took advantage of the courgettes being offered for free outside one of the houses a little further

on. We then cut across country via Langhurst Manor Farm and Prestwick to Grayswood, with lovely views of Black Hambledon and Hindhead Common (with the afternoon's climb clearly in view) on the way. Those with sandwiches ate them on the nearby village green and joined the rest (five in all) in the garden of the Wheatsheaf, braving a booby trapped gazebo overhead (water came down from the canopy every time a lorry passed by on the road). On the way out several members of the group noticed a very odd addition to what was otherwise a beautiful pub garden. Hanging on the wall of said garden, we were uncertain whether it was a bed pan or urinal (was this the location of the gents toilet?!).

After lunch we had a steady climb up to the top of Gibbet Hill (which used to be the site of the local Gibbet), passing all that remains of the Temple of the Four Winds (built as a hunting lodge in 1905). Both gave some splendid views of the surrounding countryside. Indeed, we could just make out the City of London from the top of Gibbet Hill.

We then headed down to the old turnpike from London to Portsmouth, taking in some great views of the Devil's Punchbowl and the now grassy swathe which used to be the old A3 before the Hindhead tunnel was built (what an improvement!). On reaching the view point near the NT Café, we had a pit stop for ice creams and a drink and then down into the huge amphitheatre that is the Devil's punchbowl.

Then disaster struck for one of our group. Half the group reached the bottom of steep steps leading into the punchbowl but the rest of the party were nowhere to be found. With no other possible path they could have taken we were extremely puzzled about what had happened. We soon found out. Poor Susan had tripped over a rock on the path before the steps

and had a very nasty fall, badly hurting her chest, and taking some heavy knocks on her nose, chin, arm and knee. Luckily Gail was there with her first aid kit. However Susan was very shaken and in quite a lot of pain. She bravely carried on, and finished the remaining seven miles with the rest of us!

As ever, we had the traditional rush for the train at the end of the walk, made especially pressing by the fact that the trains to London only run once an hour and nowhere to retire to if we missed the train. A faster advance party lead by the conductor went ahead to ensure they made the 6.45pm train, while Jenny, who also knew the route, kindly stayed with the rest of the group to get them to the station (thanks Jenny!). In the end, all the party, including our walking wounded member, made it safely onto the 6.45pm train. Phew!



L to R (standing) Jenny, Janette, Corinne, Sue, Leo, Carol and L to R (seated) Gail, John, Marc (photo Freddie Knight)

## **18 August Clandon Circular via Westcott**

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

*Participants (17) – Sally Adams, Don Bolton, Carol Buss, Mark Denby, Chris Dent, Gail Elrick, John Elrick, Laurence Foe, Leo Kruis, Simon Lloyd, Lynne McKenzie, Gillian Morris, Joelle Paul, Stan Saunders, Dorothy Shepherd, Jane Rosoux, Paul Tilley.*

The vagaries of the SWT Summer timetable meant that the stroll had a later start than usual at 0959 and the more genteel time no doubt contributed to the large number of strollers who greeted the conductors at Clandon station. The conductors aimed to finish in time for the hourly return train to London at 1859 shown on SWT's web site, although the paper timetable outside the station confusingly showed two return trains an hour!

The conductors set off through Clandon Regis Golf Club and East Clandon village to cross the A246 and head south eastwards along Blake's Lane. We passed Blake's Lane Farm and Fullers Farm with their stables and large areas of cultivated land to emerge on to Shere Road. We skirted Hillside Farm and, once Gail had stopped John from taking half the group in the wrong direction, we skirted meadows to enter the Sheepleas. Avoiding the myriad of paths going off in all directions, the conductors headed through the woods to join the lane at Honeysuckle Bottom.

From here we joined the Lovelace Bridges Trail through the woods. This trail takes in the bridges built by Earl Lovelace, the owner of the East Horsley Estate in the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century, to facilitate the transport of timber by horse cart from his woods to the depot. Our route took us under three of the restored bridges which are notable for their Moorish design and use of local flint and brick. Emerging from the woods we continued eastwards across fields and lanes as far as Hogden Cottage where we turned southwards to head for lunch at

Westcott. On entering the village we paused to look at a plaque on a house commemorating where Leslie Howard, the British stage and film star, lived until his untimely death in 1943, aged 50. He was a passenger on a commercial plane from Portugal which was shot down by German fighters over the Bay of Biscay. The plaque is set on the upper part of the house behind the high front wall and can easily be missed.

Some of the group stopped under the tree on the village green, from where Simon and Gillian left and Stan joined us, whilst others headed up the road to 'The Prince of Wales'. The afternoon route took us westwards along the left side of the valley with fine views of the nearby North Downs on the right. We emerged into Abinger Hammer where we stopped at the local village shop/Post Office/tea rooms. Although the shop is situated on the busy A25, we were able to sit on the benches outside and watch the local cricket whilst consuming tea and fine cakes.

The final stretch from tea took us back up to the North Downs. We made our farewells to Stan, who modestly told us that he would soon be celebrating his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, and headed off westwards as far as Clandon Downs. The long descent of these downs is a highlight of the walk with its long, sweeping panorama towards the edge of London. We re-entered West Clandon via the golf course and reached the station in good time for the 1859 train back to London.

When we last led this stroll in August 2009 we obtained a group photo at the finish taken outside the station. This photo has been stuck on our refrigerator door at home since then. Sally reminded us that she had taken the photo using a self-timer. What better opportunity than to repeat the experience! The group, with some of the same faces, assembled in the same location for Sally to take a second picture. This photo of the 'Clandon Group of 2013' will hang alongside that of 2009!

## **8 September - Paddock Wood to Headcorn**

### **Conductor: Lilian Chelli**

The conductor was joined by Adam, Corinne, Freddie, Gillian, Manjinder, and Paul Tilley. John and Gail, who completed this stroll when it was first held in August 1996, were unable to make it this time because they were leading a walk in aid of the Princess Alice Hospice.

From Paddock Wood there was a gentle climb to the picturesque old village of Brenchley. We then walked through extensive apple orchards to Furnace Pond, one of many ponds associated with the iron industry which thrived in the Weald of Kent until the eighteenth century. Freddie later commented that the stroll was like a book with dozens of short chapters. In one of the most interesting chapters, we crossed a hop garden, ducking under the twine supporting hop-bines. We enjoyed lunch in the Star and Eagle, a lovely old pub in the village of Goudhurst.

In the afternoon, we walked through Old Park Wood and passed Hazelden Farm where we saw derelict hop pickers' huts. Tea at the new National Trust restaurant next to Sissinghurst Castle was appreciated by everyone. There was a wonderful pannacotta available which was especially appreciated by the conductor. After tea, we had glimpses of the famous gardens of the other side of the moat.

A gentle walk through fields and quiet lanes brought us to Headcorn. This was a fascinating walk which we all enjoyed. The total distance was about 20 miles.

## FUTURE STROLLS

**Saturday 2 November.** Coal Tax Kanter (circular). Conductor **David Hoben** Start **Tattenham Corner** 09:39 (London Bridge 08:50, or London Victoria 08:47, change at East Croydon). Free parking at Tattenham Corner Station. Return trains 21 & 51 minutes past the hour.

*Route description: Coal Tax posts were brought in to define the boundary within which it was collected to pay for the rebuilding of the City of London after the Great Fire. The walk will try to join up some of the posts. The route goes out via heaths & takes the North Downs Way in the direction of Merstham. **Lunch is at Fanny's Farm Shop.** Return via Banstead Woods for autumn colours.*

Explorer 187. Distance approx. 18 miles.

**Sunday 17 November.** Down the Wandle, and along a bit... (linear). Conductor **Janette Henderson**. Start East Croydon station 09:22 (London Victoria 09:06). Return trains Barnes Bridge, 50 minutes past each hour. There may be mud, particularly in the early stages.

*Route description: Follows the Wandle Trail from East Croydon to where the Wandle joins the Thames at Wandsworth and then the Thames Path to Barnes Bridge. Lunch in Colliers Wood and tea at Fulham Palace. Stretches of the Wandle Trail which feel quite rural. There is a wealth of history along the route (including Fulham Palace) Explorer 161. Distance approx. 20 miles.*

**Sunday 1 December.** Bentley to Farnham (linear). Conductor **Jill Goddard**. Start **Bentley** station at 09:20 (London Waterloo 08:07). Return trains from Farnham, 30 minutes past each hour.

*Route description: This stroll takes in the woodlands of Alice Holt Forest and the ponds of Frensham before lunch at Tilford. During the afternoon we walk over the heathlands of Crooksbury and Puttenham Common. Tea at Seale. North Downs Way back to Farnham station. Explorer 145. Distance approx. 18 miles.*

**Sunday 15 December.** Eastbourne Circular. Conductor **Claire Kirkbright** Start **Eastbourne** station 10:12 (London Victoria 08:47). Return trains 59 minutes past each hour.

*Route description: Walk through Eastbourne's historic Meads district and along the South Downs Way via Jevington descending into the Cuckmere valley for a quick picnic lunch (only 20 mins/half-an-hour to maximise daylight given the late start). Hilly for the rest of the stroll till last descent into Eastbourne. Walk along the prom and pier after dark, but good street lighting. Explorer 123. Distance appx. 18 miles.*