

Autumn 2014 No.458

*The Gazette and Record of the
Surrey Walking Club*



Walking



Hadrians Wall as seen by those on the 5 day stroll (See Report)

Editor

Welcome to Gazette no. 458

This is your club magazine. As Editor I welcome any contributions. Letters, news, comments, photos and reports are all welcome. Any material Emailed to Peter Crane would be welcome.

Thanks for all contributions. This magazine and much other interesting information is also accessible on our website www.surreywalkingclub.org.uk .

Facebook

We have a Facebook page which is being well used for sharing interesting information. We invite you to join by contacting Mark Easton, our webmaster.

Gazette Night

Gazette Night is due to be held on Saturday 29 November at Hayes as usual. The cost is £12.50 preferably paid in advance by cheque to Trevor Sliwerski at his home address. Early confirmation if you are coming or not would help save him ringing around chasing for replies

President's Report

This summer has covered a busy period for both racing and strolling members of the club with our team winning bronze medals in the National 10 km led home by Shaun Lightman and then in August at the National 100 mile race Sandra Brown did an W65 age group best performance with Chris Flint being our first man home. Activity was not confined to our shores. Roger Michell won both bronze and silver medals at the European Veterans Championships. Malcolm and Angela Martin ventured to Guernsey in September with Malcolm coming 10th in the Church to Church walk but Angela romped home first woman which must merit a big congratulations and together they won the first married couples award. .

On the strolling side 14 covered 84 miles in the 5 day Hadrians Wall expedition led by Jeanette Henderson which was deemed to be very successful. There have also been a number of other very successful strolls with 14 members enjoying the Guildford Circular stroll in August.

Onto a subject that comes around ever seemingly quicker is the Gazette Night at Blackheath and Bromley Harriers HQ in Hayes on Saturday the 29th of November. I encourage you to join us for our one fundraising social event of the year. If you can come please let the Social Secretary know as soon as possible.

Surrey Walking Club & the Gazette in World War 1

As you will all be aware, the country is currently commemorating the centenary of the First World War, so I thought it appropriate to include a short article on how the war affected the Club, as reflected in the pages of the Gazettes of the period.

Issue number 13 came out in July 1914, the month leading up to the outbreak of war. There is no hint of the coming conflict save for the coincidental report of a route march along the London to Brighton road of the London Rifle Brigade, organised by a club member with the delightful name of Albany P. Featherstonehaugh, who was one of those members not to survive the fighting. Otherwise the edition contained the normal race and stroll reports and fixtures together with a report of a cricket match between the club and Capital & Counties Bank, which we lost by 99 runs.

Not surprisingly only 5 Gazettes were published during the course of the war, followed by a special issue in December 1918 which listed 90 members in service and 28 who had died or were killed in action. In January 1915 issue 14 noted "it is only fitting that our club should lie low and take things quietly" during the war. Races were suspended until further notice, but there were reports of members taking part in other races. The club did continue to have some strolls and marches, as Sandra Brown mentioned in her 1999 centenary history of SWC – "Unbroken Contact" – which is an excellent source of the story of the club to that time. The 1915 issue also reported the first member to be killed in action – Tom Crafter jun.

The reports and letters in the wartime issues show a continued strong commitment to the club and its members in spite of hostilities. There is a sense of humour exhibited even in troubled times. Sergeant Lane reported that “for the past 15 weeks I have been engaged in a walking tour of France and Belgium” for which “previous SWC strolls were useful preparation”. Tongue-in-cheek is a common means of making the best of a bad situation. Another wrote “I was inoculated this morning prior to going over to help Duggie Haig. He and I are great pals.”

Issues 14-19 are full of correspondence received from members in service and many of them commented on how pleased they were to keep in touch through receiving the Gazette and correspondence they received from other members. It highlights how efficient the postal service was at that time. Sometimes, however, you can sense the despondency which their humour masks as in “if ever peace does return to this benighted world”.

In all 65% of over 100 members served during the war, during which time membership actually grew! As Sandra Brown mentions in “Unbroken Contact”, South London Harriers wrote to congratulate SWC “upon keeping alive and regularly holding committee meetings”. Sadly it is believed 29 members did not return from the war. One of those was the Club Captain, Sgt. Teddy Knapp, who died in October 1916, after being struck by a machine gun bullet while tending to other wounded soldiers. His name continues to be remembered as the Knapp Memorial Trophy was subscribed to by members in 1919.

RACE RESULTS

13 July – 8 County Match 3km Walk, Mile End Stadium:

Two members appeared in the Southern Inter-Counties Track and Field race at the Mile End Stadium. In theory the event featured the four best athletes in each county over the whole range of events including the walk and should have meant a very large high standard race. The reality was slightly lower although both the women's and men's races were won by international walkers and the field of 20 included several of the top juniors. Surrey County were unable to field a Men's team due to management problems although they did have a Women's team and the two SWC men in the walk formed the whole of the County's male representation. The weather varied between heavy showers and very hot sunshine and the latter greeted the 3km walk so times were generally down especially as the judging was of the strict variety in line with the standard of the meeting. Mick Harran got the better of Peter Hannell again as he caught and passed him mid-race to finish 50 metres ahead in a slightly better time than recently. In terms of the men's match few points were contributed to the Surrey total but they did form 100% of this total. Hopefully, in future years, the County will be able to properly take part in this friendly event and their younger walkers will add somewhat more glory!

1.D.King (Essex) 12.29; 2. F.Reis (Herts) 14.01; 3. L.Legon (Kent) 14.34; 8. **M.Harran** (Surrey) 18.28; 10. **P.Hannell** (Surrey) 18.46.

15 July– VAC 5 km, Battersea Park

Due to a number of factors the July edition of the Battersea 5 mile races organised by VAC included a good field in the running section but only three walkers – all members of Surrey Walking Club - on the road. As the run was a 5km event rather than the usual 5 miles the walk was similarly held over the shorter distance. A warm evening led to rather slower times than usual and although, fortunately, the three competitors were of a fairly similar standard competition was limited. Dan Maskell came in first about a minute clear of Paul King who was more affected by the conditions. Although David Delaney was, as expected, a couple of hundred yards behind, he had a better race and appears to be coming back to form.

1. **D.Maskell** 31.28; 2. **P.King** 32.20; 3. **D.Delaney** 34.14.

15-18 July –Nijmegen Marches:

Two members completed the 98th edition of Nijmegen Marches, covering 200 km each over 4 days. Long distance supremo Kathy Crilley did this event in her capacity as member of the Metropolitan Police Walking Club team in full police uniform, and David Hoben as a civilian. The first day was ideal walking conditions, cool and breezy, but the remaining days saw mercury rapidly rising day by day and the endurance event was made harder than usual. The spectators numbered over one million each day, to rival those on the Tour de France in Britain, and there was a two minute silence on Friday to mourn the large number of Dutch lost on the Malaysian plane tragedy that week.

19 July UKA/RWA National 10 km Championships, Hillingdon Cycle Track

The National 10km was again held at the Hillingdon Cycle Track in Hayes, Middlesex but again the sudden high temperatures generally held back times for most and caused several retirements. The best news for Surrey Walking Club was a bronze team medal gained not so much for three high class times but for the not insignificant achievement of finishing a complete team. There was a notable absence of Midland and Northern teams apart from Leicester whose finishers including Sarah Lightman who achieved a pb for the distance as she tracked father, Shaun, as far as she was able. Shaun was SWC's first man home down a couple of minutes like most of the competitors but adapting well to the conditions and steadily pulling away from the rest of the team. Dan Maskell raced carefully in the heat and finished without fading but in a time rather slower than recently but over a minute clear of Peter Hannell who held on to complete the team. The only walker to perform significantly well was the winner, Under 20 Callum Wilkinson from Enfield, who is a rapidly improving young prospect.

C.Wilkinson (E&H) 46.22; 2. Dan King (Col H) 47.49; 3. I.Richards (Stey) 50.48; 15. **S.Lightman** 63.40; 18. **D.Maskell** 66.29; 19. **P.Hannell** 67.52;

Teams:

1. Ilford 275; 2. Enfield 273; 3. SWC 248.

3 August – National Track 100 miles Southend

This year's National 100 miles race attracted competitors from 5 different countries including four from SWC. It was started, on Saturday 2nd August at midday by the Mayor of Southend -on-Sea, Councillor Christopher Walker. Hot and humid weather conditions faced the competitors, who were attempting the 402 1/2 laps of the athletics track. The afternoon became hotter, however the evening and night were cool but after sunrise on Sunday morning the temperature and humidity rose again.

From the gun Richard Gerrard of the Isle of Man set a fast pace and was never headed. He completed the 100 miles in 19hr 36m 33s. The weather took its toll on club members Paul King and Richard Brown who retired at 55 and 87 miles respectively. Sandra Brown set a world record for the women's 65 age group of 20 hrs 40m 33s.. She was also the 1st lady and 2nd in the race overall.

Chris Flint had covered 85 1/2 miles by the time limit of 24 hours. Another notable performance was of club member Shaun Lightman's daughter racing for Leicester Walking Club. She finished 2nd Lady and 4th overall with a time of 22hrs 18m 47s. This was a Midlands record by over half an hour. She was awarded the athlete of the meeting trophy.

The disappointment of the day was Joyce Crawford who missed 100 miles in 24 hours by 1/2 mile. However she was allowed to continue to the 100 mile point and on the last lap was accompanied by a group of supporters.

1. **K.Gerrard** (IOM Vet) 19.36.33 2. **S.Brown** (W65 world rec.) 20.40.33; 4. **S.Lightman** (Leic WC) 22.18.47; 5. **C.Flnt** 85.5 miles in 24 hr Retired: **R.Brown** 87miles and **P.King** 55 miles.

12 August Vets AC Summer 5 miles League, Battersea Park

On an evening varying between pleasant evening sunshine and exceedingly heavy rain. Only 9 finishers was a disappointment although a fairly even spread of times meant most had others within sight for the whole race and most of the SWC contingent were pleased with the outcome though not the late drenching.

1. S.Bennett (Ilf M55) 47.04 ; 2. A.Cox (Hill M60) 48.40;
3. M.Culshaw (Belg M45) 50.33; 4 **P.Hannell** (M70)
52.30; 5 **P.King** (M60) 54.17; 6. **D.Delaney** (M70)
55.58; 7. **D.Hoben** (M60) 57.28.

20 August SWC Open 5km, Tonbridge School Track

The 5km promotion this year moved south to Tonbridge. There were only two visitors but a field of 10 marked a successful and friendly event. On the track however competition was strong with most of the field expecting times within a minute or so of the half hour. After little walking but fit from some running David Crane almost broke 26 let alone 30 minutes a best time for the distance and a performance not far from his previous spell of good form over longer distances a couple of years ago. Also showing improved form was Shaun Lightman in second also easily breaking the half hour and bringing a sub hour 10km within reach. Behind them the next three, Mick Harran, Dan Maskell and Peter Hannell were together for the first few laps with Mick gradually pulling away from Dan in the second half. The race was spanned by the Cranes as the tail of the field was David's father, Peter, who has raced irregularly but still managed a reasonable 35 minutes.

1.**D.Crane** 26.04; 2. **S.Lightman** 28.56; 3.
M.Harran 30.45; 4. **D.Maskell** 31.09; 5. **P.Hannell**
31.29; 6. S.Pender (E&H) 32.44; 7. **A.Martin** 33. 47
8. **D.Hoben** 34.33; 9. **P.Crane** 35.05

3km:

1.O.Hopkins (Lewes U13B) 19.04.

9/10 August BMAF T&F Championships

The annual British Vets Championships at Birmingham last weekend included just one SWC competitor, Roger Michell, but his excellent times over 3 and 5 km with Silver and Gold age group medals respectively made his trip well worthwhile.

Men 3km

1. F.Reis (Ilf M50) 13.57; 2. I.Richards (Steyn M65) 14.17; 3. M.Williams (Tam M45) 14.37; 7. **R.Michell** (2nd M65) 16.12.

Men 5km

1. F.Reis (Ilf M50) 24.15; 2. M.Williams (Tam M45) 25.06; 3. T.Jones (Steyn M55) 26.34; 4. **R.Michell** (1st M65) 27.40.

16 August Southern Area T&F Champs, Crystal Palace

The Southern Area 5km walk was included in the Under 15 and 17 T&F Championships.. The walk field was naturally somewhat older although the winner, Callum Wilkinson, is Under 20 and lapped the whole field in an excellent personal best. The event was successful in having 12 out including most of the best performers in the area despite a discouraging start as the gates to the venue were still shut 10 minutes before the time limit for registration and the facilities are, sadly, now rather run down. We had four starters although Peter Hannell meant was disqualified. The best outcome was Sandra Brown's British W65 record and a European record was shown to be within reach on another occasion as her time here was down on potential having raced 100 miles only two weeks ago. Sandra Campbell had not raced 5km before but was quite pleased with her time while Shaun Lightman was handicapped by injury and was outside his 30 mins. target.

Men

1. C.Wilkinson (E&H) 21.38; 2. I.Richards (Steyn) 24.43; 3. S.Allen (Barn) 28.15; 29.05; 5 **S.Lightman** 30.42

Women

1. P.Cummings (AFD) 28.31; 2. **S.Brown** (Br Rec) 29.06.66; 3. **A.Martin** 33.15; 4. **S.Campbell** 36.54.

23 August Wadelincourt [Belgium] 24h race walk

The village of Wadelincourt, not far from the Belgian/French border, hosted the first Paris-Colmar qualifying event of the 2014-15 season. Sandra Brown and Kathy Crilley, veterans of many such continental walking races, decided to give this relatively new event a try, en route visiting the historic town of Tournai, whose cathedral and bell tower are designated a World Heritage Site. The organising team were delighted to have two English walkers to enhance the international character of the event, and were very hospitable. The race was well organised, with the event HQ, athletes and supporters “village”, and refreshments near Wadelincourt’s village hall, and a second feeding station on the rural circuit of nearly 3.7 kms.

Although the field for this relatively new and little-known race was not large, the walkers were inspired to give their best . The first three men to finish completed over 200 kms in 24h. SWC’s ladies gave commendable performances. Sandra was 6th overall and first lady with a W65 24h World Record distance of 189.949 kms. This distance exceeds the W65 running world record! Kathy completed a strong 132.558 kms for 4th lady and 15th place overall. But for the thunderstorm and torrential rain which drove walkers off the circuit for some minutes during the night, both ladies would have achieved even greater distances.

The Belgians take their beer very seriously indeed, and all prizes took the form of local brew, with which our ladies struggled home on Eurostar after the race. The event will be biennial, and deserves better support in future years. Kathy and Sandra give the event their personal recommendation!

25 August Bill Collins 3km, Tonbridge School Track

Tonbridge AC held their Bank Holiday Monday Open Meeting again in cool drizzle and including the usual 3km walk although this was held on their normal footpath course in the very pleasant school grounds. This continued the tradition of the Bill Collins Memorial race and, appropriately for this great, departed coach, was mainly youngsters from the three fairly local Clubs producing new young walkers – Tonbridge, Cambridge Harriers and Aldershot & Farnham. The winner, Tom Snook, from the last of these was 20 seconds clear of second placed Chris Hobbs (Ashford) having pulled steadily clear over the race. Surrey Walking Club had two members in the field of 10 and both responded to the cheerful company with good times. David Hoben was almost a minute ahead of his Herne Hill time after a battle with Geraldine Legon (Bexley) who closed appreciably in the last of the six laps but failed to avoid the wooden spoon. It was good for race walking to see all of the veterans, apart from Chris Hobbs, filling the latter part of the field behind their up and coming juniors whose usual high spirits were much in evidence.

1. T. Snook (AFD) 14. 48; 2. C. Hobbs (Ashf) 15.08;
3. E. Butcher (Camb H) 17.42; 5. **P. Hannell** 18.36;
8. **D. Hoben** 20.12.

25/28 August European Vets M65 5& 20km Izmir, Turkey

The 2014 European Master's Championships attracted 7 British walkers 4 of whom were in the M65 age group specially mustered for the 20km team competition which they duly won. European Champion for both the 5km and 20km was Ian Richards who achieved a World Age-group record for the shorter distance with 24 minutes 44 seconds. Roger Michell could not match his colleague in time, but in position he was close with Silver and Bronze medals respectively in fields of about 15. Although he found the 20km hard going and his time

not quite what he might have hoped for, the shorter race saw him not far from his recent best for the distance and relatively a lot better than his recent other distances.

5km:

1. I.Richards (Steyn M65) 24. 44.06 (WR); 3.

R.Michell (M65) 28.13.7.

20km:

1. I.Richards 115.36 (WR); 2. **R.Michell** 134.02

30 August LICC 5km, Allianz Copthall Stadium

This saw three members traveling across the Thames to North London. Overall most walkers were around their normal level and Angela Martin and Dan Maskell typified this with times near to their Tonbridge results but a small improvement for Dan saw him even closer to breaking 31 minutes. Right up in 5th place Malcolm Martin returned to racing after a short break and walking cautiously was 2 minutes down on his last 5km.

Men:

1.C.Wilkinson (E&H) 22.24; 2. F.Reis (Ilf) 24.06; 3.

F.Deuter (Hill) 24.48ec; 5. **M.Martin** 28.11; 11.

D.Maskell 31.05.

Women:

1.H.Middleton (E&H) 31.08; 2. **A.Martin** 33.13; 3.

N.Grimsey (E&H) 36.14.

7 September Jim Sharlott 10km, Leicester:

This 10km was held at Abbey Park Leicester. The course consisted of 13 3/4 laps of Abbey Park. The weather was warm and sunny with a gentle breeze. From the gun a group consisting of Ian Richards (Steyning), Francisco Reis (Ilford) and Steve Uttley (Ilford) led the field. They quickly built up a commanding lead and eventually Ian Richards won with Francisco in Second and Steve in third. In the next group Roger Michell had a race long battle with Sean McMullen

(Ireland) and Peter Bosco. Peter surged ahead with 2 laps to go but Roger held off Sean to finish in a personal best since he turned 65 to gain 2nd M65 and 3rd handicap. Just behind him Shaun Lightman began fast and after two laps he settled with a group consisting of himself John Constantinou (Birchfield) and Andrew Frazer (Scotland). With 4 laps to go Andrew dropped Sean and John with John drawing ahead of Shaun. Shaun finished 1st M70. Just behind Shaun Dan Maskell had a lone race which enabled him to concentrate on pace judgement. He passed 5 km in 32m 28s and a second 5km in 32m 29s!! Later in the afternoon participants took part in "Smile Mile" in aid of Alzheimers Society. Andrea Lightman took part and finished in 14m 39s. She was with a group and managed to draw ahead 500yards from the finish.

Surrey Walking Club finished 2nd team in the veterans championship.

2nd M65. **R.Michell** 57.43; 1st M70. **S.Lightman** 63.52; 3. **D.Maskell** (M65) 64.57.

Veterans Team: 2nd SWC.



Angela Martin had a successful weekend in Guernsey together with husband Malcolm (see below)

5/7 September Church to Church 19.4 miles & 3kms

The annual journey to Guernsey included a small party of Club members – Angela and Malcolm Martin, David Hoben and Mick Harran. This friendly challenge always begins on the Friday of arrival with a little 3km warm-up which Malcolm won by 11 seconds from local man Phil Lockwood. Malcolm was able to pull away in the second lap at what for him was an easy pace. Mick and Angela both achieved all-comers age bests for their efforts further down the good field of 17 with results near their normal pace. Sunday saw 25 set out on the longer distance with Malcolm accompanying Angela as last year. Angela was first woman by a comfortable quarter of an hour in a time only 20 seconds different from last year. The front of the event saw Johnathan Hobbs from Ashford beat Sarnia walker Jason LeNoury by just 100 seconds after just over 3 hours as they completed the long Marina finish among the crowded holidaymakers. Mick Harran held the Martins for the first half and then let them go to finish isolated 3 minutes adrift. David Hoben was also near last year's time. Besides repeating her Women's Trophy win the Martins also retained the first husband and wife Cup. These presentations being made at the usual very social post-race evening reception.

3kms Men:1. **M.Martin** 16.15; 2. P.Lockwood (Sarnia) 16.26; 3. R.Elliott (Sarnia) 16.42; 7. **M.Harran** 18.34; 10. **D.Hoben** 20.03

Women:1. **A.Martin** 19.40; 2. M.Macdonald (Sarnia) 20.35 3. J.LeNoury(Sarnia) 21.38.

19.4 mls Men: 1. J.Hobbs (Ashf) 3.04.19; 2. Jason LeNoury (Sarnia) 3.05.56; 3. J.Ball (Steyn) 3.19.11; 10. **M.Martin** 3.47.46; 12. **M.Harran** 3.50. 43; 14. **D.Hoben** 4.07.17.

Women: 1. **A.Martin** 3.47.12; 2. M.Macdonald (Sarn) 4.04.56 3. Jayne LeNoury (Sarnia) 4.08.45.

28 September – Gazette Cup 4 Miles, Sandilands, Croydon

The 2014/15 Club year began with the 4 miles for the Gazette Cup in the remarkably warm sunny Sunday afternoon. There were only 5 visitors but 10 Club members represented a healthy turnout. At the front by nearly 3 minutes was Luc Legon of Cambridge Harriers despite this being a very low level event for the English Schools Champion. The next two were SWC clubmates in similar form at the moment who, after battling together for the first half of the race, finished half a minute apart as Malcolm Martin recognized his advantage over David Crane on the uphill section and managed to open a gap. In 5th place second claim Paul King had the best race to win the handicap as he tried very hard to catch Dan Maskell although the fitter man did not fade on the hills as the laps went by and ended well clear in second handicap. Completing the Scratch and Handicap frames was David Crane with 3rd place on both scores. Further down, Club President Trevor Sliwerski followed a difficult journey to arrive in time with a difficult race but finished to tie with Sandra Campbell well inside 50 minutes.

Men:

1. L.Legon (Camb H) 34.02; 2(6). **M.Martin** 35.37; 3(3). **D.Crane** 36.05; 4(2). **D.Maskell** 40.28; 5(1). **P.King** 41.58;6. R.Penfold 42.22; 7(-). **P.Hannell** 43.22; 8(4). **P.Crane** 45.36; 9(7). **D.Delaney** 45.52; 10(9). **T.Sliwerski** 49.35; 11. D.Sutcliffe (Bed H) 53.19.

Women:

1(5). **A.Martin** 45.23; 2. G.Legon (Bexley) 47.32; 3(8). **S.Campbell** 49.35.

Other Results

20 July Home Counties Inter-area 2kms S.Lightman 11.44.86

23 August Herne Hill 3kms D.Hoben 21.05

25 August Southend 1 ml S Lightman 9.16

Future Club Races

2 November – Alec Potton 7 mls – Sandilands 2pm

**20 December – Christmas Cup 5kms – Tonbridge Track
11.30am**

STROLL REPORTS

3-8 July SWC Does Hadrian's Wall

Conductor: Janette Platt (Henderson)

Participants: Chris Dent, Jill Goddard, Jill Pudney, John & Gail Elrick, Kevin McGivern, Laurence Foe, Leo Kruis, Lynn Mackenzie, Paul Laurence, Paul Tilley, Sharron Henderson, Susan Cannell.

This was a five-day walking holiday along the Hadrian's Wall Path. Total distance approx 91 miles, though with extra walking to and from B&Bs and evening meals, it may have been closer to 100!

And boy were we lucky with the weather. We only got one serious wetting (most of the afternoon on the first day sadly) but after that we had perfect walking weather. Sunny (for the most part), very clear (so we could see for miles), and with a cooling breeze.

Thursday 3rd July

The proceedings began with a group evening meal at the Broad Chare by the Newcastle Quayside. Some had come up early Newcastle to do a bit of sight-seeing. Indeed, Paul L had come up a whole day early and had done a LOT of sight-seeing and taken a MASSIVE number of photos. Only Jill G was unable to make the evening meal. She missed some great food (in the conductor's opinion the best we had on the whole trip), though the service was painfully slow. After the meal we had a massive walk (of no more than a couple of minutes) back to our beds for the night at the Quayside Premier Inn, braving the Kittiwakes (or more accurately, their

pool!) who were roosting in the bridge just opposite the hotel's entrance.

Friday 4th July

Newcastle to East Wallhouses (approx. 21 miles)

An early start (8.30am) was made the next day to take the Metro to Wallsend and the start of the official Hadrian's Wall Walk by a piece of the Wall running down to the River Tyne from the fort at Segedunum, the most easterly of the Wall forts. Sadly, we didn't have time to actually visit the fort and its museum, since we had 21 miles to cover that day. Well, 13 of the party did, since Leo had decided to walk with us back into Newcastle but after that take the train to Corbridge. This was because he was only just recovering from a really bad stomach bug and was not yet back up to his full strength.

The conductor had gone to the fort at Segedunum the previous day to buy Hadrian's Wall passports for everyone. The idea is to stamp them at various places along the Wall as a record of the walk. They had been pre-stamped at Segedunum the previous day to save a bit of time, but after that Jill G took on stamping duties for the whole group and made an excellent job of it!

Much of the first day (the first 15 miles) was on tarmac or hard paths and, while interesting (through old industrial areas, along the Quayside in Newcastle, and along an old wagonway that George Stevenson had worked on as a child, keeping cows off the line apparently), by the time we got to Heddon-on-the-Wall, we were very glad to see the end of the tarmac and walk on some soft grass for a change (even if it was starting to rain).

Luckily, too, there was a tea shop in Heddon-on-the-Wall, and more importantly, it was open, since the conductor had managed to miss the planned pub stop on the way (we suspected that the pub was no more even though it still had a website when the conductor had checked - a few months back admittedly!). So a rather late, and very welcome, lunch was had by all, even though the owner of the tea shop was somewhat gob-smacked when 14 hungry walkers arrived on her door step (this became a regular occurrence throughout the trip – startled tea shop owners at lunch time!). She (and a friend who had just been visiting) kept calm, though, coped with us very well and served up some very welcome food, with a smile.

On the way to Heddon there had also been further incident when the conductor, thinking that Susan was behind at a key turning, hung back to wait for her and almost lost the whole party in the process (only to find that Susan was in fact with the main party all along!!!). Learning an important lesson here, from that point on, the conductor was assisted by a back-marker, which made leading the stroll a whole lot easier (a different member of the group each day – thanks back-markers, your help was invaluable!!!).

At Heddon, the proper Wall walk began, including our first sight of large section of Wall at Heddon itself, plus lots of views of the Vallum and the northern ditch (in which we were often walking). Sadly, though, the rain also started at Heddon, gently at first, but getting heavier as the afternoon progressed. By the time we finished, we were absolutely soaked.

We were also very tired, as we had to walk quite quickly for the last few miles in order to meet our minibus which was

picking us up at 6pm from the Robin Hood Inn, to take us to our beds for the night a few miles away in Corbridge (not enough beds for such a large party at the Robin Hood Inn sadly). Those staying in 2 The Croft had the best of the three B&Bs by all accounts (including smoked salmon and scrambled eggs for breakfast!), while those staying at The Hayes (which included the conductor) has the poorest of the three by some way – rather unwelcoming hosts, a sloping bed (in Jill G's case) and a rather small breakfast. The evening meal was taken in The Black Bull, a short walk into the centre of town, where we met up with Leo again.

Saturday 5th July

East Wallhouses to Housesteads (approx. 19 miles)

The next day began bright and early with a minibus pick up from our respective b&bs around 9am, though Chris was almost not with us as those staying at The Hayes had great trouble in waking him in time. He had ear plugs in which worked very effectively! Eventually, Susan and the conductor worked up the courage to go into his room and give him a nudge to wake him up. That worked!

The mini bus took us back to where we left the Wall the previous day (the Robin Hood Inn at East Wallhouses, and our first stamp of the day in the porch of the pub). The day's walking was a complete contrast to the previous day, thankfully, with lovely weather and great views. Even though we were walking by the side of the road for much of the day, it didn't seem like it since it was usually hidden from view. And we had soft grass under our feet – heaven!

There was also interest along the way, with some even better stretches of Vallum (well the conductor, an archaeologist,

found this exciting!) and northern ditch, and some bits of wall, mile castles and turrets (we became quite blasé about these by the end of the walk). There was even a Mithras Temple to be marvelled at, as well as the transition from broad Wall on broad foundations to narrow Wall on broad foundations, and the remains of a Roman quarry!

Lunch was taken at a tea shop in Chollerford, close to Chesters' Fort (our next stamping point). This tea shop coped a little less well with our rather large party than the one at Heddon, with a bit of confusion over who ordered what sandwiches, leading to Susan getting hers with just 10 minutes to spare before we had to leave.

Again, though, the conductor's estimates for the time needed for this section proved a little ambitious and she had to call the taxi to let them know we would be somewhat later than planned at the pick-up point at Housesteads (45 minutes late!). This meant that the four members of the party who were staying at a b&b a little further away did not have time to get there before the evening meal, and had to take a shower in the b&b where the others were staying (Vallum Lodge, just 5 minutes' walk from the pub, the Twice Brewed Inn, where we were having our evening meal).

At the pub we were joined by three others – the Conductor's brother, Stewart (also Sharron's husband), and his two friends, Howard and Micky, who had decided to take a few days off to join us. Stewart had meant it to be a surprise, but Sharron had let the cat out of the bag earlier, much to his dismay. They had also planned to join us for part of the next day's walking, but that wasn't to be (see below)...

Sunday 6th July

Housesteads to Gilsland via Vindolanda (approx. 17 miles)

Again an early start was made (9am), but this time most could walk out from their b&b (Vallum Lodge) though those staying at Hunterscroft had to have a lift by their b&b host to meet us at Vallum Lodge (5-10 mins by car).

The original plan was to walk to Vindolanda (a slight detour off the official Hadrian's Wall walk route) for some sightseeing before picking the Wall up again at Housesteads (and this is what we had said to Stewart, Howard and Micky, who planned to meet us at Vindolanda and then walk for bit with us after that). However, after returning from the pub, the conductor thought she had better check the opening hours at Vindolanda since it would be a Sunday. And lucky she did since she found that they did not open until 10am. Since it would take us no more than 30 mins to walk there, this could be a problem. So a quick change of plan had us walking along the Wall to Housesteads first (getting our cards stamped at Housesteads on the way), and then going on to Vindolanda (basically walking the planned morning section in reverse). Estimating that this way we would be at Vindolanda by 10.30/11am this is what we told Stewart. However, as it turned out, we didn't get to Vindolanda until 11.30 which resulted in us missing Stewart and his two pals (mobile phone signals being somewhat dodgy around there).

At Vindolanda we had a break of 1 hour while most of the party had a quick look round the museum, fort and vicus (civilian settlement) and we all bought sandwiches for a picnic lunch later. At this point, Susan, who had been finding the rocky ups and downs along the Wall rather tough, left us to take the bus to Walltown where she could walk the final 3-4

miles into Gilsland. The rest walked back to the Wall and a little later had our picnic lunch in a dip (it was quite windy, so we needed the shelter) as black clouds gathered. Luckily, though, the black clouds passed us by and the rest of the day was glorious, made even more so with some great sections of upstanding Wall and fantastic views as it climbs over a succession of crags.

A slightly shorter day, combined with picnic lunch also meant we had time for a quick tea stop at Walltown (little more than a kiosk) before making our way into Gilsland where, before going to our b&bs we popped by the pub, The Samson Inn, to pre-order our evening meals (as they had requested). This night we were again divided into two b&bs, as we made our ways to them, both seemed an awfully long distance the other side of Gilsland (but were probably only about half a mile). The two b&bs were in view of each other across the River Irthing, but with no direct link between them. Both were worth the walk though, and all agreed they were the best b&bs of the whole walk.

We were joined again in the evening by Stewart, Micky and Howard, who then bid us adieu (they were travelling back home the next day). A key highlight of the evening, though, was that it was Leo's birthday and generous guy that he is, he bought us all a pudding to celebrate – thanks ever so much Leo! To top the evening a man at the bar, learning it was Leo's birthday, promptly bought him a glass of whiskey!

Monday 7th July

Gilsland to Carlisle (approx. 19 miles)

Again a 9am start was made the next day, at least for those staying at the Hill on the Wall (b&b). Those at Willowford Farm had half an hour longer in bed because they were directly on the morning's route.

Within an hour we had all admired the remains of the Roman bridge at Willowford Bridge and had our cards stamped at Birdoswald Fort. After crossing the River Irthing at Willowford we had also entered the section of the Wall that was originally built in turf and then later replaced by a (narrow) wall. After Birdoswald could see where the two walls diverged with the earlier turf wall on the left, to the south of the stone wall.

Just before Walton, where we stopped for lunch at another shocked tea shop, we saw our last bit of stone wall (in fact a 19th century reconstruction made from stone from different parts of the Wall nearby). Since we were making good time the conductor hoped to stop for tea in Crosby-on-Eden at Crosby Lodge, a rather smart but welcoming place where she had stopped a few years earlier when doing the Hadrian's Cycleway. Sadly, when the group arrived at Crosby Lodge it was no longer a hotel but simply a private residence, so we had to settle for a DIY refreshment hut nearby, which had run out of most of what it promised on its price list, but did have tea (and enough water after the conductor had sought out the farmer to get a top up).

Finally we reached Carlisle, where luckily, Paul L had a fairly good idea of the area and was able to point us in the right direction for our two b&bs (Cambro House and Fernlee Guest House), both very close to each other on the west side of the

city, about 20 minutes walk from the centre. Our evening meal was in an Italian restaurant, the Ristorante Adriano, complete with a modern statue of Hadrian (very appropriate for our last meal of the holiday). Even better, as a thank you, the group paid for the conductor's meal! And Jill P had a photo with said statue of Hadrian!

Tuesday 8th July

Carlisle to Bowness-on-Solway (approx. 15 miles).

Another 9am start due to the need to get the train back to London that evening. After breakfast, Laurence left us (he had never planned to do the last day with us) and 13 of us set off for our final pretty easy, 15 miles. First, though, we had to get our cards stamped in the leisure centre in the centre of Carlisle (after a few minutes trying to find where in the leisure centre we should do this!).

At one point the party divided into two, when the more intrepid, the conductor included, decided to take their chances on a section where the official path was temporarily closed, rather than go on the road. In fact, the path was perfectly fine, if a little overgrown. Seeing the rest of the party on the road next to the field we were in, though, we decided to join them for the last few 100 yards as the path did look pretty overgrown ahead.

Having been told by our b&b that there was a convenience store on the route out of Carlisle most of us had not bought anything for lunch in Carlisle. This proved to be a mistake as no convenience store was seen. Our only option was to stop at another self-service snack stop. Luckily, this was rather better equipped than the last one - this one had ice creams

and plenty of tea and coffee (and a toilet!) – however, it had little in the way of solid food.

Somewhat hungry, therefore, we eventually arrived at Bowness-on-Solway and the end of our walk overjoyed to find that it had a tea shop! And a fantastic tea shop it was too (the Wallsend tea shop and b&b – highly recommended though like the other tea places, they were hard pressed to deal with 14 hungry walkers all arriving at once!). Before we hit the tea shop though we had the obligatory photo session in the hut at the official end of the Hadrian's Wall Walk, and the final stamp on our Hadrian's Wall Walk passport.

The day had not ended though. With more than an hour to spare before our taxis were due to pick us up to take us back to Carlisle, we thought we had plenty of time for tea, sandwiches, cakes etc (even the full afternoon tea). Sadly the tea shop (perhaps quite understandably) couldn't cope with this all at once and took ages to serve us, meaning that some of the group ended up having to bolt their food or take some of it with them. And after all that, the second of the two taxis was late, meaning that the group who elected to go in that taxi (including the conductor) only just made it to Carlisle station in time for their train (very nail biting).

After that everything went swimmingly back to London and the end of the trip.

Thanks to everyone who made it. Great company on a lovely route, in (generally) fantastic weather.

26 July 2014 Godalming Circular 20 miles

Conductor: Jenny Caddy

Participants: John, Gail, Manjinder, Lynne, Don, Kate,

This was the walk I intended to lead eighteen months ago in December. Then, when I checked the route two weeks before the date, it was so muddy that I gave up after fifteen miles and came home by train. This time, heat rather than mud was the problem. By mid afternoon the temperature, according to John's thermometer, had reached 30 deg C.

We met at Godalming station and set off south-west towards Milford and Witley. By Witley Social Club, where eighteen months ago we'd stopped to put on waterproofs before turning left on my new route, we turned right, crossed the A283 and headed for Sandhills. We stopped briefly by a bench on a hillside overlooking the Chichester Hall—the start of the Punchbowl Marathon—drank water and admired the view. From Sandhills we took a bridleway past the donkey sanctuary. Mud on this had dried considerably so the slope downhill was easier than usual.

On the outskirts of Grayswood we aroused the attention of eight llamas in a field. They looked up from eating and moved closer to inspect us. In Grayswood we stopped for lunch. Four ate in the pub; three ate picnics on the village green. All drank plenty.

From the pub we headed uphill to take a footpath on the left that led eventually to Grayswood Common. There were good views from this. Continuing across the common we came to some allotments and paused to admire the crops. Reaching a minor road we turned right then branched left on a footpath that took us past Imbhams Farm. This farm grows cereals and produces its own flour.

From here we continued on paths to Frillinghurst and reached Chiddingfold, our stop for tea. Unfortunately the teashop was closed for a private function but the pub next to it was open

for us in spite of being crowded with guests gathering for a wedding in the church opposite. We sat indoors, as it was too hot outside, and drank watching the arrival of more guests, particularly those interestingly dressed.

Half an hour later, with some effort, we set off again into the heat. The route back to Godalming took us across fields, past Witley station, on a short section of the Greensand Way, over West Surrey Golf Course and through Tuesley fruit farm. We reached Godalming station at 17.45, ten minutes before the next train to London.

Sunday 10 August - Princes Risborough to High Wycombe (linear) 19 miles

Conductor : Gregory Noble

Participants : Laurence Foe, Gail & John Elrick

With the remnants of Hurricane Bertha battering the UK, four fearless souls gathered at Princes Risborough Station, to have the week's cobwebs blown/washed away. We left the station in heavy rain, but this subsided by the time we had reached the top of Whiteleaf Hill. Pictures were taken of the group at a good vantage point, which included the backdrop of very low rain clouds (a scene of biblical proportions).

We skirted around the perimeter of the Chequers Estate, where Gail recounted the exploits of a walker, who had been detained by security forces when a walk had been organised to pass close by, some years before. With this in his mind, the Conductor kept the group to the correct paths and to his tight schedule, so as not to incur a similar fate.

At a much needed rest stop at the top of Lodge Hill (younger sibling to Coombe Hill), John brought to the attention of the group a plaque the local LDWA Beds, Bucks and Northants Group had placed on a nearby post, denoting the merged Ridgeway/South Bucks Way paths.

We continued on a number of local paths, passing through the hamlet of Dunsmore and past Cobblershill Farm before

approaching Prestwood from the north. With lunch very much on everyone's mind, we swept through the town, albeit with a brief stop for Laurence to get supplies.

A well timed arrival at The Gate Pub at Bryant's Bottom meant Laurence and Gregory could enjoy a generous serving of Sunday Roast in the dry, as the penultimate downpour of the day took place. With energy levels revived and legs refreshed, the group set out in a cross valley direction towards the RAF base at Walters Ash. Passing through The Coppice and then Naphill Common, the Conductor had to keep his wits about him to ensure a SE direction was maintained. After a single check on his compass, he was able to steer the group safely through an apparent maze of criss-crossing paths to Downley Common. One large tree appeared to have succumbed to the strength of Bertha, since it had not been down the previous week when the route had been recced. As the group passed through Common Wood, we were soon able to pick up the well maintained signposts directing us to Hughenden Manor, the country home of former Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.

Laurence advised the group of an excellent WW2 exhibition in the former Ice House, which he had discovered on a previous visit. It showed how the rooms had been used to examine aerial reconnaissance pictures to aid bombing raids on Germany. The rooms had been laid out with fascinating items/explanations of the cutting edge processes used at the time.

The Conductor's tight schedule was soon forgotten at the Hughenden Manor tea shop, as a result of warm sunshine filtering to the courtyard, tasty scones with jam/clotted cream, pots of tea and good conversation. A final push for the station was made in gloriously warm weather. The route used footpaths that passed by the end of gardens, keeping the rural feel for as long as possible, only bringing us out into the urban area of High Wycombe for the last 5 minutes. Trains were caught quickly by all participants, except the Conductor, who witnessed another torrential downpour, luckily from the relative comfort of the station's platform.

Sunday, 24 August Guildford Circular -

(Distance: 20 miles or possibly 22 according to Kevin's gismo)

Conductors: John and Gail Elrick

Participants: Don Bolton, Jennifer Caddy, Jerry Conn, Jill Goddard, Chris Ketteringham, Roger Moss, Kevin McGivern, Jane Rosoux, Manjinder Sidhu, Corinne Thompson, Paul Tilley and Dave Williams

As well as the regulars we welcomed Roger Moss, a previous leader of this stroll in years gone by, who we had not seen on a stroll for some time. The weather forecast on this Bank Holiday Sunday was for sunny and dry weather all day and on reaching the top of Pewley Down we gained our first wide views over to the spires of Charterhouse School and beyond. We then turned in a more southerly direction, descending to Chilworth village and ascending Chinthurst Hill up to the roofless stone folly. The latter, a Grade II listed building, can easily be mistaken for an interesting historical ruin but is of no great age, having been built in the 1930s by Lord Inchcape.

Continuing through Bramley village we became aware of rather more traffic than usual. This proved to be due to the nearby Dunsfold Air Show. We continued due south on the Greensand Way to reach 'The White Horse' at Hascombe for lunch. The conductors had envisaged that we could relax on the benches by the picturesque village pond. This meant that we were well placed to see three triplanes fly over the village and after we moved into the pub for a drink Jenny rushed in from outside shouting "Come and see this!" We looked up just in time to see a formation of two Lancasters, a Hurricane and a Spitfire fly over.

As we continued on the Greensand Way more aeroplanes flew over and the group became quite spread out as the

strollers stopped to look up. The Red Arrows looked particularly impressive with their coloured smoke plumes. On reaching Hambledon Church we turned right over the meadows and through the woods to ascend Hydon's Ball, pausing at the Robertson Memorial and then continuing up to the Octavia Hill Memorial at the top for a group photograph. Then it was down and through Juniper Valley to Winkworth Arboretum. At one time it was possible to exit the Arboretum via a stile at the north end of the lake. This is now blocked up and, tempting though it was to persuade 12 other strollers to crawl through the foliage and under the wire fence, the conductors stuck with the longer but permitted route along the public footpath and round on the road. After all, the National Trust have clearly made an effort to maintain the public footpath and put up signage. We reached Farncombe Boathouse at 4.40 p.m. which left sufficient time to stop at Hectors for tea and cakes on the lawn. A steady walk back along the River Wey towpath meant that we arrived back at Guildford Station at 6.30 p.m. just in time for the London train.

Future Strolls

Sat. 1 November Sevenoaks Circular – Conductor: Paul Lawrence. Start Sevenoaks Station 09.11 (08.40) Charing Cross) Distance c19 mls.

Sat. 15 November Kingston to Guildford (linear) – Conductor: Jerome Ripp. Start Kingston Station 08.40 (Waterloo 08.12) Distance 22 mls

Sun.7 December Box Hill & West Humble to Dorking (linear) Conductor: Kevin McGivern Start Box Hill&West Humble Station 09.04 (Victoria 08.07) Distance 19mls

Sun.21 December Osterley to Hammersmith (linear) Conductors: John & Gail Elrick Start Osterley Underground Station 09.15 (Piccadilly Line) Distance: 17 mls.