

Spring 2017 No.466

*The Gazette and Record of the
Surrey Walking Club*



Walking



Walkers on the Coulsdon South to Kingston stroll on 5 February
(see report inside - photo Keith Lane)

Welcome to Gazette no. 466

Any contributions are all welcome. Any material Emailed to p.crane7w@hotmail.co.uk would be welcome. This magazine and much other interesting information is also accessible on our website www.surreywalkingclub.org.uk .

GAZETTE NIGHT 6 May

Social event for all members, family and friends raises funds towards the costs of this magazine. Do come and support it if you can. A buffet meal is followed by an auction and raffle. It is at the Blackheath & Bromley HQ in Hayes, Kent, 6.30 for 7. Tickets are £13 and available from our Social Secretary, Trevor Sliwerski

New Members

Chris Edwards
Mary-Ann Oates
Gillian Denham
Alex Hunter
Helen Franklin

Margaret Vale

It was sad to hear of the death of Margaret in December on the Isle of Man. She was the wife of former member Denis, and mother of Gordon. Margaret was always an active supporter of the Club when they lived in the Croydon area.

At the last committee meeting we were sorry to hear that **David Watson** has had a stroke and wish him well. Also **Bill Tonkin** was made a life member.

RACE REPORTS

3 December Christmas Cup 5km, Tonbridge

The Christmas Cup was, once again, held at the excellent Tonbridge Track and attracted a good number of 29 competitors almost half of whom were non-veterans with events at 1, 2 and 3km as well as the main 5km. All were pleased to see Tom Bosworth present at his home venue and racing for the first time since the Rio Olympics. Needless to say he won the race having started easily with Chris Snook who finished near his best time. SWC's own participation was limited to six with several out though injury but enjoying a Club win, a 43 second personal best and inevitably winning the Handicap Cup was David Crane. David was easily able to pull away from Fransisco Reis (SCVAC) after what initially seemed to be likely to be a close battle. Although still recovering from injury Malcolm Martin in second club place managed to stay in touch with a bunch of three ahead of him and 2nd in the handicap. The SWC women's winner was Angela Martin while further down the field David Delaney (3rd handicap) scored a clear win over David Hoben.

(SWC Handicap position in brackets).

Men

1. T.Bosworth (Ton) 22.04; 2. C.Snook (AFD) 22.39; 3. J.Hobbs (Ash) 23.58; 4(1). **D.Crane** 24.18; 5. F.Reis (SCVAC) 25.23; 6. O.Hopkins (Lewes) 27.36; 7. C.Hobbs (Ashf) 27.59; 8(2). **M.Martin** 28.17; 9. K.Pedley (AFD) 29.31; 10. R.Penfold (Steyn) 32.04; 11(4). **C.Flint** 33.11; 12(3). **D.Delaney** 34.24; 13(6). **D.Hoben** 35.05; 14. C.Edwards (Unatt) 36.38.

Women

1. E.Ghose (Ton) 27.57; 2. G.Bridge (Vale R) 30.46; 3. B.Fury (M&M) 30.47; 4. A.Ingram (Lewes) 32.41; 5(5). **A.Martin** 33.50; 6.G.Legon (Bex) 34.25; 7.R.Horningold (Lewes) 35.32.

19 November Steyning 10km

The annual 10km walk saw cold weather with heavy rain/hail at times and a strong wind to spoil this pleasant course in the Sussex countryside. Francisco Reis and Jim Ball broke away from the gun with Reis gaining a considerable advantage from the turn at 5 km to win but with Ball 19 seconds behind. In 3rd place Surrey's Malcolm Martin had a solo event to finish 3rd inside 56 minutes. Further down the field Dan Maskell and Paul Gaston enjoyed their usual battle as they swapped places with Gaston eventually beating Maskell by 10 seconds. Mick Harran began with a group including Gaston and Maskell but was dropped just after the turn at 5km to finish in 13th position. Angela Martin finished in 14th position and 3rd lady.

1. F.Reis (SCVAC) 53.33; 2. J.Ball (Stey) 53.52; 3. **M.Martin** 59.56; 6. **P.Gaston** 65.15; 7. **D.Maskell** 66.07; 11. **M.Harran** 68.35; 12. **D.Delaney** 70.49; 13. **D.Hoben** 71.18.

Women

1.L.Claridge(Ste)66.46;2.A.Jones(Ste)67.05;3.**A.Martin**70.25.

26 November Enfield League 5miles, Hillingdon

On a dull cold afternoon but with little wind, some 28 walkers faced the starter for the Enfield's League event. From the gun Heter Santo of Portugal took a commanding lead to finish in 45m 08s in his wake were Francisco Reis, Seb Pariss (57m 39s) and Surrey's Malcolm Martin (57m 54s). Further down the field a group of walkers were engaged in a battle with Dan Mascall on lap 6 making the break to finish in 66m 18s. Chris Flint dropped off the back of the group as did Angela Martin but Flint overtook Martin in the final 2 lap to finish in 18th position in 67m 21s to Martin's 19th position in 68m 24s. As in the Steyning race the battle of the Daves (Hoben and Delaney) saw Hoben gain a slight advantage early on but Delaney came through strongly to finish in 22nd position 70m 53s with Hoben 24th in 72m 13s.

Men

1. H.Santos (TVH) 45.08; 2. F.Reis (SCVAC) 52.29; 3. S.Parris (If) 57.39; 4. **M.Martin** 57.54; 11. **D.Maskell** 66.18; 13. **C.Flint** 67.21; 15. **D.Delaney** 70.53; 17. **D.Hoben** 72.13.

Women

1.M.Peddle (Loughton) 72.49; 2. C.Duhig (Ryst) 63.40; 3. M.Noel (Belg) 64.42; 6. **A.Martin** 68.24.

10 December Steyning AC Alf Palmer 5km, Horsham

Despite a change of date and rather damp conditions the annual Alf Palmer Christmas race held by Steyning in Horsham was a great success with nearly 40 starters including 16 below 20 years old. All races had many good performances including personal bests particularly among the juniors. Seven Surrey Walking Club took part which considering several known absences due to injury was a very good turnout. Angela Martin probably had the best race finishing only 4 seconds behind Chris Flint and over half a minute quicker than last week at Tonbridge. First home for SWC was Malcolm Martin as he regains form while a lap or so behind Dan Maskell and Paul Gaston renewed their rivalry but were inseparable on the line. Although isolated from his Surrey colleagues he was not short of competition finishing only a second behind Brian Kirkdale from Hastings Runners Club in almost exactly the same time as last week. Together with a good crowd of officials and spectators a lively atmosphere at the subsequent resonance rounded off a very pleasant event and even the weather improved.

Men

1. L.Legon (CambH) 22.28; 2. C.Snook (AFD) 23.43; 3. J.Hobbs (Ashf) 24.09; 8. **M.Martin** 28.24; 10. **D.Maskell** 31.40; 11. **P.Gaston** 31.47; 13. **C.Flint** 33.09; 15. **M.Harran** 33.33; 17. **D.Hoben** 35.05.

Women

1. E.Ghose (Ton) 27.42; 2. L.Lewis-Ward (CambH) 28.33; 3. A.Jennings (AFD) 28.37; 11. **A.Martin** 33.13.

Enfield League Annual Table for 2016:

Surrey Walking Club took top honours for the first time! We ended the promoting club's six season grip on the Enfield Race Walking League.

The Club A team won the team event comfortably with the B team up in 4th. Regular attendance plays a significant part in these results and they are a credit to our racing team despite the fact that the races are at least 40 miles across the river from our Croydon centre and greater distances for many. Dan Maskell as 2nd man and Angela Martin at 3rd woman led the SWC positions. With 6 in each team plus a few others taking part occasionally, we may be proud of our support for the events as well as grateful to the organising group for this impressive league.

1. Surrey WC 2515 547 Maskell, 431 Hoben, 419 MartinA, 419 MartinM, 353 Crane, 346 Lightman

2. EHAC 2407 590 Ralph, 480 Pender, 424 Thomson, 320 May, 309 Smith, 284 Jones

3. Ilford AC 1367 308 Uttley, 276 Parris, 243 Ainsworth, 235 Barnbrook, 170 Kates, 135 Bennett

4. Surrey WC'B' 1204 331 Harran, 314 Flint, 288 Delaney, 113 Gaston, 91 Crilley, 67 Cheeseman

5. Belgrave H 1189 461 Culshaw, 434 Noel, 168 King, 63 Hall, 63 Halmstrand

6. Loughton AC 1138 468 Borgars, 313 Peddle, 178 Cassidy, 123 Fernandez, 56 Taylor

Individual

Men

1. J.Ralph (EHAC) 590; 2. **D. Maskell** 547; 3. S.Pender (EHAC) 480; 6. **D.Hoben** 431; 9. **M.Martin** 419; 10. **D.Crane** 353; 11. **S.Lightman** 346; **M.Harran** 331; 14. **C.Flint** 314; **D.Delaney** 288.

Women

1. J. Miles (Hill) 464; 2. M.Noel (Bels) 434; **3. A.Mar**

26 December Preston Park 5.5m, Brighton

Numbers were down for the annual friendly and cheerful running and walking races in Preston Park on Boxing Day with some preferring the earlier Park Run at the same venue. Five Surrey Walking Club members, again with some missing, did venture South to enjoy the relatively mild weather and take on this hilly three lap course. Times were up to scratch on average. Some were rather slower than expected but offset by good performances from those in good shape. Malcolm was first home as he beat world age group champion Ian Richards of Steyning. Malcolm is finally returning to full fitness and this was good time as Malcolm and Angela took part for the first time. Mid-field, David Hoben managed his best time for five years in this event.

Men 1. **M.Martin** 47.11; 2. I.Richards (Steyn) 49.24 ; 3. **D.Maskell** 59.52; 5. **M.Harran** 63.15; 6. **D.Hoben** 63.15.
Women 1. **A.Martin** 61.10; 2. J.Carder (B&H) 63.21.

21 January Steyning AC 15km:

Although numbers were a little down on last year the quality of the field was much improved by the return of one of GB's great young prospects, Emma Achurch from Leicester Walking Club who won in an excellent time. The 19 year old was soon clear of the rest and came home in under 73 minutes and 11 minutes clear of Steyning's Ian Richards. We had 3 out with a couple of regulars absent. Dan Maskell and Paul Gaston resumed their usual friendly rivalry with Dan 30 seconds ahead at the turn on this beautiful and sunny but cold course. However, by the finish Paul had caught and passed Dan only for the latter to gain a 4 second lead at the finish with the best SWC performance. Chris Flint also continued his return with a time 4 minutes better than last year.

1. E.Achurch (Leic WC) 72.48 ; 2. I.Richards (Steyn) 83.56 ; 3. J.Ball (Steyn) 86.19; 6. **D.Maskell** 101.11; 7. **P.Gaston** 101.17; 9. **C.Flint** 105.08 10 starters.

14 January – Enfield League 5 Miles, Enfield :

A new year saw the first of the new series of Enfield competitions. Having knocked Enfield and Harringay Athletic Club off the top of the Enfield League in 2016 (a position Enfield had held for the last seven years), we laid down the gauntlet to Enfield in 2017 with a second place for Malcolm Martin. The other five SWC members were bunched a little further down the field but as a team they formed a commanding presence. It was a cold and dry Saturday after recent snow and, while SWC had most of their active team out, the weather may have put off some of the other usual racers and all but the first half dozen struggled for speed.

Malcolm started conservatively being conscious of a reduced level of fitness following injury although his performance showed that fitness is returning quickly and he overhauled Ollie Hopkins and Seb Parris to finish only 80 seconds behind the winner, Steyning's Jim Ball. Further down the field Dan Maskell caught Maureen Noel (Belgrave) but faded on the fourth of five laps however he recovered on the final lap to finish mid-field in 53m 27s. Supporting him were Angela Martin and Chris Flint who were together with Anne Jones (Steyning) for the first four miles when Anne and Angela dropped Chris in the last mile to finish together in 54m 29s with the former getting the judge's decision. Flint finished 15 seconds behind and only a minute or so behind Dan. One place behind him on this rare occasion was Shaun Lightman who came through strongly in the last two laps to overtake Mick Harran at 4 miles. Shaun finished half a minute ahead of Mick. He easily broke his pessimistic 1 hour target although short of his last good race in Summer 2016.

Men

1. J.Ball (Steyn) 44.00; 2. **M.Martin** 45.11; 3. S.Parris (Ilf) 46.08; 11. **D.Maskell** 53.27; 14. **C.Flint** 54.45; 15. **S.Lightman** 55.23; 16. **M.Harran** 55.54.

Women

1. E.Ghose (Ton) 46.49; 2. H.Middleton (E&H) 50.30; 3. M.Peddle (Loughton) 50.44; 7. **A.Martin** 54.29

22 January London Open & Southern Area Championships 10, 5, 3 and 2km, Lee Valley:

This event was held at Hillingdon Cycle Track which has become the usual venue for major races in the South with only the flat half-kilometre by the café used. The day was cold but not excessively so and the athletes, if not the officials, soon warmed up. Three races covered the 12 competitions across all youth and senior age-groups in a compact, well organized event with a good crowd of competitors, officials, parents and spectators. 57 started. We started 6 and there were also two of Shaun Lightman's coaching group from Blackheath & Bromley HAC out. SWC came away to win the very close Open & Southern Men's team event despite losing David Crane who had been up in 3rd place. After a very strong and determined effort from Malcolm Martin in his best for some time, he finished in 4th Open place and a Bronze medal in the Southern Championship. Despite a cautious start at the rear of the field Shaun Lightman improved as he gained 6 places. Despite just failing to catch the excellent Arthur Thompson from Enfield, Shaun moved the team from 3rd to 1st. The team was completed by Paul Gaston with his usual competitive effort and backed up by Chris Flint not far behind and again up on recent performances. Angela Martin represented SWC in the Women's 5km and then continued to complete a fair 70 minute 10km.

5km Senior Women

1. R.Collins (M&M) 28.23; 2. P.Cummings (AFD) 28.49; 3. H.Middleton (E&H) 30.33; 7. **A.Martin** 33.53. 8 starters.

10km Men

1. L.Legon (Camb H) 47.45; 2. J.Hobbs (Ashf) 48.27; 3. F.Reis (SCVAC) 51.25; 4 (3rd Southern). **M.Martin** 55.24; 12. **S.Lightman** 65.53; 15. **P.Gaston** 66.17; 17. **C.Flint** 67.25
20 starters.

Men's Team Race:

1. SWC 269 points 2. Ilford AC 268 pts 3. Enfield 262 pts.

18 February Enfield League 5 miles – Donkey Lane, Enfield

Excellent, dry but not cold conditions were ideal for mostly good times among the best of which was Surrey Walking Club's Malcolm Martin. He led from gun to tape to finish nearly two minutes clear by the finish in a personal best for the distance. Also well up the field was Dan Maskell in his best recent time as he finished just one second ahead of David Kates (Ilford). Angela Martin also had good race as she held onto the group around her including Chris Flint who was also a second ahead at the end. Angela's position in the race was lower than usual, not because of a poor time, but because of the welcome addition of a number of new younger walkers to the women's field. David Hoben was also pleased with his time despite a fast start as he held Peter Hannell for the first two laps. The latter, returning from a long absence, was content with a slow but comfortable two laps.

37 starters over all races.

Men 5 Miles

1. **M.Martin** 43.43; 2. G.Chapman (Head) 46.30; 3. C.Hobbs (Ashf) 47.37; 6. **D.Maskell** 51.41; 13. **C.Flint** 56.36; 15. **D.Hoben** 56.28. 18 starters.

Women 5 Miles

1. 1. H.Middleton (E&H) 49.52; 2. M.Noel (Belg) 49.58; 3. M.Peddle (Loughton) 50.20; 8. **A.Martin** 53.37; 9. G.Legon (Bexley) 56.09. 12 starters.

Men 2 Miles

1. P.Hannell 22.11 . 1 starter.



Malcolm Martin winner of the Enfield 5 miles

25 February – Lewes AC Open Walks, Lewes Track

Lewes AC's regular development race involved as many youngsters as seniors and included races at 1,2 and 3km as well as the main 5km which was won comfortably by 19 year-old Luc Legon (Cambridge Harriers) at no more than his training pace. Behind him David Crane had the better of ex-international Mark Easton who had not raced for some time. The Martins were out despite, yet again, an indoor event the next day. While most found the cold wind a handicap, Angela's performance was very near her expectation. Martin took it a little easy to concentrate on the match next day. Further back the race was all Surrey Walking Club more or less in procession with the walkers separated from one another. The first of these was Paul Gaston, 5 minutes behind Malcolm, and a slightly below par time still held off Angela. Further back Hoben dropped Delaney of the two David's and thus avoided the metaphorical wooden spoon.

Among the youngsters were two athletes coached by SWC members with Ollie Hopkins from Lewes overcoming the blustery conditions to finish well up in a good time in the 5km. In the 2km Abi Smith from Blackheath & Bromley Harriers had a very good race cutting her best for the distance by half a minute to come in line with her other distances.

5km

1. L.Legon (Camb H) 24.34; 2. **D.Crane** 25.16 3. **M.Easton** 25.51; 4. O.Hopkins (Lewes) 27.05; 5. **M.Martin** 27.57; 6. **P.Gaston** 33.04; 7. **A.Martin** 33.33; 8. **M.Harran** 34.07; 9. **P.Hannell** 34.25; 10. **D.Hoben** 35.35; 11. **D.Delaney** 36.53.

2km

2 kms 1. A.Smith (B&B U13G) 12.23

5 March Molly Barnett Open & England 10km, Coventry

The Molly Barnett 10kms was disappointing for Surrey Walking Club. Six members had got together to repeat previous, recent team wins in national 10km races and like last year the Open race incorporated the English Championship. A scoring team of three was confidently expected from the six however this did not come off as only two finished. Paul Gaston was unable to travel having to deal with his pigs. Roger Michell started the race and came through quickly but was sick on the second lap and withdrew from the race. Malcolm Martin had a recurrence of his ham string problem and stopped at 8km while Chris Flint was DQ at 9km. The winner was, inevitably, current Olympian, Tom Bosworth from Tonbridge just outside 40 minutes with World Under 20 champion Callum Wilkinson. The remainder of the SWC contingent, Dan Maskell and Shaun Lightman survived the very strict judging to record reasonable times. The weather was cold and with light drizzle except on the hour we had a hail storm but it only lasted a few minutes. Two of Shaun's coaching group at Blackheath & Bromley did much better with both scoring personal bests. Isabelle Bridge won the Under 17 race with a 1 minute 37 sec improvement while Abi Smith won silver in the Under 13s with a 9 seconds gain.

10km

1. T.Bosworth (Ton) 40.20; 2. C.Wilkinson (E8. &H) 40.56 3. C.Corbishley (M&M) 41.26; 18. **D.Maskell** 65.50; 20. **S.Lightman** 67.21.

5km

1. I.Bridge (B&B) 29.45; 2. B.Fury (M&M) 31.24;

2km

1. K.Stringer (M&M) 12.01; 2. A.Smith (B&B U13G) 12.14;

Other Results

20 November Midland Winter League Coventry

10km: 10. D.Hoben 72.30.

5km: 5. R.Michell 30.41.

22 January London Indoor Games 3kms Lee Valley :

3km Men 2. M.Martin 16.29 .

3km Women 5. A.Martin 19.56

19 February Southern Counties Veterans Indoor Champs, Lee Valley :

1. M.Martin (1st M60) 16.23.6 3. A.Martin(1st W50) 20.17.3

26 February Masters Indoor Inter-Area, Lee Valley Men

1. M.Martin (M60) 10.16.5;

Women

5. A.Martin (W50) 13.01.3.

25 February Allison Trophy 15km, Chorley

4. D.Maskell (M65) 99.13

STROLL REPORTS

Box Hill & West Humble to Dorking (linear) - Sunday, 4 December 2016

Conductor: Kevin McGivern

Participants: Adam, Chris, Helen, Jill, Kate, Laurence, Lynne, Machiko, Manjinder and Vala

On a crystal clear but cold morning eleven of us made our way west from the station on our ascent to Ranmore where we were rewarded with wonderful views from the Mole Valley to Guildford as we slowly descended to Coombe Copse and the Abinger Roughts to continue our walk to Gomshall and our lunch stop at the Compasses Inn.

From there we ascended once again to join the North Downs Way, eastwards at first then north to Polesden Farm, Chapel Hill, there to descend to our tea stop after 16 miles at Pilgrim Cycles café where five of our party took an early bath and caught the train home.

The hard core enjoyed tea and cakes before resuming the walk ascending Box Hill and continuing eastwards once again on the NDW. We were now in the dark but with a clear sky and New Moon we reached Oak Wood where we veered south west to descend slowly to Dorking, beautifully illuminated in the Mole Valley. Three of us took the train home with the three remaining walking back to their cars a further mile away. Total distance was 19 miles.

25 September Haywards Heath Circular - "The Arches: An Everyday Story of Victorian Railway Folk"

Conductor: Keith Lane

Participants: Corinne, Dorothy, Gail, Joelle, John, Kate, Machiko and Richard

The irony of the situation was not lost on the Stroll Conductor. A stroll with the express purpose of viewing a great Victorian edifice showing the pride and engineering prowess of the original railway builders was nearly spoilt by the trains of the day being disrupted. However, nine Strollers undeterred by the train disruption met at Haywards Heath Station with the sole purpose of walking to The Ouse Valley Viaduct.

Getting there we walked through Lindfield and took a variety of footpaths to Danehill and onto Horsted Keynes (two pubs and a green) for lunch before heading onto tea at Ardingly Reservoir (pronounced Ardinglie - if you are posh).

Shortly after tea and coffee but no cakes we could see the massive viaduct in the distance. Built of 11 million bricks only Battersea Power Station has more or rather had as there is now a large hole punched through the side of it to allow access to the modern flats built around it. The viaduct was built in 1842 to carry the main Brighton and London Line and had an estimated life of 120 years. In 1996 - 99 it was restored which mainly consisted of replacing the limestone cappings and 174 years on it still stands as solid and elegant as the day it was opened.

Statistics of the day - 9 cheerful walkers, 18 miles, 1 pub, 1 tea stop, 0 trains to Balcombe, 1 train cancelled due to crew shortage, 3 sightings of the steam train on the Bluebell Line (which was working normally), 37 arches and 11 million bricks.

Uxbridge Circular - Sunday, 6 November 2016

Conductors: John and Gail Elrick

Participants: Casilda, Dave, Dorothy, Helen, Janette, Joelle, Keith, Laurence, Lynne, Machiko, Neil and Paul

This stroll started and finished at Uxbridge Underground station (the western end of the Piccadilly Line). Although at times it felt as if we were in open countryside, the whole route was within the boundary of Greater London and close to the M25. The morning route went broadly northwards to Harefield village and in the afternoon we returned along the Grand Union Canal towpath with a diversion through Denham village.

Crossing Uxbridge Common and the A40 we entered **Swakeleys Park** and as the main path curved right we could just see the impressive **Swakeleys House**, a privately-owned Jacobean house which, *unfortunately, is not open to the public*. Following the River Pinn we paused to view the excavated remains of Pynchester Moat, the site of a medieval farm or manor house built with a moat around it in the 14th or 15th century.

Approaching Harefield the conductors took a wrong turn in the woods and had to veer back north to enter the village. This proved to be a better option than we had planned because we were able to pass the Anzac Cemetery and War Memorial. This was created after the Great War for Australian soldiers who died at the then Australian military hospital in the village. The hospital later became Harefield Hospital, famous for heart transplants.

We met up with Lynne at the 'Harefield' pub and after lunch headed down to the Grand Union Canal. Just after passing under a fine railway viaduct we turned off the canal path to enter Denham Country Park and the approach to Denham village. The village, with its quaint pubs, houses and church,

has the feel of a film set, perhaps reflecting its history as the site of Denham Film studios in the 1930s and 1940s. We paused to stop outside Hills House, the former home of Sir John and Lady Mills and, prior to them, of the actress Merle Oberon and her husband, the film producer Sir Alexander Korda.

After a brief refreshment stop outside the church we had to put our best feet forward to reach the tea stop at the Colne Valley Park Café by 3.30 p.m. Unfortunately, the café was closing as we arrived but the volunteer staff allowed us to use the facilities. The latter was an essential part of Plan B which entailed a short walk back on to the canal at Denham Lock to 'Fran's Tea Room' which does delightful tea and cakes but lacks a toilet! From here we followed the tow path towards the lights of Uxbridge and emerged on to the road to walk through the centre and reach the Underground station as it began to get dark. Distance: 17 miles.

Sunday, 18 December Osterley to Hampton Court (linear)

Participants - Kate, Keith, Manjinder, Paul, Vala (a special guest appearance!) and our very own Santa- aka Neil. Also, for the afternoon the enigma that is Mr. Dent!

Seven of us turned up at Osterley for my stroll to Hampton Court. On a murky, overcast day we progressed through Osterley Park and then along the Grand Union Canal to Syon Park for a refreshment stop in the café where two shocks occurred!

First Santa was barred for scaring all the kids and then the leader in a very unusual splurge of festive generosity produced mince pies and other seasonal goodies. Suitably refreshed we proceeded on to Richmond for our lunch stop where Santa this time managed to get himself barred from the

White Cross pub, this time for scaring all the adults! Some of us then adjourned to the Waterman's Arms for a pint or two.

The afternoon route then took us up into Richmond Park and on into the Isabella Plantation and on to King Henry's Mound, where unfortunately because of the murky conditions there was no view of St. Paul's Cathedral. On past Pembroke Lodge and we exited the Park through Ham Gate and progressed through the woods and across Ham Common and on to the river where Vala departed (with the leader's ears still smarting from the tongue lashing he had been subjected to for daring not to have a map with him!!).

Undaunted we carried on to Kingston and into Bushy Park where we were treated to the sight of a couple of stags practising their rutting skills!
We reached Hampton Court station without further ado!

22 January Sunningdale to Staines (linear) - 15 miles

Conductor: Kate Copeland

Participants: Andy, Carol (almost), Casilda, Debbie, Gail, Gillian, Joelle, John, Keith, Lucy, Michael, Neil, Paul, Rachel, Scottney and Susan.

It's fitting that this walk was scheduled so close to Burns' Night as I can heartily concur with Rabbie that:

*'The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley'*

Due to major signal failure we never even reached our intended departure point of Sunningdale! Instead we were unceremoniously ejected from our much-delayed train at 10.45 at Staines, our finish point.

So we threw away the script and improvised the route somewhat.

Due to the late start 16 of us glided briskly along the Thames

Path to Windsor, pausing only briefly to admire the hardy rowing and Dragon boat crews at Runnymede, and to eat some homemade muffins at Old Windsor Lock.

We were pleased to see Carol by Eton Bridge as we'd missed our rendezvous with her due to the route alteration.

After lunch 14 of us set off on a hastily thought-out circuit up Queen Anne's Ride to the Copper Horse statue of George III on Snow Hill and then back down the Long Walk into Windsor. We were rewarded with stunning views of the Great Park, Castle and deer herd, bathed in the sort of warm, golden light only provided by a low Winter sun.

We were on the 5pm train back to London.

15 miles total.

Thank you to all who came for your flexibility and patience!

8 January Chesham Circular (though not for most!),

Conductor: Janette Platt

Participants: Rachel Birchall, Adam Charles, Machiko Crane, John & Gail Elrick, Jill Goddard, Sharron Henderson, Keith Lane, Simon Lloyd, Gillian Morris, Paul Tilley, Dave Williams

Backmarker: Rachel very kindly volunteered to be backmarker and did an excellent job. Not only was she very conscientious but also her bright yellow jacket made her very easy to spot! Thanks ever so much Rachel.

This stroll did not turn out at all as planned due to a last-minute tube strike which was due to start at 6pm that evening. This meant that for most of the participants, including the conductor, the stroll had to be cut short so that we would not be stranded at the end of the walk. Only the four car drivers among the group (Rachel, John & Gail and Jill) made it back to Chesham (and not via the route planned by the conductor since she was not with them!) while the rest took the train

back to central London from Wendover. Ah well, the full route will have to wait for another day....

Even so, the conductor was extremely surprised at the turnout, given the prospect of the strike. So it was that 13 walkers, including Sharron all the way from Sheffield, set forth from Chesham tube station on a somewhat dreary Sunday morning (low cloud and a mix of drizzle and full scale rain). The going was often quite muddy and slippery, and we had our first faller of the walk, Paul, within 20 minutes of setting off. It was a soft landing though so all was well! The low cloud also made it difficult to appreciate the views, though it did lend a certain mystery to the scenery.

Our route took us via Herbert's Hole (as the name suggests, at the bottom of a valley so fairly muddy in parts) and then via Ballinger Common to Lee Common, passing a rather cute little cottage in the middle of a field on the way. Eventually, we reached Grim's Ditch (an Iron Age boundary ditch) on Cock's Hill, where we met a small group of men with very large rucksacks. Initially we mistook them for Duke of Edinburgh Award types, until we saw their age (definitely not school children!). Chatting to them, it transpired they were in training for an annual iron man type challenge and had been camping out under the stars, with no tent! Pretty hard types!

Soon after they left us eating their dust, we had our second faller, the conductor, but again no harm done, except to pride. At least the men with large rucksacks did not see it! Then it was up and over Boddington Hill (some lovely views at last!) and into Wendover (at which point the sun started to show itself – typical!). On Boddington Hill the conductor pointed out the banks of the Iron Age hill fort (as is her wont) before we

headed down hill and had our third and final faller of the day, Simon. Again, no bones broken!

There was a parting of the ways for about half the group in Wendover. Simon and Gillian headed straight for the train station without stopping for lunch, while the car drivers had a quick picnic lunch before setting off on as direct a line as possible for Chesham. The rest of the group (seven in all) also had a quick lunch (three in the chocolaterie, the rest picnic) before heading off to the top of Coombe Hill to see to Boar War monument (and some great views) and then straight back down again to catch the train back to London from Wendover.

Thanks to all participants for your company. See you again soon!



5 February Coulsdon South to Kingston (linear) -

(Distance: 20 miles)

Conductor: Keith Lane Participants: Casilda, Corinne, Dave, Gail, John, Machiko, Margaret, Neil and Pawan.

10 Strollers set off from Coulsdon South station on a cold misty and soon to be muddy morning to get to Kingston in three stages:

- 1. Local footpaths to Banstead.
- 2. The London Loop from Banstead to Ewell.
- 3. Following the Hogsmill River from its source at Ewell to its mouth in Kingston.

Initially though, we were heading for a warm coffee shop. We walked along Farthing Downs (actually ups), through Happy Valley (actually a misty and miserable valley) and transversed fields (actually mud) to get to Starbucks at Hooley.

After that the day brightened up and we soon passed through Chipstead Bottom and Banstead Woods to get to the parish church. Being Sunday the porch would be open so we could eat our sandwiches away from the cold wind. Well it would be wouldn't it? No, it was decidedly locked so our lunch break was prolonged only to give John time to sign up a new member and off we went to have a tea stop in Ewell. On reaching the London Loop two strollers forgot it was a stroll and thought they were participating in an SWC. Something to do with going loopy on the London Loop, I believe.

Ewell boasts a good tea place at Bourne Hall but this was closed on Sundays (why?). However, The Springs Public House was close-by. On the door there was a sign reminding us of the the dress code - "smart casual". We may have been casual (and muddy) but decidedly not smart so we gave that a miss and I introduced plan C which was the Toby Carvery pub

at Old Malden (nee The Hogsmill Pub). Off we went cleverly diverting to avoid extreme mud along the riverbank.

We arrived at the Toby Carvery at 15:30 and it was heaving (worse than a Virgin train with Corbyn on board). Belying the widely held belief that lunch is at lunch time and dinner is at dinner time, it seems that for Toby Carvery enthusiasts lunch and dinner are combined at tea time. Hence, it was so crowded and hot (steamy is not an exaggeration) that we finished outside in the cold again with our new member showing his class and ordering a pot of tea. It was here that one Stroller left us to walk home to Balham.

So, on and so muddy, actually the so muddiest of the day and we reached Berrylands Station at 17:00 where I produced my notes stating that we would get there at 17:00. Finally, we reached Kingston station at 17:30 where, I proved my talent for smugness and unbearability by once again producing my notes stating we would get there at 17:30. 4 minutes to catch the train to Waterloo and intermediate stations and home we went cold, muddy but not misty.

FUTURE STROLLS

Saturday 18 March. Chilterns circular. Conductor Lynne Mackenzie. Start Saunderton station at 08:56 (London Marylebone 08.13). Return trains from Saunderton at 50 minutes past the hour.

Route description: This walk will be in the form of a figure of eight around Saunderton, with lunch at Saunderton and tea at West Wycombe. Explorer 172. Distance approx. 20 miles

Sunday 9 April. Southend Millenium Walk (linear – Westcliffe to Thorpe Bay). Conductor: David Hoben Start 09.48 at Westcliff station (08.55 from London Fenchurch Street). Return trains from Thorpe Bay at 14 & 44 minutes past each hour.

Route description: Revisiting Southend Millennium Walk (devised by Ramblers Association) in clockwise direction. Will incorporate a visit to the Crow Stone (marking end of the Thames), the wooden buildings and cobbled streets of Leigh-on-Sea, a tour of Hadleigh Castle. Coffee at Salvation Army Café in Hadleigh Country Park, with views of the mountain bike course used in 2012 Olympics; afternoon tea at Southend Leisure Centre. Explorer 175. Landranger 178. Distance approx. 18 miles.

Saturday 29 April. Autumn in the High Weald. Conductor Jerome Ripp. Linear walk from Haywards Heath station. Start 9.00 (London Victoria 8.17) finishing at Balcombe, one station up the line. Likely return train 17.29.

Route description – Undulating wooded countryside, valleys and rivers as we explore the area around Ardingly Reservoir and the Balcombe viaduct. The lunch stop will be the Seed Café in Wakehurst Place Botanic gardens where light lunches and snacks are available. This area is National Trust but the

café is open to all. However NT members should bring their membership card and there will be an optional tour of the gardens and adjacent woodland with hopefully some fine autumn colours. Tea stop in Balcombe depending on available time. Explorer 135. Distance approx 20 miles.

Sunday 14th May. Teynham to Whitstable (Linear). Conductor Kevin McGivern

Start at Teynham station 09:33 (London Victoria 08:04). Return trains (note, return journey includes short bus ride) from Whitstable at 25 minutes past the hour (buy Super Off Peak Day Return to Whitstable).

Route description: We travel north through orchards and onto the Saxon Shore Way (SSW) which we follow easterly on a raised footpath with views of The Isles of Sheppey & Harty over The Swale on our left and lonely marshland on our right. We continue to follow the coastline past Oare Marshes Nature Reserve veering south into Oare with its history of boat building, crossing Oare Creek we go north on the SSW to our early lunch stop at The Shipwrights Arms in Hollowshore. The afternoon sees us continuing along the SSW with its big sky and tranquil remoteness, passing The South Swale Nature Reserve on our left and vast marshland on our right. As we enter Whitstable a Fish and Chips supper (optional) awaits us before catching a train home to The Smoke. Explorers 149/150. Approx. 20 miles

Sunday 28 May. Peterfield circular. Conductor: Jill Goddard

Start Petersfield station 09.39 (London Waterloo 08.30). Return trains from Peterfield at 04 and 24 minutes past the hour. Route description: We start off by heading out towards the Queen Elizabeth Country Park and then up Butser Hill to lunch at East Meon. In the afternoon we head back to Petersfield via Steep. A good mix of wood, open downs and rolling farmland.

Explorer 133. Distance approx. 20 miles.

Sunday 11 June. Canvey Island linear (from Leigh-on-Sea to Benfleet). Conductor Dave Williams .

Start at Leigh-on-Sea station 09.14 (Fenchurch Street 08.25). Regular return trains from Benfleet. Route description: We following the coast path to Benfleet, then a take a circuit around Canvey Island with all the magnificent sights & attractions it has to offer. Lunch at the historic Lobster Smack.

Explorer 175. Approx. 18 miles.

Saturday 24 June. Epsom circular. Conductor Lilian Chelli

Start Epsom station 09.29 (London Victoria 08.47). Frequent return trains from Epsom.

Route description: . Climb to Epsom Downs, and cross the racecourse to reach Headley Church. We cross an attractive area of open downland, Mickleham Gallops, before descending to Mickleham Village. Lunch is at the Racing Horses PH. In the afternoon we climb Box Hill, walk along the North Downs Way, and pass through the woods of Headley Heath. Tea is at the Grey Dove Village Cafe in Walton on the Hill. The evening section is mainly downhill along Ebbisham Lane and Chalk Lane. There are regular trains back to central London.

Explorer 146, Landranger 187. Distance approx. 19 miles.