

January 2018 No.468

*The Gazette and Record of
the Surrey Walking Club*



Walking



Our new President, David Hoben, in the Moulton 5 Miles.
Dave has been one of our most active race walkers in 2017

Welcome to Gazette no. 468

Any material Emailed to p.crane7w@hotmail.co.uk would be welcome. Also see our website www.surreywalkingclub.org.uk .

We welcome new members

David Thomas

Maggie Easton

Nick White

David Hoben was elected to the post of President at the recent AGM meeting. Also at the meeting Helen Franklin was elected as Strolls Secretary and Cyril Reebak was elected as a Committee member

*A Happy New Year to all
readers
May you have many great walks
in 2018*

HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO AUGUST 2017

Starting with the positives, Surrey Walking Club maintained its membership numbers and, in fact, it gained one stroller. Numbers taking part in races has however declined but no less than for other Clubs so we continue to feature well in results sheets if a little further down. Both Club and sport, in common with athletics generally need more interest coming through to the ages between 30 and 60. The exception to this being the very lightly but efficiently organised Park Runs. Quite a few race walkers from our own and other Clubs support these events partly in the hope of attracting others into our event as many of the runners are rather slow and would do better and risk less injury by doing so. This has yet to bear fruit but may be significant in getting more into race walking and general athletics.

The Strolling section continues with fairly steady numbers with new leaders coming through although a slight increase in participation would be welcome. At the end of the year Jeanette Henderson, who lives in distant Bath but has done an excellent job in planning Strolls and Weekends over the years, decided that geography made the role no longer viable and the section was faced with the task of finding a replacement. In fact it was much less difficult than anticipated as several people showed interest. Of these Helen Franklin seemed the most appropriate and she will be elected at the AGM. We look forward to her new vision. The most obvious matter for consideration is to increase numbers taking part from both the rest of the large current section and outside through publicity.

At the beginning of the year we had 141 members and have since elected 7 new applicants of whom 2 are on the racing side. There has been 1 death, 4 resignations and we have deleted one name for non-payment of subscriptions. The net result has been a increase in membership of 1 to 142 at the end of August. Stroller Don Bolton died following at stroke at 80 after 20 years of membership. He was a keen and innovative member of the group developing many interesting new routes. A full obituary appears in this Summer's Gazette.

Surrey Walking Club held the usual five races this year with two at Norman Park, Bromley, two at Tonbridge and the seven miles at Addiscombe. Participation was generally not bad except for the last of these and we continue to look for an alternative venue for this race which is constrained to an unattractive time on Sunday which may put off visitors. The 7 miles saw 14 out including 8 SWC which was poor considering the organisation required and the historic levels. David Crane won the scratch race and the handicap. The Christmas Cup saw 27 out including many youngsters was very cheerful with David Crane taking the Cup. The track 3km, Johnson Bowl and Open 5km completed the programme with total numbers of 6 (4 SWC), 6 (3 SWC) and 10 (1 SWC) respectively so little Club participation. Although various other events caused little SWC interest at Tonbridge for the 5km the field, just into double figures, comprised of almost all youngsters which is very much the situation we desire. On the other hand the most worrying part of the racing situation is at the other end of the age scale with most of the officials and organisers both within SWC and generally in Walking, moving towards a time when they will no longer be able to carry out these roles. The two generations between 25 and 65 are very poorly represented across athletics

From the Club Captain's point of view this year has been a little disappointing. In recent years we have seen an almost embarrassing prominence of SWC teams including our older members in National results due to the failure of other Clubs to get their members out. This year the problem has hit SWC and we have had little success in these Championships. People just will not travel so far and in our case Enfield, where we were very successful, appears to be the limit. We were the first club for many years to take the league title from the home club and our total participation was into double figures. As ever the story in the long distance races was somewhat different as Sandra Brown defied her veteran classification band here and abroad with second woman in the Bury St Edmunds 100. Also a few have taken part in veteran international competitions with an M65 team medal for Roger Michell in the World event.

The Gazette Night Auction this year raised only £90 at Blackheath & Bromley's HQ in Hayes due to a series of problems. The occasion was moved from November to May in the hope that the lighter evening and better weather would attract more people and after an initial struggle, when cancellation was imminent, the minimum target of just over 30 was reached and the event put on. On the night however as the start approached it was clear that something was amiss and we heard or found out that a large number of people had been unexpectedly prevented by illness from coming at the last moment with some in hospital. The most serious of these involved Shaun Lightman who had had a car accident the previous evening. This not only seriously depleted the numbers but changed the mood of the event. None of the more valuable items was auctioned for fear of inadequate demand. This was especially sad for organiser Trevor Sliwerki and auctioneer, Roger Michell whose excellent work in organising and running the event was frustrated but such a limited financial outcome. We were grateful to Blackheath Harriers as they sympathetically mitigated our difficulties by waiving their charge.

Gazette Editor Peter Crane produced the usual issues and this year and the brighter product with more colour photographs caused even more interest and commendation from the members. Meanwhile Mark Easton, our Webmaster, continues to regularly update the events and results on the Club website and Facebook page and has engaged in projects to make more of our history available on the site.

Your Committee has met five times this year, under the Chairmanship of our President, Peter Crane. The only serious difficulty has arisen concerned the projected 2018 100 miles where, with financial support from the Centurions, we eventually enthusiastically committed to a track event next year. Unfortunately serious delays in the process outside of our control and a competing event in the Ilse of Man meant the race was no longer viable and a decision by email had to be taken to cancel our plans. We trust the membership has found their stewardship of the Club satisfactory.

We hope that the 2017/18 year will again bring success to the Club and that the various national and local initiatives being to tackle the longer term problems which have been evident for some years will bear fruit. The UK now has a fairly solid racewalking squad with some success and we hope this will increase general public interest and that the Club may benefit from this interest.

Peter Hannell

Captain's Report 2016/17

This year we were low on the ground in numbers competing in the national championships. This was due to injury, distance of travel and start time.

Although we were low in numbers in the nationals and not successful, we made this up with quite a number of members competing in all the open, vets, masters, overseas and club races. In the Enfield League for 2016, SWC took the top honours and also 4th place. Also, in the London Open and Southern Area Championships the club was 1st team.

The E C Webb Trophy will not be presented this year, as no one achieved any outstanding performances on track or road. This is also true of the Sydney Scholfield Shield as the club has no juniors.

Sandra Brown gets the Freddie Blackmore Trophy for her performance in the National 100 miles at Bury St Edmunds, placing 2nd woman and 6th overall. She also won the Harry Preston Cup, competing overseas in the South African 100 miles, finishing 2nd woman and 9th overall.

In the 20th European Masters Athletics Championships, held in Aarhus Denmark, Roger Michell, Malcolm and Angela Martin again represented the club and they all performed well, with Roger gaining a Silver Team Medal in his age group (M65) for the 20km road walk, with an improved performance.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank all the members who competed in the various races.

I now wish all the members a Healthy and Successful 2018.

Nolan Simmons

EXTRACTS FROM HON. TREASURER'S REPORT 2016-17

The Club finished the accounting year with a total net deficit of £635.17 and total net assets of £9,678.05 Members' subscriptions and donations were less than the previous year (possibly due to the loss of older members). The Club received £565.00 in annual subscriptions and £462.00 in donations. Thanks are due to the continuing hard work of the Membership Secretary.

Gazette Night receipts fell sharply with the 2017 Gazette Night making a net surplus of £89.50 Thanks are due to the Social Secretary for dealing with the event's rescheduling from 2016.

Net race costs decreased to £82.80 mainly due to lower payments to Sandilands Club and the lower engraving costs of cups.

Administrative costs reduced to £933.08 mainly because no donations were made. (*£100.00 of this is advance payment for 2017-18.*)

John Elrick 20 November 2017

The full accounts are available from the Hon.Treasurer.

RACE RESULTS

27 July-6 August European Masters, Aarhus, Denmark

Three members took part in the European Masters Track & Field Championships and of all of their results a team silver medal for Roger Michell in the 20km was the highlight. Out of a field of 20 for this age group France had 1,3,6 and GB 2,4,7 so this was a very competitive race and Roger's excellent time inside 126 minutes and about 10 minutes inside current form. Angela Martin did well in both 5 and 10km with the latter sub 70 minute performance a good improvement. Malcolm has been injured for some time and his 5km reflected this although 5th place out of 13 was not at all bad. A little later in the week the same position in the 20km was the result of a significantly better time. Generally the walks were well supported as usual.

5km Track (31/7) Men M60 1. H.Prieler (Ger) 26.38; 2. M.Luniewski (Pol) 26.46 3. G.Hauger (Ger) 27.14; 5. **M.Martin** (M60) 29.57;

Men M65 1. P.Brochot (Fra) 26.05 2. I.Richards (Steyn M65) 26.26; 3. B.Seidel (Pol) 29.15; 8. **R.Michell** (M65) 29.15.

Women W50 1. S.Sevellec (Fra) 26.59 2. B.Primas (Ger) 34.22; 3. M.Lucaferro (Ita) 27.32 11. **A.Martin** (W50) 34.22

10km Road (3/8) Women W50 1. S.Sevellec (Fra) 55.17; 2. M.Pinuela (Spa) 56.28 3. M.Lucaferro (Ita) 56.42 12. **A.Martin** (W50) 68.53

20km Road (3/8) Men M60 1. M.Luniewski (Pol) 113.52; 2. H.Prieler (Ger) 114.34; 3. G.Hauger (Ger) 119.07 5. **M.Martin** (M60) 123.50

Men M65 1. P.Brochot (Fra) 109.10 2. I.Richards (Stey) 110.52 3. V.Panico (Fra) 125.46 7. **R.Michell** 125.46

5/6 August National 100 Miles, Bury St Edmunds Championships

This year's National 100 miles was held in Bury St Edmunds over a slightly undulating course with 20 and 50 miles events also on offer. As far as Surrey Walking Club was concerned the main interest was in the Browns, the only members going for the whole distance and Sandra up in 6th overall and 2nd woman. Her time was a little down on 2016 but beat 22 hours and her more recent Dutch and South African times. This was Richard's first completion since the 2015 National and he was the first and only 70+ finisher in the middle of the field well inside 23 hours. Although the main event saw only 7 UK 100 mile completions the total across all the events was over 60 and there were 15 new Centurions mainly from Holland and Belgium.

Chris Flint (M70) also attempted the 100 and completed a creditable 84 miles. Doing the shorter events were another two SWC members (20 miles) plus Shaun Lightman coached Richard McChesney (50 miles). Kathy Crilley and David Hoben both finished the 20 with reasonable times as Kathy returns from injury and David 10 minutes ahead of 2016.

(62 competitors in total)

Men 100 miles (18)

1. G.Vermeir (Belg) 20.39.35; 2. J.Scholz (Australia) 21.04.53 3. P.Asselman(Belg) 21.11.07 9. **R.Brown** 22.48.54

Women 100 miles (5)

1. S.Scholtz (Australia) 21.04.53; 2. **S.Brown** 21.44.15; 3. J.Crawford (E&H) 23.42.22

Sub 100 miles in 24 hrs (18)

C.Flint 84 miles in 23.50.43

Men 20 miles (13)

1. R.Tersteeg (Ned) 2.58.31; 2. I.Richards (Stey) 3.10.54; 3. D.Annetts (N Herts) 3.32.17 11. **D.Hoben** 4.24.24 sec.

Women 20 miles (6)

1. L.Kehler (W&B) 3.23.18; 2. M.Noel (Belg) 3.51.46 3. S.Davies (AFD) 4.12.26; 5. **K.Crilley** 4.37.25

9 August Enfield League 5 miles Friendship Walks

Once again Ron Wallwork and his team put on a special event to celebrate the current World Championships in London. The skies did give us an extraordinary amount of rain on the day but in spite of this, besides the 41 starters, there were many others present, helping to put on the event, supporting the athletes or just there for the occasion. Many old friends were reunited and at least three representatives of the international walking community were there too. The wet weather, which temporarily eased during the race, had the effect that the fastest half used the cool damp conditions to achieve good times while the less fit found the rain rather off-putting and were relatively slow. The first two home were our American friends, Erin Taylor-Talcott who is competing in the first Women's 50km event and Dave Talcott - both naturally out-performing the usual Enfield crowd.

The SWC participation was limited to three in the lower ranks with Hannell only slowly coming back to form and David Hoben in a slightly slow time but better than expected with his 20 miles only a few days earlier. Mick Harran and Kathy Crilley were a bit below par but again Kathy had also completed the 20 miles.

In the 1 mile race Under 13 Abi Smith of Blackheath & Bromley had little competition and completed the distance with a win and a 20 second personal best. In second place was popular ex-international Amos Seddon but with very little training and 76 years on the clock he was no match.

5 Miles Men

1. D.Talcott (USA) 40.13 2. G.Wilkinson (E&H) 45.31 3. M.Culshaw (Belg) 47.16; 15. **P.Hannell** 56.16; 19. **D.Hoben** 59.14; **24. M.Harran** 65.21

3 Miles

1 N.Grimsey(E&H) 35.12 2. **K.Crilley** 37.21; 3. M.Croft (Ilf) 37.47

1 Mile

1.A.Smith (B&B U13G) 9.25; 2. A.Seddon (E&H) 11.20 3. G.Legon (Bexley) 11.29

19 August Southern Area T&F Champs, Crystal Palace

The positive side of this report is the Senior men's Silver medal won by SWC's Peter Hannell in this important Championship. Ollie Hopkins (U20) and Jack Childs (U15), both coached by Peter Selby did even better and achieved Gold. However, unfortunately, this masks the big negative that only 10 turned out across all of the age groups. With the A race denomination of the races most seniors were put off even attempting to survive the strict judging. Hannell's 2nd place was achieved at a very slow pace to successfully avoid the 3rd red card and, with the only other starter in the senior men's event withdrawing after two very early cards, Hannell was also last. While Jack Childs' win (out of two) was at a reasonable speed having chased Ollie early on the latter's time was over two minutes down with no opposition in the Under 20s. All ages and both distances were run together and this might help to save the event but the outlook is not encouraging.

Men Senior 5km 1. M.Culshaw (Ilf) 28.30 2. **P.Hannell** 34.26

Men Under 20 5km 1. O.Hopkins (Lewes) 27.23

22 August Veterans AC Summer 5 miles League, Battersea

The last of the pleasant 2017 evening races was held Tuesday. Although the total field was low three of the contestants were new to race walking with the youngest, David Annetts (N.Herts), easily winning after a few races but coming from a fast running background. We provided almost half the field as usual with Dan Maskell, recovering from illness, first home. Having started cautiously behind Peter Hannell he was soon past and pulling away steadily to 200 yards by the end. Roughly the same distance behind came David Hoben half a minute faster than last time.

1. D.Annetts (N Herts M50) 43.16; 2. J.Hall (Belg M65) 49.38; 3. M.Noel (Belg W50) 52.25; 4. **D.Maskell** (M65) 55.11 5. **P.Hannell** (M70) 56.39; 6. **D.Hoben** (M60) 58.27

27 August Veterans AC/Southern VAC 3km Walk, Kingsmeadow,

Veterans AC's second promotion of the week was their annual Track & Field Championships held jointly with SCVAC at 2pm on a very hot Sunday. Attendance, particularly on the women's side, was rather poor with most competitors being the only ones in their age group. Once again this was an "A" race with full judging and this may have been a discouragement. In fact the judging took into account the physical constraints on the older groups and no disqualifications were required. Surrey Walking Club were represented by David Hoben and Peter Hannell and also past member Glen Keegan was there in his Herne Hill vest. The heat had no effect on the average performance but the spread was wide and while some were attuned to and enjoyed the temperature others certainly did not. Both the SWC men fell into the latter category. While the field was mostly together for the first couple of laps, the gaps steadily widened. The two women had a close race but the men, headed by a fine performance from winner, Mark Culshaw, were mostly separated with age a significant factor. The exception to this came from M65 John Hall from Belgrave in second place.

1. M.Culshaw (Ilf 1st M50) 16.20; 2. J.Hall (Belg 1st M65) 17.33
3. J.Morgan (Newp 1st M45) 18.37; 6. **P.Hannell** (1st M70)
20.24 .4; 7. **D.Hoben** (1st VAC M60) 21.45

1 October Dutch/Belgian Championships, Tilburg, Holland

Angela and Malcolm Martin travelled to Holland with coach and strong competitor Fransisco Reis for a high class meeting in Tilbourg. Malcolm showed a continuation of his come-back within 3 minutes of the two hour mark. Angela was even further ahead of recent times and not far off her best 20km times.

Women 1. A.Sarrazin (BEL) 119.49; 2. L.De Smet (BEL) 123.43 3. **A.Martin** 143.49

Men1. R.deBruin (NED) 103.35; 2. M.Strunk (GER) 106.12 3. S.Meftah (FRA) 108.27; 4. **M.Martin** 122.52

14 October Enfield League 5 miles, Lee Valley

5 Surrey Walking Club members faced the starter. Malcolm Martin was the highest placed individual in 5th position after a race long battle with Jim Ball and Graham Chapman. The competition encouraged Malcolm to another good performance. At 4 miles Ball fell back but Chapman pushed on ahead at 4.5 miles but failed to drop Malcolm who finished only 8 seconds behind. His wife Angela was next home in an excellent time and just lost out to Ann Jones of Steyning who edged away after 4.5 miles. She had a Chris Flint finished next in 54m.57s just edging out a number of competitors. Dave Hoben finished in 58m 01s after a solo effort. Shaun Lightman had a recurrence of a leg injury and stopped after 3 miles.

Men

1. F.Reis (SCVAC) 39.29; 2. S.Parris (If) 43.22 3. G.Wilkinson (E&H) 43.37 5. **M.Martin** 45.10 13. **C.Flint** 54.57 14. **D.Hoben** 58.01

Women

1. M.Peddle (Loughton) 48.50; 2. H.Middleton 49.14; 3. F.Bishop (AFD) 51.58; 5. **A.Martin** 54.05.

4 November Steyning 10km, Steyning

This race was due to be held two weeks before but like other events on the Sussex Coast was postponed due to storms. This had some impact on numbers and the Steyning AC were pleased to have a dozen starters on a day with ideal conditions for racing – cool and a little damp but not raining. The clear winner by 3 minutes was the home Club's Ian Richards, a world class walker for his age group even at the end of that group. Surrey Walking Club with four out had Paul Gaston in 4th place in an above average time after a long battle with local man John Killick as the latter reeled Paul in from a 40 second deficit at halfway. SWC's best performance came from Kathy Crilley on her first visit to this picturesque location. David Hoben beat a below par Peter Hannell by 50 metres to secure a first victory over his training partner even though slightly disappointed by his time.

Men

1. I.Richards (Stey) 55.24 2. J.Ball (Stey) 58.10; 3. S.AllenB (Barn) 64.56; 4. **P.Gaston** 66.20 5. J.Killick (Steyn) 66.22 6. S.Maidment (Stey) 68.45; 7. **D.Hoben** 73.45; 8. **P.Hannell** 74.08; 9. M.Ford_Dunn (Stey) 78.13

Women

1. A.Jones (Steyn) 67.46; 2. L.Claridge (Steyn) 71.53 3. **K.Crilley** 76.23

11 November Enfield 7 miles

The 91st running of this prominent race saw a very reasonable 42 starters including 8 Surrey Walking Club members of which only one had to drop out due to pre-existing injury. The spread of the 6 SWC finishers is easily summarised with two right up in the top six, Dan Maskell right in the middle and great packing with the last next consecutive at the three quarter point and a below par Shaun Lightman just 3 places behind. Generally almost ideal conditions and great competition yielded good performances and David Crane in the frame in 3rd and Malcolm Martin in 6th were among the best having both determinedly

holding position. David's sub-hour position despite isolation for much of the race was particularly pleasing. Dan Maskell was also up on recent times and so to a lesser extent was David Hoben after a very strong start. The positions of our first two men made a high team position likely and sure enough we tied with the home Club for first on points and only 4 places difference in last scorer left SWC in second place. An interesting presentation with many families and supports adding to the good field. This included the Veterans AC 7 miles medals with gold for several SWC folk in addition to spot prizes for Maskell and Harran.

Men

1. J.Hobbs (Ashf) 55.46; 2. F.Reis (SCVAC) 56.24; 3. **D.Crane** 57.52 6. **M.Martin** 63.11; 14. **D.Maskell** 73.52; 19. **C.Flint** 77.56; 20. **M.Harran** 81.06 21. **D.Hoben** 81.54 24. **S.Lightman** 83.17

Mixed Teams of Four

1. Ilford 56 pts (last position 22); 2. Surrey Walking Club 56 pts (last position 26); 3. Ilford 76 pts.

19 November Midland League 10km, Coventry

3 SWC members converged on Coventry for the last Midland Winter League race including David Hoben who had competed in the Christmas Cup the day before. Midlands resident Roger Michell was up in 6th in his usual fast time despite also racing the 5km earlier in the day. Dan Maskell and David Hoben, a little down the field both walked to form in an event which saw nearly 40 out across the various age-groups.

Men

1. M.Williams (Tam) 54.33; 2. G.Chapman (Head) 54.52 ; 3. B.Allen (Leic WC) 55.14; 6. **R.Michell** 61.36; 11. **D.Maskell** 65.56; 12. **D.Hoben** 73.25;

18 November Surrey Walking Club 5km Christmas Cup, Tonbridge incorporating Southern Area Young Athletes League 3km

This historic SWC event for the Christmas Handicap Cup over 5km was attended by 5 Surrey men plus 7 visitors however of more significance was the 3km for the Area's young hopefuls bringing with some others, the total to 23 starters. More than half of the total was under 20 years old with judging at the highest standard but no disqualifications. The temperature was far from benign especially for the officials and many accompanying parents. The first two home in the main race were outstanding, particularly the Portugese winner Francisco Reis whose 23:33 performance as he lapped the field was extremely impressive for a 57 year-old. In second place was SWC's Malcolm Martin, just coming back to full fitness, with a sub 27 minute time and another improvement. Naturally it was no surprise that he won the Cup for the handicap with Shaun and Paul Gaston filling the frame. There was another improvement for Shaun coming back from a long layoff just in front of young Jacqueline Benson and less than a minute behind fellow SWC Paul Gaston – an old rival.

Men 5km (SWC Handicap in brackets)

1. F.Reis (TVH) 23.33.3 2(1). **M.Martin** 26.51.3 3(3). **P.Gaston** 32.24.1; 4(2). **S.Lightman** 33.01.5; 5(4). **C.Flint** 33.15.6 6. R.Penfold (Steyn) 33.18.5; 7(5). **D.Hoben** 35.59.4

Women 5km

1. P.Cummings (AFD) 28.03.8 2. A.Ingram (Lewes) 31.52.9; 3. G.Legon (Bexley) 34.34.5

Women U20 5km

1. A.Jennings (AFD) 27.05.6 2. J.Benson (Ashf) 33.02.4

Men 3km 1. **C.Edwards** 21.29.1.

Women U20 3km 1. E.Payton_White (Lewes) 17.21.6

Girls U15 3km

1. K.Stringer (M&M) 17.47.3; 2. D.Nova (Ashf) 18.01.3 3. C.Wallis (AFD) 18.26.6

Mixed Girls & Boys 1km

1. L.Burr (Ton) 6.06.5; 2. E.Cooper (Ashf) 7.37.7

26 November – Surrey Walking Club 7 Miles, Sandilands, Croydon and Midland League 10km, Warwick University, Coventry (19/11):

Seven members and two visitors started this Club Championship on a cold but bright Winter's day. David Crane, in good form, was away from the start and, apparently not noticing the sharp climbs on each of the 8 laps, won both race and handicap in a good personal best time. He almost lapped the field despite a fairly good time from Malcolm Martin. The competition down the field was in two groups as Dan Maskell would have caught Steve Allen had the latter not noticed the danger and managed to accelerate to a 40 second gap. Further down the last five started together but after the first lap gradually split with the the last retiring. Shaun Lightman held off Chris Flint and eventually made 2 minutes on his rival. Second in the handicap David Hoben walked strongly on the hills to beat Geraldine Legon by three minutes and finding the climbs more challenging.

1. **D.Crane** 56.58.7; 2. **M.Martin** 64.57; 3. S.Allen (Barn) 74.58; 4. **D.Maskell** 75.35; 5. **S.Lightman** 77.51 6. **C.Flint** 79.51. **D.Hoben** 83.34; 8. G.Legon (Bexley) 86.29;

Other results

28 August Avril Bowring 3kms Tonbridge **D Hoben** 21.31

27 September UK Police 10km Champs & Match with Civil Service, Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham 7. **D.Maskell** 66.58

7 October Macclesfield Sheild 10km 3. **D.Maskell** 65.29; 11. **D.Hoben** 72.25

9 December Irish 20kms Champs. **M Martin** 120.09

Stroll Reports

21st October. Otford Circular

Conductor: Helen Franklin

Participants: Bola, Gillian, David T, Richard, Dave W, Keith, John, Jeff, Cathy, Joëlle, Jane.

My first time conducting a walk for the Surrey Strollers! I aimed to tick all the boxes in planning the walk, i.e. 18 miles, starting from a railway station, with an afternoon tea stop. I used my trusty OS maps app to plot a totally original route, and so it was vital that this was recce'd in the weeks beforehand, and the distance of 17.99 miles was confirmed by Bola.

The weather forecast had been carefully watched by myself and many participants, in the days before the walk as there was a threat of Storm Brian. Thankfully the weather system lost its power and didn't hit the South-Eastern corner of the UK, unlike the storm surge of 30 years before, which decimated a large number of trees in the very area we were going to be walking in. The weather was incredibly mixed all day, sunshine mixed with light, short-lived, drizzly showers with gusts of wind. It was unusually warm for this time of year, which meant the waterproofs were off and on all day.

We left Otford station on time. Although there were other walking groups meeting at the same time, we didn't bump into them at any point during the walk. With a steep ascent onto the North Downs Way, we ambled along in the gusty wind and met the friendliest horses just before we left the path to head down to the village of Heaverham. We then walked through farmland including a fruit farm growing strawberries and blackberries the size of your thumb. We headed towards Oldbury Wood, a large hilly ancient woodland. Taking a slightly different route through the woods than planned, was necessary to walk down a steep bank, which was not a great idea (note to self: stick to the path you know!).

It was not that far then to our lunch stop at Ightham Mote, and the weather allowed us to sit outside to enjoy our lunch. Dave W produced a valuable document for me to read... (second note to self: appoint a back-marker!). The afternoon passed

without issue as we followed the Greensand Way (GSW) towards Knole Park. This undulating section has great views, but sadly the drizzle kept that from us for another day. Reaching Knole Park tearoom in good time, we left with the time of the trains in mind, for the last four miles to complete our stroll back to Otford. This part of the walk took us through Knole Park and out into the 'Wilderness', near Bat and Ball. Finally, we walked along the clearly signposted footpath through a sand and clay pit works, to reach the footpath leading back to the station, with three and seven minutes to spare for the trains back to Victoria and Blackfriars respectively. I really enjoyed conducting my first stroll. It was great to have such a good turn out on what was potentially going to be a bad day weather-wise. But as the Scandinavians say, 'there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing'.

4 November – Seven Sisters Rollercoaster

Conductor: Janette Platt

Participants: John & Gail Elrick, Helen Franklin, Keith Lane, Simon LLoyd, plus guest

This was very much a stroll of two halves. Train problems meant that four of the party (Gail, John, Helen & Keith) were unable to get to the start point until an hour later than the appointed time, so made their own way to Cuckmere Haven in the morning by a shorter route than taken by the conductor and the two others (Simon and guest participant) who made it to the start on time. The wonders of mobile phones meant the conductor was fully apprised of the train problems and during the morning we could keep in touch with regard to progress of both groups, which was a great relief.

So the conductor and select party of two others set off on the appointed route at the appointed time, the conductor emphasising to our guest that our strolls were not always so disjointed as this! Luckily, what was forecast to be a very wet morning proved to be merely overcast, with a bit of light rain, so the views from the top of the South Downs could still be made out, even though not as clear as when the conductor had recied the stroll in glorious sunshine a few weeks earlier.

After walking through pleasant countryside, we eventually turned our steps towards the South Downs and started the steep climb to the top, only to start downwards again along the top of Blackstone Bottom, with views of the sea ahead of us. Eventually we got to the White Horse on the west side of the Cuckmere valley and admired the fine views of the river and sea from its lofty heights. A sharp descent was then followed by a gentle stroll along the river towards Exceat. On the way, conductor hailed a couple of walkers, for some reason thinking they were part of the other group (despite the fact that there were only two of them and they were walking the wrong way!). They (quite rightly!) ignored her.

Lunch was taken at the National Trust cafe at Exceat. Sadly the other group had still not reached Exceat at that point and said they would stop for a picnic lunch later. Fearing that we would not see them that day, the conductor and her two charges set off in the direction of Cuckmere Haven. Luckily, the other group had decided to stop for lunch close to the start of the Seven Sisters path in the hopes of meeting us (very sensible move!) and as we started to climb up our first 'Sister' there they were, in a prime spot, eating their lunch with a fantastic view of the sea and cliffs at Cuckmere Haven in front of them.

Overjoyed to be reunited, the full complement continued on their way, the wind behind them taking them easily over the rise and fall of the Seven Sisters. After stopping for a welcome tea at Birling Gap the party made its way over Beachy Head in the failing light (dark by the time we got to the top). The conductor had not managed to reccie this part of the stroll, thinking it was probably unnecessary, but in the end needed help from the others to find the correct path off Beachy Head, in the dark. Between us, though, we made it safely down and then hot footed it straight along the (very long) front at Eastbourne before eventually turning inland to the station, feeling very satisfied that at least we had all managed to end the stroll together despite earlier set backs.

Total distance (for three of the party) - 19 miles



The strollers at Cuckmere Haven with new Strolls Secretary, Helen Franklin (back row right)

Strolls Fixtures

Sunday 7 January. Alton to Farnham linear. Conductor: **Jill Goddard** Start 09:31 at **Alton** station (08.07 from London Waterloo). Return trains from Farnham at 00 & 30 minutes past each hour.

Route description: This linear route takes us through the rolling Hampshire countryside from Alton to Farnham. We head south west from Alton towards East Worldham and on to Froyle before going up to Well for lunch. The afternoon route is to Dogmersfield and the Basingstoke Canal before tea near Church Crookham and then to the heathland north of Farnham. Explorers 144 & 145. Distance approx. 18 miles.

Saturday 20 January. Henley Circular via Marlow. Conductor: Kate Copeland. Start Henley station at 09:50. (08.42 from London Paddington, changing at Twyford). Note: some trains may be leaving 10 mins earlier on this date due to engineering works. Any updates will be posted on the web site and e-mailed to members nearer the time. Return trains every half hour.

Route description: In the morning we walk alongside the Thames to Temple Island, the pretty village of Hambleden and a brief communion with the Chiltern Way at Marlow Common before dropping down into Marlow for lunch (9.5 miles). Numerous pubs and cafés in the town. In the afternoon we take the Thames Path past Bisham and Hurley, turning inland at Aston via Remenham and a brief reunion with the Chiltern Way to reach Henley. Optional tea stop at The Chocolate Cafe. Stunning Thames vistas, beech woods and red kite sightings. Explorer 160. Distance approx. 17 miles.

Sunday 4 February. Guildford Circular. Conductors: Gail and John Elrick. Meet Guildford station at 09:12 (London Waterloo 08:30). Frequent return trains to Waterloo.

*Route description: We leave Guildford via Pewley Down where we should get extensive views of the countryside from the top, then we descend and return to the tops at Chinthurst Hill. We use much of the Greensand Way to reach The White Horse at Hascombe for **lunch**. After lunch we wend our way to Farncombe Boathouse for tea at Hectors then follow the Wey Navigation back to Guildford. Mainly Explorer 145. Distance approx. 20 miles.*

Sunday 18 February. St Margaret's (Herts) circular. Conductor: Lynne McKenzie. Start St Margaret's Station at 09:25 (08:42 from London Liverpool Street, changing Broxbourne 09:15). Two return trains an hour at 19 and 49 minutes past each hour.

Route description: This walk follows throughout the day the Lea Navigation, Harcamlow Way and Hertfordshire Way. Lunch at The Bull Inn, Much Hadham. Potential tea stop in Wareside but to be checked on recce. More details to follow nearer the walk.
Explorer 194. Distance approx. 18 miles.

Sunday 4 March. In Darwin's Footsteps (circular). Conductor: Simon Lloyd. Start at Hayes (Kent) station 09:29 (London Charing Cross 08:45). Return trains at 15 & 45 minutes past the hour.

*Route description: The morning heads across ancient Commons (Hayes and Keston via London Loop) passing William Pitt's Holwood estate and the Wilberforce Oak, then to Downe village to pass Down House, home of Charles Darwin. Skirting Biggin Hill's edges, we reach **The Blacksmith's Arms**, Cudham. After lunch, via fields and woods to High Elms Country Park for tea (Green Roof Café: visitor centre, and exhibition). Then on to Hayes visiting Farnborough village and church, finishing across the north of Keston Common.*
Explorers 147 & 162. Distance approx. 20 miles.

Saturday 17 March. Dorking circular. Conductor Keith Lane Start Dorking station 09:50 (London Victoria 09:01). Regular return trains to London.

Route description: In the morning the route undulates along the North Downs Way, over Colley Hill and Reigate Hill for a picnic lunch. Hot drinks available from the café at Reigate Hill where there is a picnic area and toilets. After lunch the route descends to Reigate Heath and on to The Plough PH, Leigh. Then to Dorking Station via Strood Green and the Coach Road.
Explorer 146. Distance approx. 18 mile