

June 2018 No.469

*The Gazette and Record of
the Surrey Walking Club*



Walking



Peter Hannell, our hardworking General Secretary, puts as much effort into his racing, as to his administrative work

Welcome to Gazette no. 469 Any material Emailed to p.crane7w@hotmail.co.uk would be welcome. Also see our website www.surreywalkingclub.org.uk .

We welcome new members

Bozena Kaniewska

Deborah Weston

Changes of Address

Iain Lindsay

Paul

Alex Hunter

Chris Tarrant

We have received news that our oldest member, Keith Fraser, passed away a while ago. A tribute will appear in the next issue.

Another of our older members, John May, can no longer race. The Committee agreed to make John an honorary member.

Gazette Night – 16 June – Blackheath HQ, Hayes, Kent

Come and join us at the buffet meal, auction and social event to raise funds for this magazine. It's great fun. Tickets are £15 from Trevor Sliwerski. (See back page for contact details).

RACE RESULTS

26 December 2017 – Boxing Day 5.5 miles, Preston Park

On a cold overcast day with a stiff breeze, 9 walkers faced the starter at Preston Park Brighton. From the start Ian Richards (Steyning) sped into a commanding lead and was never headed. Behind him the rest of the field formed a group which split after the first half mile. Shaun Lightman forced the pace, closely followed by Eva Payton-White and her father Jules White (both Lewes). The latter two set the speed up the long climb on the back of the course for the first time. This hill is the main characteristic of this event. At the end of the first lap Lightman made a break and, although Eva made a comeback in third, he finished in second position with Jules White fourth. Apart from Shaun this hard course saw most competitors down about two minutes on their normal time however Shaun made another improvement in form.

David Hoben and Mick Harran both had solo efforts at the back of the field. On this occasion David was ahead of Mick with the latter finding the weather and the hills a challenge.

1. I.Richards (Steyn) 47.15; 2. **S.Lightman** 59.20; 3. E.Payton-White (Lewes) 61.03; 8. **D.Hoben** 66.48; 9. **M.Harran** 67.34

20 January Enfield League, Donkey Lane

Dismal weather greeted the 36 starters for the first event of the 2018 Enfield League. SWC provided 3 of these plus the welcome return of second claim Paul King. Our first man, David Crane, went off with the leader Ian Richards and at half way dropped Richards but was challenged by the fast finishing newcomer David Annetts (North Herts Road Runners) to lose out in the final 800m to finish second just 23 seconds behind the winner. Further down the field Shaun Lightman began cautiously but came through overtaking Andy

Cox at 3.5 miles and nearly catching Gary Smith in the last 400m and showing further progress back to form. Paul was consistent with his previous races despite a long period out of the sport. In the women's race, new comer, Maddy Shott (Belgrave) had only been training 6 weeks and this was her first race however she won the ladies race.

.Men

1. D.Annetts (N Herts) 40.30; 2. D.Crane 40.57; 3. I.Richards (Steyn) 41.26; 14. **S.Lightman 53.31**; 16. **P.King 55.48**

Women

1. M.Shott (Belg) 44.14; 2. H.Middleton (E&H) 48.27; 3. M.Peddle (Loughton) 48.51; 9. **K.Crilley 62.32**.

27 January – Steyning 15km

The usual report for this race begins with a description of the pleasures of a satisfying walk out into the rolling hills of Sussex. Alas this year there will be no such tidings as almost ten miles of rain and cold winds made this more of a challenge than a pleasure. The first three were well spread and the rest in small groups as Ian Richards typically sped to a very good time and away from the rest including 2nd placed ex-international Hungarian visitor George Dudas. George, who despite being quite a bit younger, was quite unable to hold Ian in good form. S Paul Gaston was in 4th place, just in front of Fiona Bishop, and finished with a good time despite the conditions. Peter Hannell and Ed Shillabeer were close all race with both returning from injury and were pleased to get through in slowish but acceptable times all things considered. Friendly competition, as ever, yielded better performances and in this case ensuring both finished despite positions down the field.

1. I.Richards (Steyn) 77.14; 2. G.Dudas (Hungary) 75.44 3. T.Jones (Stey) 93.47 4 **P.Gaston** 103.19 8 **P.Hannell** 113.57

4 February – London Open & Southern 10 & 5km

The dominant feature of this meeting was the weather with a cold breeze adding to the bright but low air temperature. Surrey Walking Club won the men's team race but the victory was tempered by the fact of a very low turnout which left SWC as the only team of two although well down the small field. Shaun Lightman and Chris Flint battled on bravely with Shaun working hard from a cautious start. The third member of the team, Peter Hannell, was unable to hold form after injury and removed but two finishers were enough. The good features of the event were the presence in the first three places of relatively young walkers and the performances of three of Shaun's coaching group from Blackheath and Bromley HAC in the other races. Katie Brash was the only Under 13 2km competitor in a combined race with the 3km Under 15 3km but broke her best by a considerable margin. Also in the 3km Abi Smith was in silver position while the 5km women's race included Under 17 Isabelle Bridge winning gold. Both girls performed well.

Girl's U13 2km

1. K.Brash (B&B) 12.06.

Girl's U15 3km

1.L.Carty (AFD U15G) 16.47; 2. A.Smith (B&B U15G) 17.05;
3. K.Stringer (M&M U15G) 17 min 20 sec.

Women's 5km

1. N.Aidietyte (Ilf) 25.28; 2. M.Shott (Bels) 26.28; 3.
A.Jennings (AFD) 26.58; 4. I.Bridge (B&B) 28.30

Men's 10km:

1. C.Snook (AFD) 47.14; 2. L.Legon (Camb H) 47.58 3.
J.Hobbs (Ashf) 49.54; 8. **S.Lightman** 69.11; 10. **C.Flnt**
72.30

17 February - Enfield League 5 miles, Donkey Lane and

The second Enfield League event saw a reasonable field of almost 40 with other events removing most of the juniors and some veterans although Surrey Walking Club's Malcolm Martin competed in this race as well as the Championship the next day. There were 5 other SWC at the Donkey Lane playing fields including the winner, David Crane, in his best time over this course as he was only just over 40 minutes and well clear of George Wilkinson, a promising Under 17. A few places down Malcolm was fourth as he gradually comes back to form. Chris Flint and David Hoben were further down in reasonable times with David encouraged by a position well ahead of the back of the field. The shorter events saw two of the SWC female group as Kathy Crilley (3 miles) and Angela Martin completed 2 miles recovering from injury.

5 Miles Men

1. **D.Crane** 40.12; 2. G.Wilkinson (E&H) 41.25; 3. G.Chapman (Head) 45.09; 4. **M.Martin** 46.00; 12. **C.Flint** 55.32; 14. **D.Hoben** 58 .41

3 Miles All

1. **K.Crilley** 38.50;

2 Miles All

1. **A.Martin** 23.04

18 February - SCVAC Indoor Championship 3km, Lee Valley

The Southern Area Masters' Indoor event saw a small field of six with most preferring the less formal 5 miles the day before with race walking on the in-sloping track being always difficult. Both achieved gold in their respective age groups with Martin easily beating his rival in the same group. Both also look forward to better times with a return to full fitness.

1. D.Annetts (N Herts) 14.44; 2. **M.Martin** 16.37; 3. J.Hall (Belg) 19.39; 6. **P.Hannell** 22.24

24/25 February – Bourges 24 Hour Race, France

Two members, Sandra Brown and Kathy Crilley, headed to France to compete in the Bourges 24 hours race. This always difficult event was made even more so by a two degree C temperature and a biting cold wind but this did not prevent excellent results with Sandra completing 104 miles as second woman and Kathy 5th with 89 miles. For Kathy this race was particularly important as she hopes to take part in this year's Paris -Alsace race for the Bourges race is a qualifying event.

Women

1. T.Maslova (Russia) 173.827 km; 2. S.Brown 169.359 km;
3. K.Zeimer (France) 168.116 km; 6. K.Crilley 143.621 km.

4 March – National Masters Inter area Indoor Match, Lee Valley

4 members represented their area Masters clubs in the annual Indoor Championships at Lee Valley, which narrowly avoided the snow and its travel problems. The real difficulty, as always, was the steeply sloping bends on the ten laps which tends to slow times. After a close race among the first three in the men's event SWC's Malcolm Martin (South M35) managed to win over Chris Hobbs (South M50) by a foot or so with both in reality just over 60. Martin's time was near to his improving recent races despite the slopes. A good performance from Roger Michell, just in the M70s but racing in the M35 group for the Midlands, saw him in fourth overall. Near the back of the field M75 Peter Hannell represented VAC M50s but was in poor form. Earlier in the day the women's race saw Angela Martin in the correct W50s race for the South still recovering from injury in a battling group of three with her Southern colleague and friend Geraldine Legon (Bexley) getting the better of her on this occasion.

Men 1. **M.Martin** 10.39.5; 2. C.Hobbs (Ashf) 10.40.1; 3. P.Boszko (Bir) 10.42.4; 4. **R.Michell** 11.42.2 9. P.Hannell 14.27.8

Women 1. C.Derbyshire (Midlands) 11.12.6c 2. W.Bennett (Worc) 11.12.6; 3. M.Peddle (Loughton) 11.16.3; 9. **A.Martin** 14.02.9

24 February - Manx Open and England vs Ireland Match for the Nihill Shield

In the Isle of Man Shaun Lightman's group had mixed fortunes as Isabelle Bridge (Blackheath & Bromley) produced a PB while Abi Smith had a disaster. In the U 17 women/men combined 5km Izzy came 9th in a PB of 27m 48s as fourth U17W. She was 4th Under 17 woman and 1st English woman. Abigail was 2nd in the U15 3km event with 400m to go and then was sick and failed to finish. She was on for a PB. This may be due to some milk that was off at breakfast.

Women Under 17 5km

1. E.McHugh (Irl) 24.39; 2. J.Fidgeon (Irl) 25.53; 3. E.Delahunt (Irl) 27.41; 4. I.Bridge (B&B) 27.48.

11 March – Molly Barnett Walks incl. England 10km, Coventry

Unfortunately Surrey Walking Club had only one competitor in the Senior National 10km - Chris Flint. He had a steady start before coming under the judges' ban just before 5km.

In the U13 2km event Katie Brash won the event. She was not only the first girl but she beat all the boys including Blackheath & Bromley's Tom Gilbert.

In the U15 3km event 4 competitors headed the field. They

split up at 2km with Katie Stringer (Medway) getting the better of Abigail Smith both of whom passed a fading Lois Carty.

In the 5km U17 women's event Isabelle Bridge went into the lead with Matthew Crane (Bexley). She built up a commanding lead over Lucy Lewis Ward and although she faded towards the end she hung on to win the women's race.

5km (all groups)

1. M.Crane (Bexley 1st U17B) 27.50; 2. I.Bridge (B&B 1st U17G) 28.17; 3. L.Lewis-Ward (Camb H 2nd U17G) 28.36

Under 15 mixed 3km

1. C.Hopper (Camb H 1st U15B) 16.57; 2. K.Stringer (M&M 1st U15G) 17.07; 3. A.Smith (B&B 2nd U15G) 17.37.

Under 13 mixed 2km

1. K.Brash (B&B 1st U13G) 12.13; 2. T.Chaplin (Shef/Dearn 1st U13B) 12.43; 3. T.Gilbert (B&B 2nd U13B) 13.41.

17/18 March –Chateau-Thierry 24 hours

Besides the hills on each of the 136 laps completed (117 miles for the overall winner) the weather would make it impossible for most of us ordinary walkers but not for these contestants. Surrey Walking Club was as usual represented by two hardy, female walkers – Sandra Brown and Kathy Crilley. They were first and third women with 105 and 77 miles respectively in spite of the near zero conditions following 7 hours of rain then 8 hours of snow during the night. Such a situation makes the results for these two ladies, both around 70, all the more incredible.

Women

1. **S.Brown** 169.450 km; 2. C.Bizard (France) 147.259 km; 3. **K.Crilley** 124.981 km.

11 March British Masters Indoor Championships 3km, Lee Valley Centre (11/3):

Three SWC were on show. Angela Martin, Malcolm Martin and Roger Michell all won their age groups although it must be admitted that fields were disappointing. Malcolm's time was his best over 3km for some time despite the difficulties of indoor walking.

Men 1. F.Reis (TVH 1st M55) 13.53; 2. I.Richards (Steyn 1st M65) 15.30; 3. D.Annetts (N Herts 1st M50) 15.55 4.

M.Martin (1st M60) 16.14; 6. **R.Michell** (1st M70) 17.55

Women 1. H.Middleton (E&H 1st W55) 17.34; 2. F.Bishop (AFD 2nd W55) 20.55 3. **A.Martin** (1st W50) 21.29;

21 March – European Masters Indoor Championships 3km, Madrid

Two members were part of the British team in Madrid for the European Indoor Championships over 3km with a road 5km included. Both performed well in the more important indoor event with Malcolm Martin just missing a medal by 10 seconds in 4th. Roger Michell's 5th was a little down on his 18 minute UK Masters time. The 5km saw another good position for Malcolm in 5th and only just outside 28 minutes and his best since February last year. The longer event was a struggle for Roger in 8th with a time a minute or two down on what he might have expected.

Indoor 3km

M60

1. R.Martin (Spain) 15.46; 2. D.Bogaert(Belg) 15.47 3. J.Moreno-Mate (Spain) 16.06 4. **M.Martin** 16.11.

M70

1. E.Formentin (Italy) 16.12; 2. J.McMullin(Ire) 17.45 3. L.Niestelberger (Austria) 18.01; 5. **R.Michell** 18.40.

Road 5km

M60

1. R.Martin (Spain) 26.32; 2. D.Bogaert(Belg) 26.50; 3. J.Moreno-Mate (Spain) 27.14; 5. **M.Martin** 28.08.

M70

1. E.Formentin (Italy) 27.41; 2. J.McMullin(Ire) 30.12; 3. L.Niestelberger (Austria) 30.34 8; **R.Michell**) 32.52 .

14 April – Cecil Gittins Memorial 15k, Gravesend Cycle Track

The Cecil Gittins Memorial meeting at Gravesend was greeted with Summerlike conditions which were very welcome after the rain but less welcome for those competing as the higher temperature added to the hills and bends on the course to make the races, especially the 15km, even harder. Although some put up excellent times a larger number found it very hard work and were slowed as a result giving a wide range of performances. Surrey Walking Club was represented across the various distances even if thinly. The full event over 15km had a combined field of 7 of whom 3 were SWC with Angela and Malcolm Martin both finishing and a particularly good time for the latter. Angela, while recently injured, was not too far from her previous standard with Chris Flint also completing in a fair time. The more popular 10km had 17 out with David Crane up in 2nd despite an earlier Park Run and a time which he was pleased with. Further down but up to scratch were Mick Harran and David Hoben, the event organizer. A very unfit Peter Hannell battled with David over the first 5km with difficulty and settled for the shorter event only to be embarrassed by being first home against the older competition including 85 year-old Ken Livermore. At the other end of the age scale were two of Shaun Lightman's Blackheath charges doing one 2.5 km lap. Abi Smith, now in the Under 15 group, won the race while Katie Brash was the only Under 13 and it was the latter who had better performance over what was for her a long and hard distance.

2.5 km Girls

1. A.Smith (B&B 1st U15G) 15.02; 2. C.Wallis (AFD U15G) 15.43; 3. M.Morris (M&M U17G) 15.45 4. K.Brash (B&B 1st U13G) 16.33

5km Men

1. **P.Hannell** 36.24; 2. **C.Edwards** 37.05;.

10km Men (excl 15km competitors)

1. F.Reis (TVH) 50.45; 2. **D.Crane** 52.34; 3. C.Hobbs (Ashf) 57.44; 10. **M.Harran** 72.06; 11. **D.Hoben** 74.15

15km Women

1. **A.Martin** 114.06

15km Men

1. S.Parris (Ilf) 85.24; 2. **M.Martin** 85.38; 3. O.Hopkins (Lewes) 88.22; 6. **C.Flint** 107.58

25 April - VAC, Surrey, Middlesex and Herts County 10km, Battersea Park

After a thin spell of events April saw the start of the crowded summer programme. As usual among the first of these was the combined VAC 10km track walking Championships and County events for Surrey, Middlesex and Herts. 18 starters represented a fair turnout for this popular event with one DNF and no DQs. We were without David Hoben as he was the organizer of this very professional event which included chip timing. The lap recording was spot on with no queries. First SWC was Sahun Lightman who started very cautiously but soon picked up to a fair speed until the last lap or so when he slowed in an isolated position. Mick Harran was considerably better than other recent events while Peter Hannell, near the back of the field showed faint signs of improvement.

Men

1. D.Annetts (N Herts 1st and 1st Herts) 52.41; 2. I.Richards (Steyn 1st) 53.30; 3. T.Guttulsrod (HW 1st M55 and 1st Surrey) 55.48; 9. **S.Lightman** (1st M75 and 2nd Middlx) 69.34; 11. **M.Harran** (2nd M75 and 3rd Sy) 71.25; 12. **P.Hannell** (3rd M75 and 4th Sy) 74.12

28 April - LICC/Enfield League 5km, Lee Valley Track

Only 3 days later the Enfield league combined with a London Inter-Club Challenge meeting at Lee Valley over 5km on a crowded track with 35 starters and a cold wind. The winner was a most impressive performance from Portuguese ex-international Francisco Reis although his 23:47 was below his recent best. Just about as expected David Crane was up in 3rd as he almost held young George Wilkinson, brother of European Junior Champion Callum, who had an excellent race. Not far behind Malcolm Martin had one of the best results in 5th as he completes his recovery from injury. Down in the bottom third of the field came the other three SWC. The first of these was Shaun Lightman nursing an injury but walking steadily. Further down David Hoben once again got the better of Peter Hannell with both lacking the sprinting speed required by this short event.

Men

1. F.Reis (TVH) 23.47; 2. G.Wilkinson (E&H) 24.27; 3. **D.Crane** 24.31; 5. **M.Martin** 26.23; 14. **S.Lightman** 34.20 ; 16. **M.Harran** 34.48; 18. **D.Hoben** 36.17; 20. **P.Hannell** 36.22

Women

1.P.Cummings (AFD) 28.52; 2. H.Middleton (E&H) 29.20 ; 3. M.Peddle (Loughton) 29.25; 8. **A.Martin** 35.38.

3-9 May 8th 6-Day Race, Balatonfured, Hungary

The field for the 6-day race in Hungary was 92 - a large field for an event of this kind. The course was at the popular tourist resort Lake Balaton, Central Europe's largest lake.

The vast majority of the field were runners but the first race walker home for the men was right up in 3rd, Ivo Majetic (USA) with 786.744k (490 mls). Representing SWC was David Hoben coming in with 337.502k (210 mls), in 78th overall. The whole event was well organised down to the

smallest detail, and on the final day nearly all joined in the flag bearing of their home country on the last lap.

Other Results

10 February Sam Shoebottom 10km, Simster, Lancs 14.
D.Hoben 72.31

7 April Macclesfield Shield 10 miles 10. D.Hoben 118.20

29 April RWA Inter-Area Match, Nuneaton 5km Senior Men
11. R.Michell 34.35

12 May Middlesex County 3km, Lee Valley
4. S.Lightman) 20.20.

22 April London Marathon

David Hoben was the only SWC member taking part in the London Marathon this year as Kathy Crilley was unable to take part following being knocked over by a cyclist during the VAC 5 miles in Battersea Park five days earlier. David's time of 6 hr 31 min was not too bad considering the sudden and very early rise in temperature compared with recent weeks. With about 40,000 taking part this year he was race walking in 37,095th or 22,643th male and 229th M65.

NEXT RACE

27 June Johnson Bowl / Gazette Cup
Norman Park, Bromley 7.30pm - 4 mls

Stroll Reports

Henley Circular - Saturday, 20 January 2018

Conductor: Kate Copeland

Participants: Gillian, Nick and Scott

The Met Office had promised us double raindrops and a 'feels like' temperature of 0 degrees. A few walkers sent their apologies the night before so the leader was fully expecting no one to turn up and to be back home by 11am!

In fact Gillian and Nick decided to brave it and we were all very glad that they did as it turned out to be a really good day. With the exception of a mini hail storm as we arrived in Marlow the weather was never as bad as we'd feared.

We left Henley along the quiet west side of the Thames, this involves crossing a series of small wooden bridges over the streams that feed the river and passing the grand Fawley Court and Temple Island. Then we climbed into the beech woods above Hambleden before dropping down into that very pretty village for a quick cuppa at the Post Office. Climbing back up we crossed Rotten Row, some farmland and more beech woods, joining the Chilterns Way (Berkshire extension) at Marlow Common. We then headed down into Marlow, passing the house where Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley lived and worked. Our bedraggled appearance created a fair bit of interest in the lunchtime cafe.

The afternoon route, which was mostly dry, followed the Thames Path for about 6 miles, crossing and recrossing the river at the islands between Bisham and Hurley. Then we turned away from the river to pass through the park at Culham Court with its large sculptures and great herds of deer. At

Aston we left the Thames Path, crossing more farmland at Remenham then skidded our way down into Henley.

It was good weather for ducks so we had fun spotting many birds along the way. In fact, it turned into a bit of a safari. Despite the Big Five escaping us we saw plenty of grebes, coots, Canadian and Egyptian geese, herons, red kites, pheasants, jacks and herdwick sheep, shetland ponies and white stags. We completed the walk well before dusk and Gillian and Nick elected to miss their first train home so that they could fully savour the delights of The Chocolate Cafe.

Guildford Circular – Sunday, 4 February 2018

Conductors - John and Gail Elrick

Strollers – Chris K, Gillian, Helen, Jenny, Jill, Kate, Keith, Lynne, Mary-Anne, Neil, Nick and Simon

Fourteen walkers assembled at Guildford Station on a chilly but very clear morning. Gail waited for Neil whose train was running late. However, when Neil arrived he exited the station at a fast trot and the two set up the hill to Pewley Down at a very rapid rate!

Meanwhile, the rest of the group walked over the top of Pewley Down at a more gentle pace where they were rewarded with long views to the south. After descending to the bottom those with eagle eyes spotted Neil and Gail moving quickly down the hill and a runner going in their direction was tasked with giving a message to say the main group was not far ahead. Encouraged by this the two slithered down the rest of the way and the group soon came together.

After a very wet period the preceding week had been quite dry which meant that the mud, so evident during the recce, had

dried up considerably. Moreover, Jenny, who we were glad to welcome back after injury, applied her local knowledge to help us get round the remaining muddy areas.

We went over Chinthurst Hill and continued through Bramley and from there due south on the Greensand Way to Hascombe. Lunch was taken at 'The White Horse' pub whilst those with sandwiches sat on the village green or in the church porch. After lunch we stayed on the Greensand Way to Hambledon Church from where we climbed up to Hydon's Ball viewpoint. Here we paused to look at two memorials: the Robertson Obelisk paid for by William Robertson in memory of his two brothers who both died in the First World War and on the summit the memorial to Octavia Hill, philanthropist and one of the founders of the National Trust.

We descended to Winkworth Arboretum where Jenny said farewell and we decided to stop at the National Trust café for tea rather than risk continuing to Farncombe and finding Hectors closed (which it was). Now that the quick way out over the stile is blocked off we had to walk all the way through the Arboretum and along the lane to pick up the path towards Farncombe. By then darkness was falling and we had to stop and find our torches in order to follow the two miles along the River Wey back into Guildford.

Distance – 22 miles according to Gerry the Pacemaker!

Richmond to Kingston Linear - Sunday 4 March 2018

Conductors - John and Gail Elrick

Strollers – Cathy, Dave, Jeff, Joelle, Keith, Maggie, Mark, Nick and Vala

Earlier in the week we decided to cancel the stroll in the programme from Hayes, Kent due to engineering works on the railway line and knee problems experienced by Simon which made him unlikely to be able to lead. Moreover, we were all in the grip of the Beast From The East which saw the capital under snow, a biting wind from the East and mass train cancellations.

We therefore decided to put together a walk connecting the parks and green areas in our locality. Richmond was an accessible place to start and the improvised route offered plenty of flexibility if we had to cut it short due to the bad weather. We assumed that few people would make it but in the event nine people arrived at Richmond station, all of them desperate to get some much needed fresh air. Matters were helped on Saturday when the temperature lurched above freezing and the snow disappeared.

Along the towpath Nick and Jeff pointed out the tallest Plane Tree in London which stands beside Gaucho's restaurant (see photo on the Strolls web pages). We walked across Petersham Meadows and entered Richmond Park at Petersham Gate to ascend up to Pembroke Lodge. There are always two ritual stops at this point, one is to see if St. Paul's Cathedral is visible from the viewpoint on King Henry's Mound (it wasn't), and the other is to look at the Ian Dury bench (recently repaired but minus music). Having got this out of our system we walked a wide circuit to Ham Gate via Pen Ponds, across Ham Common and on to Teddington Lock.

In Teddington we stopped for lunch with the sandwich eaters occupying the benches near the five foot high poppy statue which commemorates World War One and the drinkers going off to 'The Adelaide' pub. After lunch we walked through Bushy Park via the Woodland Gardens, exiting through the Lion Gate and cutting through Hampton Court Palace to cross the river. On the Surrey side the Rivers Mole and Ember run side by side in Molesey and join together just to the west of Hampton Court Way before running into the Thames by Cigarette Island. We meandered in a circle through East Molesey, trying to follow the two rivers as far as possible, and finally finished up back at Hampton Court where we stopped for a very welcome tea and cakes in a small café.

From here we recrossed the river and headed through Home Park, mainly along the Long Water, to reach Kingston station.

Distance: 18 miles according to Gerry the Pacemaker.

Dorking Circular – Saturday, 17 March 2018

Conductor – Keith Lane

Strollers – Cathy, Dave T, Dave W, Gail, Gillian, Jane, Jeff, Joelle, John, Richard and Ron

A Stroll to Remember

Despite snowing in the morning and an Amber warning for the Dorking area, in the late afternoon, 12 Strollers assembled at Dorking station.

For mid-March (or indeed any month) this was a bitterly cold day, however, once Box Hill had been climbed at Ashurst Roughts and we entered the woods towards Juniper Top the beauty of the fresh snow was apparent. Five miles of undulating footpaths and tracks took us to an almost deserted

Headley Heath. To the relief of the Strollers the mobile café was open. The sight of this almost caused a Stollers' stampede.

The next stage through mud, large puddles and snow turned into a trudge to get to Colley Hill where the Conductor took a message from someone not unimportant in Strollers' matters and discovered he had been left behind and had decided to return to Dorking.

The original idea of having lunch on top of Colley Hill was quickly dispensed with and we made our way down to Reigate Heath where the first pub was considered to look very muddy-walkers-unfriendly so we made our way to The Skimmington Castle.

Now, dear reader, reflect for a moment on what you want from a pub on a freezing day. Fires? Warm hospitality? Stone floors? Good service? If so, you will love the Skimmington Castle as it excelled on all counts.

The Conductor had decided to shorten the 19 mile stroll and instead of returning via Leigh, after lunch, we walked back to Dorking Station conveniently along the Greensand Way as the Conductor had not recce'd this alternative route.

Dorking station was reached in good time to catch the 17:33 train having walked 15 miles. A day of beauty, hardship, mishap, some humour and a winter wonderland.

29 April 2018

Pitsea station to Thorpe Bay station (linear)

Conductor: David Hoben

Participating: John & Gail, Joelle, Nick

After a plan to do a walk involving a return ride on the Epping Ongar Steam Railway which had to be abandoned, the stroll from 2017 to Britain's driest town was repeated.

The Fenchurch Street service was on diversion that morning, going on a circuitous route via Grays to Pitsea, but amazingly only arrived at Pitsea station one minute later than advertised by SWC!

The Thames Estuary path started outside the station so it was possible to get into the countryside with immediate effect, the first 3 miles or so already back to winter ground conditions even though the London Marathon weekend just a week earlier had been fine and sunny. From Benfleet to Hadleigh Castle the route was on mountain bike trails and the quality of the surface was much better, which made progress easy. There was also a chance to spectate an orienteering event which was taking place on the same piece of woodland.

Morning coffee was at the Salvation Army Café at Hadleigh Castle which usually affords great views over the Thames estuary into Kent, the dull weather this particular day making the views less distinct. The view that was expected and we didn't get was the one over the 2012 Olympic mountain bike course, which was a shame.

The remainder of the stroll was the over the Southend Millennium Walk, which was hosted by a local RA group for the first few years of the present century until it was deemed not worth putting on for turnouts of only 90 or so. After coffee the party made a mini tour of Hadleigh Castle, which is open at all times and free. Much of the castle is in ruins, but there was still enough of interest to look round. The Millennium

Walk then climbed again giving view over Canvey Island, Hoo Peninsular, and Isle of Grain, with Isle of Sheppey in the distance.

The route into Old Leigh was through the huts selling local seafood, then through the cobbled streets and wooden buildings which make this resort popular throughout the year.

The high street featured a plaque for the high water mark reached in the severe floods of 1953 which tragically affected the Canvey Island area, and the local museum.



Our President with strollers Gail, John and Nick by the skinny post box on Southend Pier. Joelle took the photo.

The next port of call on the promenade was the Crow Stone, marking the point at which the Thames ends and the North Sea begins, unfortunately it was approaching high tide and not possible to visit at close quarters. Lunch was at Rossi's café at Westcliff; from there the Walk turned inland and followed the park and gardens overlooking the promenade.

It was then time to do the walk to the end of the pier and back, still Britain's longest pier at 1.34 miles each way, and have

photos taken next to just about the thinnest pillar box you could imagine, still in service. The last mile back to Thorpe Bay station was on a pleasant avenue in the central reservation of the dual carriageway, on arrival at the station we were greeted by yet another replacement bus service for the ride back to Southend Central station, again this did not add too much to the journey time.

Southend had lived up to its reputation – it didn't rain. "Southend is the pier. The pier is Southend." Sir John Betjeman on his favourite pier.

Forthcoming Stroll

Saturday 23rd June Knockholt Circular. Conductor: Helen Franklin. Start **Knockholt** station **09:19** (Charing Cross 08:35 direct, or Charing Cross 08:45 and change at Orpington. Or Victoria 08:28 to Orpington and change trains there onto Knockholt). Trains run half-hourly back to London.

*Route description: Crossing Broke Hill Golf Club, we make our way through Pratt's Bottom, and along undulating paths towards High Elms Country Park, for a 'comfort' stop. We then pick up the London Loop to Downe Village. Pub **lunch** at either the George and Dragon or the Queen's Head (need to recce) or picnic in the village, plenty of benches available. In the afternoon we pass Downe House, home of Charles Darwin, and on through farmland and woodland towards Knockholt Village. We then start to head back towards the station, stopping at Arthur's Café in Coolings Nursery for tea, on the way.*

Explorer 147. Distance approx. 18 miles.

