

The Gazette and Record of Surrey Walking Club

Racing and strolling on roads and trails



Surrey Walking Club
founded 1899

**Message from
the President**

Committee news
a summary of the
Committee meetings

Race walking news

The race walking section of the Surrey Walking Club competes in races on track and road in the UK and overseas

Strolling news

An active group of walkers who take to the paths and hills, not only in Surrey but beyond...



Surrey Walking Club racers in action

Almost back to normal!

The summer of 2021: After several versions of lockdown over the last 18 months, dare we hope that at long last strolling and racing events are back on the menu?

June saw a smattering of races taking place and the Strollers ramped up their strolls programme (despite the weather!)

A short round up of races and strolls are reported on the inside pages!

The first issue of the "digital" Gazette featured a "blast from the past" - a race report from the Roubaix 28 hour race popular with many members. This "column" proved popular and we now feature interviews by Lyn Atterbury with members past and present.



**Roger Michell
President of Surrey
Walking Club**

Roger is a well known race walker who travels far and wide to compete in Masters races - often coming home with many honours.

Roger was elected President of Surrey Walking Club in 2019

Message from the President

At last we are emerging from the worst effects of covid and our activities are returning to something approaching normal. Racing and strolling are now taking place and I thank all the organisers for their efforts in making these events happen.

As we were unable at the time to celebrate some members 50 years, I wrote to them expressing the club's congratulations on the event. The replies I received reflected the pleasure in being remembered. It is worth reflecting that we should make an effort in contacting members that we have not heard from in order to ascertain that they are well. An email or a phone call could make all the difference. The club should be more than just events and members are important to us.

In the past the President has led a stroll, and I intend to lead one, at a date to be fixed with Strolls' Secretary. Watch this space.

Discussions have also taken place with some committee members on establishing a headquarters for the club. In the past the club had a base. This meant that we had a place for races and a focal point. Although it is early days the pros and cons of various venues are being considered. Factor such as transport connections and the availability of public transport are all being considered. We need to get the correct balance.

Please support the events, both strolling and racing, so that we can again like a club after such a difficult couple of years.

Keep active, healthy and enjoy your walking.

Roger

race walking news

race round up 2021

Surrey racers have travelled far and wide to compete after months of lockdowns and no races. Welcome to newcomer Adrian Moore.

Dick & Zena Smith Trophy Track Races, Bury. 5th June

writes Dave Evans (Lancs WC)

Dave Hoben and Andrea Lennon, we're off on their 5000m as soon as they heard the air horn whilst the remaining aspirants charged off with 25 laps ahead of them (10,000m).

1st Dave Hoben 39:14

Veterans Athletic Club Open 5km Road Walk, Battersea Park 8th June

The second of the Battersea Park races had a smaller field than the first race, but with idyllic spring weather, reports Dave Hoben, with large sections in the shade it looked like PB territory, and so it was.

The race distance was again 5km, and the race walk was the only event, which was actually a race, as the accompanying running races had wave starts, due to compliance with the present COVID-19 regulations. The race walk was open to only 10 walkers (runners field 100).

In 9th place was Club Secretary Peter Hannell in 39:12



The next race in the series took place on 13th July with Chris Flint and David Hoben in attendance - (both pictured left)

7th David Hoben 37:39:89; 8th Chris Flint 38:09:30

The final race was held 3rd August - again with Chris and David competing. In 9th place - David Hoben M65 36:56; 10th Chris Flint M75 37:13; 11th Peter Hannell 39:45

Woodford Tuesday Walks, Woodford Tuesday, 15th June

A good start to the Woodford Tuesday Walks as they emerge from their COVID-imposed absence, reports Peter Cassidy with a total of eighteen entrants, three of whom were unable to compete. SWC was represented by Stephen Crane who came in 5th with 16:17.2

Johnson Bowl 4 Mile Road Race, Norman Park, Bromley Wednesday, 30th June

A somewhat smaller field than hoped for, writes Chris Flint. It was good for the club to hold the event after such a long break, and for new comer Adrian to win the handicap.

1st Roger Michell M70 40:47; 2nd Dan Maskell M70 43:48; 3rd David Hoben M65 47:16;

4th Adrian Moore 47:44; 5th Chris Flint M70 48:22; 6th Peter Hannell M75 51:04

Surrey Walking Club Track 3km Championship 11th August

Due to Covid difficulties the usual joint event with Blackheath & Bromley Harriers AC was not held however our officials were able to put on the SWC Championship & Open track 3km at Tonbridge School which was well supported with 18 starters and Officials and supporters to match. The race was marked, apart from any racing elements, by the family presence of the Cranes of seven in number. The eldest, long-term SWC member Peter was joined by his two sons, David & Steven, three grandchildren and daughter-in-law with five of them on the track. After a calm first lap David steadily pulled away from brother, Steve, to record a competitive time while the latter was well ahead of his pre-Covid performances. David Hoben had been severely affected by the pandemic but came back here strongly to take the handicap. Chris Flint finished more or less dead on expectation as he and Samuel Crane strode along together at either end of the age-range Pleasant weather added to what was a very enjoyable get together after the separation brought about by Covid.

Results: Surrey Walking Club Track 3km Championship 3km Mixed (16 starters).

SWC Handicap in brackets.

1st (4). **D.Crane** (Sy WC M40) 14 min 58.2 sec; **2nd** (2). **Steve Crane** (Sy WC M40) 15 min 18.6 sec; **6th** (3). **R.Michell** (Sy WC M70) 18 min 35.5 sec; **8th** (5). **P.Gaston** (Sy WC M70) 20 min 0.8 sec; **10th** (1). **D.Hoben** (Sy WC M65) 21 min 50.3 sec; **11th** (7). **C.Flint** (Sy WC M75) 22 min 1.8 sec; **12th**. Samuel.Crane (U13B) 22 min 1.8 sec; **13th** (6). **A.Martin** (Sy WC W55) 22 min 31 sec; **14th** (8). **P.Crane** (Sy WC M75) 22 min 35.5 sec; **15th** . **P.Hannell** (Sy WC M75) 23 min 12.7 sec; **16th** (9). **K.Burnett** (Sy WC M80) 29 min 37.1 sec.

Sri Chimnoy 24 hours, Battersea Park Track, 18-19 September

Despite the heavy rain forecasts for the weekend, the weather remained remarkably warm and sunny - well until the end of the presentation!

This was primarily a running 24 hour race but two race walkers were competing: David Hoben (SWC) and Centurion Richard McChesney. As usual with (running) 24 hour track races, there was a change of direction every 4 hours which helps with athletes from "leaning in" to the track. Nevertheless, David did suffer from this: "first and last 24h track experience!" Still, it was a PB for Dave with 68.124 miles. Well done!

6th Cecil Gittins Memorial Walks, incorporating Enfield Race Walking League Cyclopark, Gravesend, 2 October 2021

5k/10k/15k road race

A smaller than usual field at the start line, in part due to the heavy rain and the current fuel crisis, with only two walkers from SWC.

5km: 2nd Dave Hoben 37:59; 10km Chris Flint 1:18:13

Forthcoming races

30 Oct SWC 10km Woodcote High School track (Coulsdon) - start time to be decided

13 Nov Enfield 7 miles - Donkey Lane. details to follow.

20 Nov SWC Christmas Cup 5km Tonbridge track. 1pm start

Blast from the past... interview with Chris Flint

My approach to race walking has been mainly as a recreational sports activity. Although by nature a fairly competitive individual sport was in second place whilst pursuing a career in the police service. I enjoyed sport across a broad range of activities but lacked the determination to

achieve any pinnacle of success so became at best a useful club competitor. For me sport has been an ideal balance between career and recreation, and whilst race walking has never dominated my life it has given me the opportunity to be involved both as competitor and administrator.

In January 1963 I joined the Metropolitan Police Cadet Corps at Hendon having just turned 17, and was introduced to a life style which still had strong Service features. It was an early introduction to policing, an opportunity to continue one's education and to be involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and something called race walking. Hendon Aerodrome on a cold and wet winter's day was my initiation over 6 miles. From the 60 cadets taking part I was identified as having some natural talent and so was fellow cadet Bill Sutherland, subsequently Commonwealth Games 20 km bronze medalist.

Race walking in the Met Police Athletic Association between the 60's and 80's was a high-profile discipline. It had support from senior officers and walking was included in the Victor Ludorum Inter Area competition. Some of the UK's very best competitors such as Charlie Fogg and Gordon Brown, (both winners on numerous occasions of the famous Barking to Southend race), Paul Blagg (Olympian) and Peter Hodgkinson to mention a few started their walking careers in the Met. All were also members of outside clubs. In the summer of 1963 a cadet team competed in a match at Mitcham Green where I was asked by Len Mitchell, London Vidarians WC president, to join the club. I did, and remained with the Vids until its eventual demise in the late 90's but not before we had won the RWA 100 miles in 24 hours team championship on a number of occasions. I later joined Surrey WC.

Whilst at the University of Exeter (1979-82) as a mature student I met up with members of the Plymouth and Dawlish club run by Ed Shillabeer's father, and I was privileged to train on occasions with Chris Maddocks who competed in five successive summer Olympics. His determination and talent stand him out as a truly exceptional race walker, and is definitely a character among race walkers who maintains a public profile. It is people like Chris who can act as motivators to draw people towards race walking. It needs all the help it can get.

One could say that announcements of race walking's demise is somewhat premature. Race Walking Records of the 70's were saying something similar but somehow it continues thanks to dedicated coaches, officials, and increased opportunities for younger walkers to receive specialist training at institutions such as Leeds Beckett University. This has proved invaluable. It is particularly reassuring to see increasing numbers of female competitors. We have world class race walkers and Olympians in our midst. Inevitably, some doubt exists whether contact is being maintained throughout and their sheer physical fitness and resulting speed can prove difficult for judges, especially when photo/video pictures show loss of contact. But pictures don't show the whole event and judges viewing a competitor's style, technique and composure will identify blatant disregard of the rules. The biggest issue facing race walking is recruiting and retaining not just our younger walkers but those in the 35-55 years age bracket. Numbers have declined dramatically and race walking clubs and athletic clubs with walking sections are often unable to enter teams for championship events, and the RWA (Southern Area) committee has agreed to undertake a survey of clubs to assess the true state of race walking in its geographical area. It hopes to publish results by late Autumn.

As for me I am surprised that I became an ultra-distance competitor specialising in (or able to

endure) 100 miles in 24 hours events both in the UK (21 successful completions and a couple of national championship wins) and overseas such as Roubaix, Bar-le-Duc, Rouen, Chateau Thierry, as well as numerous Nijmegen Marches.

Much to my regret I've not inherited my grandfather's artistic talents; the genes gave me a wide berth but rejoined the family line in my son who is an increasingly well known professional artist living in France.

Chris Flint.

Many thanks to Lyn Atterbury for setting up this interview

Seen on the LDWA facebook 13 September....



The post commented: *"This 12-page programme will be on sale at the Brighton Book Fair at the end of October...."*

Competitive walking was a big sport at the time and inside there are long lists of clubs and participants including 'Centurions, i.e., one who has walked 100 miles in 24 hours.' (Ouch - that's FOUR marathons!)....

There were plenty of comments but mostly about the London to Brighton running race. Your Gazette editor added a bit of context to the post - pointing out the SWC logo at the top of the programme.

The programme is for the 11 September 1948 race!

news from the Strollers....

Strolls Secretaries: Kate Copeland and Lynne Mackenzie.

Generally the Strollers get out and about in the countryside (and not just around London but also further afield) twice a month. Since the lifting of partial lockdown in May, this summer has seen the strollers in plenty of action.

Strolls reports

full reports of our strolls can be found on the [SWC website](#)

Balcombe Circular 15th May 2021 Distance: 16 miles

Conductor: Nick White

We set off westwards from Balcombe station towards the impressive gardens and park of Nymans (National Trust) with its small delightful lake and Japanese pavilion. On the way through Nymans we passed many huge redwood trees, one of which is said to be the largest in Sussex.



Lunch break was at the village green of Staplefield. There are two pubs on the green but, as the weather was unpredictable, we quickly ate our packed lunches and moved on. There followed a pleasant walk down to the River Ouse where we were lucky enough to spot a small herd of deer. We continued down into the valley and under the Ouse Valley Viaduct - a surprisingly impressive structure, built in 1842 for the London to Brighton Line. Then on through fields, sometimes a bit muddy, and up slopes until emerging to the slightly surprising sight of a huge reservoir. This is Ardingly Reservoir, a particularly beautiful location, popular for boating and paddle boarding. The weather held off here and we had a lovely long walk around it. There is always something relaxing about walking alongside water. We were now heading back to Balcombe.

Overton Circular 12 June 2021. Distance 18.4 miles

Conductor: Lynne McKenzie

Four intrepid walkers were not put off by the rising temperatures and set off from Overton at 9.50am. We headed away from Overton towards Watership Down. There were beautiful views with big open skies. There was some shade which was much needed. We parked ourselves on a steeple chase fence after 5miles for a well deserved break.

Onwards to lunch at Kingsclere which involved a steep down hill at Freemantle Down. After lunch, a slight deviation in the route (chatting can cause these issues) and we made an unexpected detour through Hannington. This turned out to be fortuitous as it is a beautiful village. The conductor remarked that this was a good mistake to have made. Back following the pink line on the OS Maps app we strode through the paths in ever increasing temperature and afternoon sunshine.

Sawbridgeworth Circular - 27 June 2021

Conductor: Gregory Noble

The group set off from the station under low clouds having rained earlier yet with plenty of warmth. We passed through the grounds of Great Hyde Hall and an undulating patchwork of fields with crops well on their way to ripening and enjoyed their scent. The noise from the M11 was soon left behind as we wended our way into the parish of Little Hallingbury. Noise from Stansted flight traffic was noticeably absent too, which added to the delight of the walk.

The group enjoyed the excellent westerly views of the surrounding countryside from the top of the slope leading to the village of Hatfield Broad Oak.

After passing along a short section of Sheering's main road, the group turned off into more fields of crops only to hear and see the M11 again.

We arrived in Lower Sheering very much looking forward to our lunch time food stop since it was now gone 2pm. A truncated version of the stroll that ended at Harlow Mill railway station was hastily agreed upon and the group set off, skirting Pishiobury Park, taking in part of their wetland nature reserve which borders the Stort Navigation canal. We eventually picked up a path along the side of the canal which brought us to the main road and eventually the station.

Circular - 10 July 2021. Distance: 18 miles

Conductor: Kate Copeland

We set off from Cowden at 10am exactly, having all seen the weather forecast so were dressed appropriately for the next 3 hours of drizzle. It is a very unpopulated route which has many benefits and also means there was a lot of long grass and 'thriving' undergrowth at this time of year. In one place the bracken was five foot taller than on the original recce in April and, surely, one foot taller than the final recce the week before! Given how wet the ferns were, it was a bit

like going through car wash rollers. We saw a kestrel and a deer but that was as far as the exciting wildlife went. In fact, we only passed one horse and rider and three dog walkers the entire day. We also waved at a small group of Capital Walkers across a field. They were walking from Ashurst to Hever and told us that the Metropolitan Walkers were also in the area that day.

The walk takes in farmland, meadows and woodland and there were some fabulous colours from the barley and long grasses along the way. There were plenty of pretty houses to drool over, both large and small, including Bolebrook Castle which was apparently the hunting lodge from which Henry VIII chased wild boar and deer on Ashdown Forest, before wooing the ill-fated Anne Boleyn at her family seat of Hever Castle about five miles away.

We arrived with twenty minutes to spare for the 6pm train. The group were extremely upbeat (at least within the leader's earshot) about the unseasonal amount of mud we encountered on the way and the mood was good the whole day. It's possible that Paul mentioned something about wishing there were a few more stiles but the remark was somewhat indistinguishable.

Clandon Circular– Sunday, 25 July 2021. Distance: 20 miles

Conductors: Gail and John Elrick



Brave souls, Nick and Stephen, joined John & Gail on the day and our thanks to them for stoically putting up with the very wet conditions after lunch.

The first part of the route passed through Clandon Regis Golf Club and East Clandon village to cross the A246 and head upwards into the Sheepleas. Avoiding the myriad of paths going off in all directions, the conductors headed through the woods to join the lane at Honeysuckle Bottom and from here we joined the Lovelace Bridges Trail through

the woods. We turned southwards and crossed over the North Downs Way (NDW) to head downwards for lunch at Westcott - and along came the rain!

We dried out at the Abinger Hammer village shop/tea rooms opposite the empty cricket field and then made good progress back up to and along the North Downs Way as far as the top of Clandon Downs. Descending along the edge of the field required avoiding the quite large animal holes (bunnies or badgers?), but we couldn't avoid getting very wet as we brushed through the long grass.

We reached the railway station via the empty golf course and Nick was able to catch the 6.00pm train back to London.



August Bank Holiday weekend - 3 day spectacular along the Vanguard Way

Saturday 28th East Croydon to Edenbridge c20 miles - Conductor: Keith Lane

Sunday 29th August: Edenbridge to Buxted c23 miles - Conductor: Kate Copeland

Monday 30th August: Buxted to Newhaven c25 miles - Conductor: Gavin Fuller

The aim was to walk the whole of the Vanguard Way over the August Bank Holiday 2021 weekend. This had been postponed for over a year due to Covid, meaning that we fortuitously coincided with the VGW's 40th anniversary. The route itself is 66 miles but with the necessary diversions to and from train stations, it ended up at about 70 miles. People came and went over the three days, generating energy for the group, and everyone who joined us added something unique to a memorable event.

A full report will appear on the SWC website in due course.

Redhill to Edenbridge - Saturday 11th September 2021

Keith claims the record for the most unsuccessful attempt to lead a Stroll in the history of the Surrey Walking Club!

It appeared that some trains were running to East Croydon station and so the Conductor, Keith, met up with Gail & John Elrick. Noting that the indicator board was showing the first train to Redhill would not be until 11:16 a decision was made to re-route to somewhere they could get to: namely Wimbledon and so the Strollers Three had a pleasant day finishing at Richmond.



Forthcoming strolls - see website [Surrey Walking Club](#) for details

10th October Godalming Station 09:25 18.5 miles. Route Hydon's Ball and Hascombe, to Cranleigh for lunch. Following the Wey South path and Downs Link to Bramley, and finally across to Godalming.

Details yet to be decided for the following strolls - but do add the provisional dates to your diary!

23 or 24 October Whitchurch

6 or 7 November Reading

20 or 21 November Dorking

04 December Box Hill

19 December Hampton Court



Committee News

During 2020 and 2021 the Committee has met "virtually" via Zoom.

We have met in January, April, June and September during 2021.

Discussions have ranged from the new Surrey WC website (web master Mark Easton along with Gail Elrick's contributions for the Strollers). The new website should launch shortly.

Discussions took place concerning the Surrey WC Welfare policy document and Shaun Lightman updated the Committee on his 3 hour Zoom webinar with England Athletics on safeguarding.

As the racing world slowly opened up, Race Secretary, Chris Flint has been looking at race venues for our future SWC races. Norman Park, one of the Club's regular venues, has been out of action due to building works.

At the last meeting, Peter Selby posed the question - "What should we do for SWC 125th anniversary? Should we hold a 100 miles/24 hour race?" "Can we hold a stroll in conjunction with a race - start /finish locations?" This proposition was welcomed by all and we now have 3 years to organise it! Ideas and suggestions are very welcome.

The Club's AGM takes place on 15 November with a short Committee meeting afterwards.

Venue to be decided.

The next full Committee meeting will be held 17 January 2022.



Surrey Walking Club Committee

President: Roger Michell

Vice-Presidents: Kathy Crilley, Gail Elrick, John Elrick

General Secretary, Press & Trophies/Vice Captain: Peter Hannell

Captain: Nolan Simmons

Race Secretary: Chris Flint

Membership Secretary: Pam Ficken

Strolls Secretary (job share) Kate Copeland & Lynne McKenzie

Webmaster: Mark Easton

Gazette Editor: Kathy Crilley

Treasurer: John Elrick

This is your club magazine.

The Editor welcomes any contributions, letters, news, comments, photos or reports which could be of interest to other club members. Just send them to the [Editor](#). Reports of strolls would be especially welcome as these have always been popular with readers.

Many thanks to those who have sent contributions to past editions of the Gazette.