

## **NEWSLETTER JULY-DECEMBER 2015**

### **CLUB DAY/AGM 2015**

An encouraging number of walkers turned out on Easter Monday, a beautiful Spring day, after the disappointing turnout for the Club Day walks held on a Sunday last year. We were rewarded with a warm welcome at St Thomas' Church Hall, Southborough meeting up with friends old and new over refreshing cups of tea and cakes, before the AGM, which was attended by 34 members-just a few more than last year.

The meeting began with a discussion on the best day to hold an AGM. There seems to be no day or time of day to suit everyone, and a vote for Easter Monday showed a small majority. Of course this did not take into account all those who could not be there because of family commitments, so I'm sure there will be more discussion on this. After the usual business of adopting last year's Minutes, the Chairman's last Report, and Treasurer's Report, our Chairman, John Smout stepped down, and Janet Wilson was elected as our new Chairman. She gave John a vote of thanks for his 11 years as Chairman, and at least 28 years as a Club member. John responded by expressing his concern for the future of footpaths with Budget cuts and new Planning laws. KCC are asking for volunteers to become access officers with training being given. Please contact John if you would like more information on becoming one. With all John's knowledge of footpath matters, it was proposed that John should be our Honorary President, and he graciously accepted.

The rest of the Committee were elected, but Mary Blinks stated her intention to resign as Editor and from the Committee at next year's AGM. So the Committee will be looking for a new Editor. The meeting closed with a Vote of Thanks to the Committee for all their hard work in the running of the Club.

### **OUR CHAIRMAN**

John Smout became our Chairman in 2004 having been a really active member of the Club for about 20 years before then. Together with his wife Shirley he has led many walks, and taken many members on memorable walking holidays, and even undertaking to hiring and driving a minibus, enabling us to do the long distance linear walks. He was also very involved with the Ramblers, and because of his valuable knowledge of footpath matters, the Committee didn't want to lose him when he resigned as our Chairman, so invited him to become our President. We are very grateful that he accepted.

We are also grateful to Janet Wilson for coming forward to become our new Chairman, and wish her well.

### **EDITOR –IMPORTANT-PLEASE READ**

I am resigning as Editor at the AGM in 2016, having been doing this since 1987, and on the Committee since 1977! There have been a lot of changes over the years, as we did literally cut and paste our hand written programmes and newsletters before taking them to be typed! Now we're in the digital age I feel it is time for someone more computer literate to take over, ideally to work with me in preparing the next programme. Please contact me if you would like more information.

Mary Blinks Tel: 01892 538891 or marymb@hotmail.co.uk

### **SUMMER SUPPER Saturday 15 August**

This year we have booked the Bell Room at High Rocks (High Rocks Lane, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9JJ) for our Supper. The cost will be £16.50 ( to include tip) for a 2 course 'sit down' meal. We shall have sole use of the room, and look forward to another of Len's testing quizzes.

Please complete the booking form and return it by Saturday 25 July at the latest. We have to let the caterers know the final numbers by that date.

*Jill Rouse*

## LONGER WEDNESDAY WALKS

The walking this winter has been much better than last - not nearly so much mud and rain. In fact we have managed to travel further afield than we normally do in the winter with some lovely walks around Chartwell and Toys Hill. April turned out to be a very pleasant month with beautiful sunny days. So pleasant in fact that on a walk from Mark Cross the temperature reached 25 degrees and there were a few complaints "it's too hot". Us walkers are never satisfied!

In May we have planned a completely new walk from Pluckley, a place we have never started from before, which offers beautiful views over the North Downs. In June we have again booked our boat trip from Newenden to Bodiam and walking back to finish with a scrumptious cream tea in the new tea rooms at the Newenden Boat Station. We have just a few places left on this trip if anyone likes to join us.

Usually we arrange to end up in a tea room which gives us the opportunity to meet up with some of those who have not been able to walk with us lately such as Jeremy, Colin, Betty and Geoff. It is always nice to see old faces.

*Eric Botley*

## SHORTER WEDNESDAY WALKS

Our happy band of Wednesday (Five Mile) Walkers take the 'R' out of Rambling and Amble round at a leisurely pace stopping for a picnic around midday and continuing the last couple of miles or so afterwards. However, in June we will be having a Summer Lunch walk finishing at a local hostelry.

Recently there were 29 of us on a walk and we came to a very main road. Three had crossed and others were waiting for a gap when a kind driver stopped to let us across and then a driver coming the other way had to do likewise and I don't think either, to say nothing of the traffic piling up behind them, was that pleased when a further 26 trundled across despite the many waves of thanks.

There was a similar occasion later when we had to re-cross the same road further along but a few more had made it to the other side before the traffic stopped. Nothing astounding about that but on the same walk we came to a pedestrian crossing over a railway line. I am apprehensive about these since a year or two back when on a walk with the Friday Group I tripped on the first sleeper and went sprawling across the track. Someone picked up my stick which had gone flying and I remember thinking 'Sod the \*\*\*\*\* stick, what about me' It seemed to take forever to get my breath back and get up during which time visions of silent movies of maidens tied to the track came to mind and I was thinking in the twenty-first century I don't think a train will come to a halt a fraction of inch from me – before I know it I will be mincemeat. Anyhow, I lived to tell the tale but I am rather wary of them as you can imagine, so on this occasion I crossed with care whilst peering down the line. Just a few of us were over and I thought I saw a train in the distance so, in true traffic cop style I put up my hand to stop the others. It was, indeed, a train coming closer but going slower and slower and it stopped just prior to the crossing to wave us over!

Our Group was originally set up to cater for the longer distance Wednesday Walkers who were finding they needed to ease off to a shorter walk at a more gentle pace and they are always welcome as are new members just setting out on the walking experience.

*Janet Wilson*

## FRIDAY WALKING GROUP NEWS

We have enjoyed another 6 months of varied walks, commencing the year with many walkers resorting to wearing wellies in an attempt to manage the wet and muddy conditions, then emerging like butterflies from the chrysalis to bask in the warmth of Spring as it burst upon. Even the chattiest walkers have taken time to remark on the abundance of hedgerow flowers – the snowdrops, primroses, daffodils, bluebells, to name a few, and the blossoms in the orchards giving an expectation of some useful windfall gleaning in the autumn.

It has not all been good news for the group. Sadly Fred Johnson lost his battle with cancer, and he will be missed after being such a good leader until his health deteriorated. Christina and Tony Simpson have also had to face the unexpected loss of a daughter. That is such a harsh experience and our sympathy is with them. Some have suffered injury which has stopped them walking for a while and I particularly mention Brenda, Pat and Tony, and hope they will soon be able to return. George has on occasion arranged a shorter walk for those recovering fitness after injury and we are grateful to him for this, even though we know it also gives him company when the longer walk is too arduous! *Sheila Jones*

## LONGER DISTANCE WALKING GROUP

The Sunday walkers had a perfect walking day for the start of the High Weald Landscape Trail, their chosen long distance walk for this year. The mud was beginning to dry up, making for easier walking on this undulating section, and the primroses and violets and wood anemones put on a glorious show. We were fortunate to have another fine day for the second section, and during our lunch break were treated to an aerial display by a Spitfire for VE Day. We are now looking forward to the next 5 sections when we will finish in Rye.

We have become quite a small group on Sundays now, but what we lack in numbers we make up for in enthusiasm, and Janet has done well finding a leader to cover nearly every week in this programme.

*Mary Blinks*

## 20 WALKS IN THE WEALDEN COUNTRY Published in support of HOSPICE in the WEALD

This fully illustrated guidebook describes twenty circular walks varying in length between two and ten miles, with most of them being five or six, so could be useful particularly to the Wednesday and Friday groups. It describes the towns, villages and other places of interest in that part of the High Weald in the vicinity of Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. Priced at £6 it is available from the Online shop at [www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk](http://www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk) or email [sara.clark@hospiceintheweald.org.uk](mailto:sara.clark@hospiceintheweald.org.uk) or 01892 820586. All proceeds arising from the sale of this book will pass to Hospice in the Weald.

The author Peter Titchmarsh has also written The Wealden Round which is a 50 mile circular from Tonbridge for which he hopes walkers will obtain Sponsorship forms from the above.

## FAMILY NEWS

After a brave fight Frederick Johnson known to us all as Fred died on the 16th December 2014. The club was well represented at his Thanksgiving Service in January 2015. Fred's love of walking, cycling and skiing was well known to us all and I had the pleasure of meeting him in 2002 when we led walks for KEC Tonbridge Adult Education. Fred was instrumental in introducing Friday Walks of around 5/6 miles which are well supported. Fred's excellent knowledge of the surrounding countryside was important and he was always willing to pass on helpful advice. He was always keen to check out a walk before he led the group and I would sometimes walk them out with him as he would with my walks. We enjoyed finding new walks. It pleased Fred that many of our members also now lead walks in our programme which are quite varied. Fred also liked longer walks and with around 5/6 members would walk around 10/12 miles sections every other week or whenever possible on National Footpaths such as the Saxon Shore Way, The Wealdway and the Greensand Way. The location of a suitable eating venue at the end was important and that still applies today although not everyone can stay on. We send our belated condolences to Pat and the Family. Fred will be missed but we all have some good memories.

*George Holt*

## EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE

Thank you to everyone for their contributions to this Programme and Newsletter. It is good to hear about all the various groups' activities, and how our Club is flourishing, especially the weekday groups. Our Tuesday evening walks have started again with the longer evenings, and as we go to press we are looking forward to our coach outing to Broadstairs, and don't forget the Summer Supper in August. Where else could you get such good value for £4 a year?!

**DEADLINE** for the next programme-yes, we need to think again already! Mary Blinks would like articles for the Newsletter, and Janet Wilson needs walk details by Sunday 8 November, which means the group organisers need them by **1 November**. Janet does a brilliant job typing up the programme of walks for us. It is a taxing task putting in all the telephone numbers etc, but she shouldn't have to look up grid references and post codes as well, so it would be very helpful if leaders would put in these on their forms. A very easy way to find these is to open up [www.streetmap.co.uk](http://www.streetmap.co.uk), move the arrow to your chosen meeting place, find 'click here to convert coordinates', click on this and up it all comes.

*Mary Blinks*