

## NEWSLETTER JANUARY-JUNE 2016

### SOCIAL EVENING AND AGM 2016

Following the 2015 AGM your Committee had several discussions to try to find a way of maximising attendance at this important annual event. We were aware from comments that every alternative had its drawback for one or other member of the Club. It was eventually decided to combine the AGM with a social evening on a weekday as this appeared to be the best option. It was hoped that the attraction of one of Len's quizzes plus the promise of a glass or two of an alcoholic nature would encourage people to come to the Camden Centre. Boy were we proved right with an attendance of 53 - over 25% of our membership! Our expectations were substantially exceeded, extra chairs had to be brought in and Sheila had to make a quick dash to get more essential supplies.

Janet was very keen to get through the formal business of the evening and, in what must be a record, did this in 25 minutes. The Club's officers were re-elected and Nick and Eric who had been co-opted were formally elected to join the other members of the Committee who had stood again.

Linda was asked a couple of questions on the accounts and asked for suggestions as to where the Club might invest the Footpath Fund, perhaps in a gate, but your Committee would welcome any ideas as to what to do with the money – please think about it and let us know.

Janet paid a tribute to Jill Rouse who had stood down from her position as Vice Chairman and had resigned from the Club, as to our great sadness she is unable to go on our walks anymore. Jill is an amazing lady who has done a lot for the Club and we wish her well.

Sylvia Richardson has moved west to be near her family. She was another long standing stalwart member of the Club, holding many positions and she will be missed by many of us – she even got me to join so things are not always positive!

Following the formal part of the evening we enjoyed (is that the correct word?) one of Len's fiendish quizzes whilst partaking of cheese and wine. Other drinks were available but the tea and coffee went unused – I wonder why?

Thanks go to Len for the quiz, Sheila for the catering and to all those others who helped with the washing up and general clearing up at the end of the evening.

A great success, I think.

*Editor*

### ACTING VICE CHAIRMAN

Unfortunately nobody volunteered for the position of Vice Chairman, vacated by Jill, at the AGM. The Committee was quite keen that there should be a Vice Chairman to ensure that there was somebody to deputise for Janet if the circumstances arose. After a bit of arm twisting, I have agreed to act in this role in the hope and expectation that I shall have nothing to do!

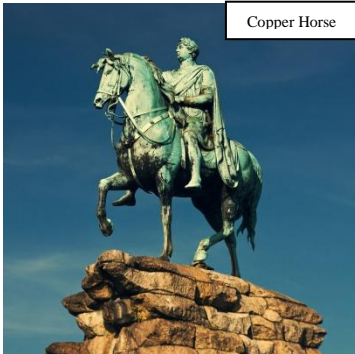
*Editor*

### A DAY IN WINDSOR

To borrow from an old song "Didn't we have a lovely time the day we went to Windsor?"

The day dawned brightly as we gathered at Tunbridge Wells for our charabanc to arrive and in due course a fine conveyance arrived courtesy of Hams Travel. After a twice aborted start – two missing and one unexpected traveller - off we went, picking up more excited expedition members at Southborough and Tonbridge. A smooth ride and we eventually arrived at the outskirts of our final destination. A diversion twice round the same roundabout and the energetic ones were dropped off at Virginia Water and much to the

consternation of the rest of us, we continued on and on getting further and further from our next drop off point at Savill Gardens. After a deft bit of reversing our driver got us back on course and we turned towards the Gardens only to be faced by a sharp right turn – would our driver ever get us there? No fear, with a skilful bit of manoeuvring and the demolition of a hedge we finally reached the coach park at the Gardens. A few stayed on the coach as they were not walking today and the writer understands that they then enjoyed a further exhibition of hedge trimming on the way out to the main road on their way into the town.



Copper Horse

After refreshments at the Gardens the main body of walkers set off at a leisurely pace towards our ultimate destination, Windsor. The sun got hotter and hotter, fevered brows were mopped and it was with relief a water break was called at the “Copper Horse”, statue of George III erected in his memory by his son, George IV. We were then joined by those on the longer walk – golly they must have got their skates on to get there so quickly!

Those of us on the shorter walk continued along the Long Walk, (yes I know, it’s confusing!) whilst the other walkers went off to Runnymede and hitherto other uncharted areas.

The day grew warmer and warmer and Windsor Castle rose like a mirage in the distance and seemed never to get closer. But of course it did and eventually we were there. Those of us who had taken a packed lunch refreshed ourselves whilst others went off to one of the many hostelrys in the town with directions to meet in the coach park later.



The Long Walk

We all met at the coach and a tired but happy crew had a smooth uneventful trip back to our picking up points. The M25 even co-operated with no hold ups!

Many thanks to Mary Blinks for her fine organisation of a great day out and to the guides she co-opted to shepherd us all – Judy, Janet and yours truly. *Editor*

## LONGER WEDNESDAY WALKERS

The walking this winter has been particularly difficult what with the wind, rain and mud. So much so that we’ve had to cut short or cancel several walks. However we have persevered and leaders have come forward with interesting new walks from Framfield, Frant, High Rocks and Brenchley which has encouraged us to get out whatever the weather.

Our walk from High Rocks on the 6th April was particularly daunting. At the meeting place 10 intrepid walkers sat in their cars looking at the pouring rain, knowing the forecast was rain and sleet for the rest of the day. However we set off and within minutes the rain stopped, the clouds cleared and by lunch time we were sitting in warm sunshine and having to strip off!! You can never tell with the English weather.

In June we have again booked our boat trip but this time with a difference - we will be going towards Rye - from Newenden to Wittersham and walking back to finish with a scrumptious cream tea in the new tea rooms at the Newenden Boat Station.

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 Colin, Betty and Geoff. It is always nice to see old faces. *Eric Botley*

## WEDNESDAY 5 MILE WALKERS

Our Group continues in much the same way as always. We are all getting older and tend not to walk that quickly any more – in fact I sometimes think if we walk any more slowly we will go backwards! We are losing some of our friends through the usual aches and pains of old age but still manage to maintain attendance of about 25 walkers, although Brian’s walk from Otford with 140 steps was less well attended. I



Bluebells Staffhurst Wood

think too many remembered that not only were there the steps to contend with but a steep hill leading to them and onwards and upwards afterwards, too. However, those of us who did attend were rewarded with lovely views, it being a fabulous day and we welcomed Bridie, Paul & Beryl's golden retriever, for the first time (we are the only group



After the Steps at Otford

that allows dogs with the permission of the walk leader).

On the day that I am writing this a few of us attended the funeral of Beryl Rees and I made a short speech about her many years with the Club. Sylvia Richardson told me that when she joined in 1966, Beryl was already a member so she had been with us for at least 50 years which is quite an achievement. She originally walked with our group (although before my time) and, until the end of last year, continued to organise the short Sunday walks from Tonbridge.

*Janet Wilson*

## FRIDAY WALKERS

In January, Geoff Abbott retired as coordinator of the Friday Walking Group, after a long stint, during which he has very effectively kept us all on the straight and narrow. I am now getting to grips with the role and hope to make as good a job of it as he has done. Meanwhile, Maurice Dickens has kindly taken on the task of organising our Christmas lunch and I have every confidence that he will be arranging something more than adequate to satisfy the ravaging hordes of Friday Walkers.

I am sure that all those who have turned out regularly throughout the New Year and spring feel that they have had sufficient cardiac exercise. We seem to have been battling endlessly and relentlessly with mud, reminiscent of the battle of the Somme. The long, cool spring has only recently begun to improve the conditions for us as winter slowly relaxed its grip. On the other hand we have often been blessed with quite reasonable weather conditions, albeit with a cold wind, and the flora and fauna have been stunning. Mary's walk from Heaverham yielded a wonderful array of bluebells high on the North Downs and spectacular cowslips on the downhill return leg to the pub. On almost every Friday since early in the New Year we have heard skylarks, which seem to be thriving in many parts of Kent and Sussex, possibly due to more farsighted farming practices. Sadly, cuckoos are very scarce so far this year, though we've heard them occasionally. Thrushes appear to be doing well, perhaps benefitting from the numerous slugs and snails that have survived the mild winter.

On recent walks, we have been delighted to find that the improved weather has tempted old friends George and Pat out of their winter quarters to enjoy short walks and to meet us for lunch at the pub. It has also been a pleasure to notice that not only have numbers turning out for our walks increased as the weather has improved, but we have also welcomed a steady trickle of new members to the group. Long may this trend continue!

*Nick Churchill*

## ALL DAY SUNDAY WALKERS

Our numbers continue to be small, but we are a friendly group who like to socialise in a cafe at the end of the walk. I think Dermot holds the record for the muddiest walk in February when nearly half his group opted out at half time, but he redeemed himself with a glorious walk over the South Downs in April, which included a visit to the National Trust Monks House and tea in a Youth Hostel.

We have just started the first section of the Wealden Round, the route devised by Peter Titchmarsh in his book '50 mile Circular from Tonbridge'. The woods were brilliant with bluebells and we heard the first

cuckoo (for some!) and there was very little mud - thank goodness. We are looking forward to the summer and hopefully, less boot cleaning!

*Mary Blinks*

## **FAMILY NEWS**

### **In Memoriam**

#### **Beryl Rees**

Sadly we heard of the death of Beryl Rees in April. She was a longstanding member of the Club and in 2000 took over the organisation of the Sunday afternoon Tonbridge Locals from Muriel Trumper, when no one else had volunteered. She managed to keep them going often with personal difficulty, until they were discontinued only this year.

Beryl used to arrive on her moped for the All Day Sunday walks, usually leading in the Plaxtol area where she worked. She was famous for not using a map as she knew the area so well, but didn't always stick to the right of way. She joined the shorter Wednesday group when she could no longer do the long walks.

She was full of fun, had lots of interests and an independent spirit, and will be sadly missed.

*Mary Blinks*

## **EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE**

It was with great trepidation I agreed to become Newsletter Editor following on from the sterling work that Mary Blinks has done over the years. She will be a very hard act to follow.

You will have noticed that I have included some photographs – those on email will see them in glorious technicolor but due to printing limitations, those that get them in the post will only get them in black and white. On the subject of the post, it would greatly help if those that have access to email but get the newsletter etc by post agreed to move over to email only. Let a member of the committee know if you are willing to do this.

This is your newsletter and it can only be as good as the contributions I receive. I have only been a member of the Club for 4 years since my retirement so do not know many of you and am not yet really tuned into the Club gossip as Mary is. If you have any items or suggestions for inclusion please do let me know - send any contributions, including photographs, to me and I will try and incorporate them.

*Editor*

Here is the first member's contribution. Thanks to the Club's unofficial poet laureate, Sheila Wood. I hope you like it.

## **WEDNESDAY WANDERERS**

We've rambled through woods, hills and a dale,  
Through sun and rain, mist and gale.  
We come across horses and Jean says, "Oh no",  
Bob gives them a pat and Gill a Polo.  
We climb over stiles and through a gate,  
Then up a hill and then have to wait.  
The weather is changing and clouds getting  
darker.  
When we look back we have lost our back  
marker.  
He stopped to take a snap or two,  
Shall we go without him? – Oh what a to-do.  
We wander on, this happy bunch,

Then a cry from the back shouts, "When is  
lunch?"  
At last we stop and find a seat,  
We like to ramble but love to eat.  
Lunch is over and flasks stowed away,  
And off we go on our merry way.  
Enthusiasm we do not lack  
But we want to know – are we nearly back?  
Car park is in sight – Oh what glee  
As Jackie and Heather are there with our tea.  
On our way home it starts to rain.  
This time next week we'll do it all again.