

NEWSLETTER January – June 2020

HONORARY MEMBER

The Committee unanimously decided at their last meeting that honorary membership should be offered to any member who had held continuous membership for 50 years.

Sylvia Richardson is the first to have reached that significant milestone and accordingly Janet contacted her to offer her such membership. The Committee is delighted to report that Sylvia has graciously accepted our offer.

CAMBRIDGE

Another day and another degree to take.

The day of Saturday 3rd of August will live in my memory for a long time.

The day started well. The coach had been booked by Eric and all I had had to do was organise a walking tour and collect a few cheques. Janet had been delegated the task of counting fellow travellers onto the coach at Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. I had got to Tonbridge in good time and everybody I was expecting to arrive was there. Jolly good! This coach trip thingy is easy peasy to organise.



NO! NO! NO! Disaster had struck. The coach driver was ill so a replacement had been found and the coach was delayed. We had a walking tour arranged and the Dartford Crossing and the M25 to negotiate to get to our destination. To add to the confusion the coach company, for some reason had not passed my mobile number to the traffic manager but they did have Janet's number. Janet was relaying messages to one of my party as she could not reach me – I later found that my phone was blocking her calls! What a kerfuffle.

Then blessed relief the coach had arrived at Tunbridge Wells ¾ hour late - BUT part of that party had disappeared as did some at The Fountain. Eventually the coach turned up in Tonbridge and

remarkably we had a full complement.



Our journey to Cambridge was completely uneventful. Our driver was so smooth you hardly knew you were moving and the Tunnel and M25 were clear of any hold ups. Luckily I was able to put the tour back by quarter of an hour and, after a quick visit for some of us to the medieval midden (I don't know what foreign visitors make of our public sanitary facilities!), we were off.

We had 3 guides and each guide took each group on very different routes. Our group saw the ye oldee Chelsea bunne shoppe and Pat and I went back later for a very sticky sample. We also viewed where C S Lewis had lived,

several churches, the Hangman's House, the Cavendish Laboratory famous for, amongst many other things, x- ray crystallography, the discovery of the neutron and the DNA double helix. We ended our version of the tour at the Corpus Clock & Chronophage.

After an afternoon free for lunch and a wander around Cambridge it was back on the coach and after another smooth journey we arrived back at our departure points. Miracles of miracles the M25 and the Dartford Crossing co-operated for the second time that day.



LONGER WEDNESDAY WALKERS

What a cracking summer! Long hot summer days, sometimes too hot. A walk from Appledore along the Military Canal tested our determination to the maximum it was so hot and afterwards we staggered into Miss Mollett's High Class Tea Room for a refreshing and much needed drink.

We love doing the South Downs in the summer. This year we started from a new destination the small village of Firle and walked up and along the South Downs to come back down at Charleston. We also walked from Pett on a lovely sunny day and had wonderful views along the coast from Dungeness to Eastbourne and the sea looked more like the Mediterranean than the English Channel and the same with an East Dean walk. Unfortunately our luck ran out with a walk from Alfriston in cold drizzle and mist - not so nice! We have also not been so lucky with a walk from Duddleswell on Ashdown Forest. The first time we had to cut it short and the second attempt we had to cancel it altogether. Both times due to torrential downpours.

New leaders have taken us on new walks from Pluckley, Edenbridge, Groombridge and Teston. Many thanks to Jo, Jane and Bob for offering these new walks.

The autumn has proved very difficult with the non-stop rain. So much so that last week's walk from Etchingam saw many of the fields under water and the water lapping over our boots!!

We are always pleased to see ex walkers join us for tea after the walks. It is always nice to see them again and not lose touch.

Eric Botley

WEDNESDAY 5 MILE WALKERS

We have enjoyed another varied programme of walks during the second half of the year, including some old favourites such as Nesta's Bodiam walk and Brian & Carol's Otford one (less popular with some because of the 145 steps – but the views are worth it!). We've also done some new walks – for example with June at Tudeley and with Janet at Burwash. Janet puts us to shame by coming up with new routes to add to her already extensive repertoire. One of the hottest days of the year saw a small group of us take the Bluebell Line from Horsted Keynes to Kingscote for a pleasant linear walk back to the cars, something we very rarely do. We reverted to "Railway Children" mode and waved at the passing steam train. Thanks to Julie for organising that one.



On a sadder note, we were sorry to hear of the sudden and unexpected passing of Judy Blott. Judy had not walked with us for a few years but used to be a regular member of our company.

Numbers have been a little lower than usual, partly because of personal circumstances and partly because of the weather. In the summer the heat was a little too excessive for some and more recently the rain has been a deterrent. But rain or shine, Bob, our faithful dispenser of tea - and also on occasion our horse/cow/bull whisperer – is there to offer welcome refreshment at the end of the walk. We even have china mugs now instead of the plastic ones that kept blowing away. Thank you, Bob!



And thank you, Janet, for organising the programme so efficiently.

Sue Brown

FRIDAY WALKERS

Our walks during the second session of 2019 have included a few new venues in some further flung places – Sarah and Nick led from Sedlescombe, which is south of Robertsbridge. The weather has been really weird, with some stonking hot days (up to 37 °C) leading to some horrible stuff over the last couple of months.

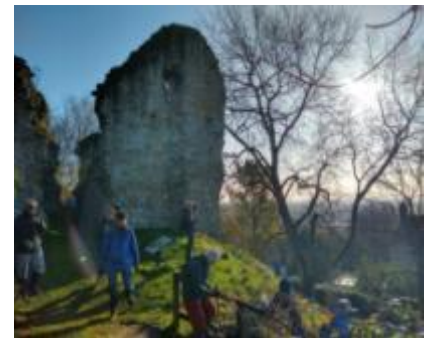
In August we went to Biddenden (Susan L's walk) with ideal weather and a memorable herd of Hereford cattle. The route went past the vineyard and through the Millennial Park at the end – lots of pig references and wooden carvings. We ate at the Red Lion in Biddenden with a vintage landlord (an Eastender, and avid Michael Caine fan). He is the longest serving landlord of the pub (since 1989 and still going!) - they are all named on a list in the bar. There was also an excellent coffee shop next door to the pub.



At the end of August, we went on our all day walk to West Sussex, starting at the picturesque village of Slaugham ("Slaffham" to the locals). The walk ran past lakes to the picture postcard village of Warninglid and on past the Bolney Wine Estate. The Bolney Stage coped easily with 20 of us – magnificent pub. Slaugham church boasted an excellent loo (inside the church) and lots of architectural interest. Lord Nelson's sister is buried in the churchyard. Brian Funnell, the church warden, was a mine of local historical information. Afternoon tea was taken on the grass outside the churchyard on our return - cake and plums with our coffee. Idyllic!

In more Northern Parts we went to Ryarsh (Brenda's walk which was postponed from the first half of 2019 because of the weather) and Eynsford (Eileen) along the Darent valley. It was a gorgeous sunny day for the latter and we had lunch at the Malt Shovel (which served an excellent pint of Harveys).

And then the weather turned. Nick and Diana led from Eridge. It was a good walk (a 6 miler) but we had to cross the busy A26 a few times and the heavens opened for the last half hour. We got drenched! Carol's Frittenden walk was also very wet by all accounts. There was a brief respite for Janet's walk from the Boarshead, when the weather was lovely and sunny. The pub, which boasts a dodgy jellyfish in the fish tank, was very welcoming.



Another new venue was Danehill, down from Sheffield Park. This featured a triple set of mishaps. MD (who led) managed to get a number of people wet when a lorry drove through a puddle; he was nearly mown down by a bike when crossing a road while map-reading and then he proceeded to lose three of the group when trekking through a wooded section. Still, the pub (Coach and Horses) was good and it only rained at the end.

In November, Ian led for the first time from the pretty village of Waldron(near Heathfield / Cross- in-Hand). An excellent walk for the views and the autumnal countryside looked lovely. The going was pretty wet underfoot, but nobody sunk without trace. Jane and Graham led us on a gruelling 6 miler from Chartwell, with some particularly slippery sections – combinations of leaves / mud / steep ups and downs. We ate at the Chartwell tea room – hot soup and a bottle of National Trust beer with hops grown at Scotney Castle.



Our most recent walk featured Celestine (deputising for Joan) from Lamberhurst via Scotney Castle. The ground was very wet underfoot – like going through a paddy field. Noteworthy in Scotney Castle grounds is a 600 year old hornbeam tree which was short listed for the Woodland Trust's Tree of the Year in 2017. Even the temptation of an extra half hours walking failed to quell the call of the pub in the gathering drizzle.

Maurice Dickens

LONGER WALKERS

With no long distance path to write about this time, it was a case of looking at the programme and picking out a few of the varied walks led by our enthusiastic team of leaders. We have used trains for a few of our walks including one led by our newest member leading her first walk for us along the Len Valley Path, with an unexpected visit to a classic car workshop and a palatial cafe in Moat Park along the way. Linda introduced us to her new caravan at Winchelsea for tea after an interesting walk around that area including two bird hides. Claire treated us to some of her delicious home-made scones in her beautiful garden at the end of July. On the hottest day of the year in August, Sally offered us a figure of eight walk, so some of us opted out half way, but a few hardy folk completed the walk. My walk from Mayfield

included a visit to Argos Hill windmill for tea and a tour, and a walk from Bough Beech Reservoir finished with tea and a folk group. Numbers on the walks have varied between 5 and 12, but as you see we seem to be a group that enjoys a social tea stop after a day's ramble, and be it rustic barn or stately home, we're not fussy!

Our thanks go to Janet for organising our Sunday walks.



Finally I will close with this extract from

A TRAMP ABROAD by Mark Twain-written in 1880

Now the true charm of pedestrianism does not lie in the walking or the scenery but the talking. The walking is good to time the movement of the tongue by and to keep the blood and the brain stirred up and active...but the supreme pleasure comes from the talk. It is no matter whether one talks wisdom or nonsense, the case is the same, the bulk of the enjoyment lies in the wagging of the gladsome jaw and the flapping of the sympathetic ear.

Mary Blinks

FAMILY NEWS

Geoff and Betty King – An Appreciation

Geoff and Betty King have been members of The Club for forty-five years during which time they led some 100 walks and created the Wealdway Long Distance Path from Gravesend to Beachy Head, Eastbourne, a distance of some 84 miles. In 1991 five hundred ramblers, from Europe as well as the UK, converged at Camp Hill Ashdown Forest when *Derek Barber, Chairman of the Countryside Commission declared England's newest Long Distance Path open and uncovered the marking post of good stout English oak. We were proud of the acclaim given to Geoff 'The King of the Wealdway' whose unwavering enthusiasm in the face of tremendous difficulties throughout 9 years of unremitting hard work made the concept of this magnificent footpath a reality-*(extracted from the TWRC newsletter)

For over twenty years Betty organized an annual tea party in August for her Wednesday Walkers at which an attendance of some 80 club members was not unusual. She not only made scones for everyone, but in 1998 made a birthday cake for Albert, a regular Wednesday walker, on his 90th birthday. Then in 2000 the press were invited to the tea party to launch the Club History Book 'Footsteps' which was a Club Millennium project. At the parties Geoff and Betty invited members to donate to the Britain Nepal Medical Trust, a charity dear to their hearts after a walking holiday in Nepal.

Geoff served on the Club Committee as Special Projects Organiser for a few years in the 1970s, and apart from leading walks, he organised a leadership course and wrote numerous articles in our newsletters with advice on planning walks, safety and clothing and rucksacks. He also designed the name tags we carry in case of emergency. Two of the coach rambles to mention that he and Betty organised are: in 1990 a ramble including a visit to the Channel Tunnel Exhibition before the tunnel was opened, and the other was in 1978 to join the RA's unsuccessful Darent Valley protest against the motorway to be built between Swanley and Sevenoaks, now the M25

Not only was Betty a very keen walker but also a mountaineer and we are very grateful for her hard work and support of the club. Following her death last Christmas she will be greatly missed and we are all grateful to her, and indeed Geoff, for the support they provided for so many.

Mary Blinks

EDITOR'S FOOTNOTES

Coach Trip

Janet undertook a highly scientific poll of the membership and after long nights pouring over Excel spreadsheets and complicated statistical formulae she came to the conclusion that the vast majority of responders would like to go to Waddesdon Manor. The coach has been booked for 2nd May 2020. Full details and a booking form has been distributed with this Newsletter.

Please be sure to get your Booking Form to me early as I have to advise and pay Waddesdon Manor well before our visit to ensure that we are allocated enough entry places to the house.

Editor

Summer Supper

We are planning a Summer Supper for 2020 the date of which has been arranged for Saturday 15th August so put that date in your diaries now. For those who have previously complained of the lack of choice we are abandoning the Set Meal that we have had in recent years and are, instead, trying a buffet style of meal instead. The Venue will be High Rocks as they do not make an additional charge for the room which helps to keep the cost down. More information nearer the time.

Janet Wilson

Footpaths

As many of you are aware we hold money in the Club's fund that was collected over the years to be spent on footpaths.

It has been noticeable on our walks that many stiles have been replaced by gates which certainly speed up walks when there are larger parties of walkers. Gates are also vastly more convenient for those of us who, for one reason or another, are less mobile.

The Committee asks members to highlight any stile or gates on footpaths where the money we have could usefully be spent. Please pass on recommendations to any member of the Committee so that we can take the matter further with the appropriate local authority.

Editor

SEASONS GREETINGS



The Committee sends its best wishes for a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year to all our members and their families.

We look forward to seeing you on many a walk in 2020

