

# NEWSLETTER January – June 2022

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

The last couple of years have been something of a disaster, so fingers crossed 2022 will be Lockdown-Free and we can all enjoy walking without interruption as we have, mostly, during the second half of this year, mainly wading through mud.

Our Summer Supper got off to a slow start and I was thinking of cancelling it but numbers picked up nearer the date of the event to make it worthwhile, although it was a pity that predominantly it was attended by people from the Wednesday 5 mile walkers and the Friday Group. In the event it was well received and I think everybody agreed that the food was delicious and plentiful. The 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Cake was absolutely amazing. I will be bringing the main decoration from the top of the cake to the AGM so anybody who hasn't seen it will get the opportunity to do so but as well as the decorations on top, on each of the four sides there were pictures of Kent, scenes such as oasts and even one of High Rocks itself!



As ever, Len's quiz was great fun despite a bit of a dispute! I understand that Len will soon be moving out of the area – what will we do without him? We are very grateful for all the fun he has given us over the years and he will be sorely missed.

The next big birthday for the Club will be 100 years – I hope we will all be around to celebrate!

*Janet Wilson*

## GROUP REPORTS

### WEDNESDAY 5 MILE WALKERS

We had an interesting schedule of walks for the second half of 2021 when we were able, once again, to walk 'normally' – I'm talking here about without Covid restrictions, not that my group walk abnormally, you understand. A few of our walkers have not returned since Covid but I hope it won't be long before they join us once again.

I have noticed that most of our walks tend to be towards the east – Pembury, Paddock Wood, East Peckham, Brenchley, Horsmonden, Goudhurst, Tudeley, Yalding, Bodiam, Ticehurst, Sandhurst, etc and I am wondering whether the best walks are that way or the best leaders. I think I will have to encourage everyone including myself to search for walks in a westerly direction.



What a good looking chap.



Sue and Friends



Just a small puddle.

As I'm sure you all know by now, we set off at 10.30, picnic about midday and continue on for approximately five miles at a leisurely pace. However, once in a while we have a pub lunch and recently Gill & Bob organized a walk from Hever with a very nice lunch at the Henry VIII afterwards. Unfortunately to get there we not only got rained upon at the beginning and towards the end of the walk but in between we waded through very deep puddles, which was not a good time for Sheila and me to discover that our wellies leaked, big time. Anyhow it was a very nice lunch afterwards, even if we were sitting there with cold damp feet.

At the time of writing we are all looking forward to our Christmas Lunch at High Rocks where, as well as enjoying a three course lunch, we have a quiz and a raffle with the proceeds going to The Hospice in the Weald.

*Janet Wilson*

## LONGER WEDNESDAY WALKS

We love doing the South Coast in the summer. This year we started from a new destination, Firehills near Fairlight, and the whole walk was in the Hastings Country Park nearly to Hastings and back. In places it was very challenging with steep up and downs but afterwards we enjoyed refreshments in the new Visitor Centre on top of the cliff overlooking the Coast with Dungeness in the distance.



New leaders have taken us on new walks from Sundridge, Godden Green, Shipbourne, Penshurst and Flimwell. Many thanks to Mary, Keith and Bob for offering these new walks.



We had a very strange incident at lunch on a walk from Crowborough. As we were sitting on a log in a field of sheep, instead of avoiding us the sheep got very interested in our lunch and as a herd ran over to us and had to be chased away. I've never known that before. In my experience sheep are timid animals who want



to avoid us when walking in their field, but not these!

As you know our group likes to have tea after a walk and we are very sorry to see some of our favourite cafes have stayed closed, maybe for good. We are particularly sorry to see Hadlow Garden Centre cafe in Hadlow College closed, as it is somewhere we often start from.

We will be sorry to lose Len and Christine as they are leaving us and moving to Devon. They have been regular Wednesday walkers for many years and have often led walks and, of course, Len is a member of the Committee who looks after the Club web site. We wish them all the best in their new life.

*Eric Botley*

## FRIDAY WALKERS

This session we have been back to more of our usual type of walking – the organised programme type, for which we thank Nick and Susan for cajoling us into producing a set of walks. At the end of May, Janet organised a walk from Leigh which was designated the “George Holt Memorial Walk” finishing at the Fleur de Lis, Leigh. We were pleased to have Valerie (George’s wife) and Keith (his son) join us at the pub. At the beginning of June, Sue Westlake led what I think turned out to be the wettest walk of the year from Hadlow. Only five of us walked and only two stayed for lunch – everybody else was soaked to the skin! Celestine led from Langton Green on a day when the forecast was horrendous – thunderstorms and heavy rain – however, the weather was mostly OK but it tipped it down for the last half mile. Sheila led from Capel Church – a lovely walk which she cut short a bit as the group was getting really strung out – the first time I can remember that happening to the Friday Group walkers. On to July where John and Evelien walked from the Tickled Trout at Teston – I reckon John deserved some sort of medal because of the severe undergrowth pruning he had to do to get us through some sections. One of our regular walks cropped up in July – from the Kentish Horse at Markbeece. This is traditionally a mud bath through the Newtwe Hurst Wood section – it didn’t disappoint, despite a change of timing to the summer months. A write up for this walk describes it as “a walk for spring, summer and early autumn – appallingly muddy bits from December to April” ([kentwalksnearlondon.com](http://kentwalksnearlondon.com)). Nevertheless, it was memorable for a great pub notice spotted on the door of the Rock at Chiddingstone Hoath (see picture). I can concur that the Rock is indeed a proper pub!



I am ashamed to say that I missed a big chunk of walks in and around August (most unlike me). My only excuse is that a fair bit of the time was spent in Yorkshire. In September, we had walks from Susan (Camer) and Brenda (Ryarsh) which covered some of the Northern parts of our walking area. Into October, we had a beast of a walk which went up and down (about 5 times!) a section of the North Downs, starting at Thurnham from the Black Horse. Even the last bit back to the pub was uphill! The intrepid group who walked that day are pictured alongside the stone-carved Millennium village sign at Detling.



Eileen led us from Cudham on a great walk from the Recreation ground – a lovely sunny day, with some good climbs. Lunch afterwards was at the impressive Blacksmith’s Arms, notable for its speed of service. Next we went from Burrswood with Diana which covered bits of the Wealdway and the Tunbridge Wells Circular. As usual, a great meal at the Crown in Groombridge to finish. On November 5<sup>th</sup> (Bonfire night), Janet led from a new car park (to me anyway) called Bushy Willows in Ashdown Forest. Another gorgeous day, as shown in the photo taken from the high point in the forest (Gills Lap) at the site of a plaque commemorating AA Milne and EH Shepard.



There was also a root “bridge” over a stream in the forest (with a nice bit of autumn colour) which we thought worthy of a picture – very unusual.

Susan led us from the mega car park in Cranbrook, starting in the town, seeing a number of notable buildings - the mill, the church and Mr Tooth’s hat factory (he was surely in the wrong job). It was a bit of a poor day weather-wise (drizzly) but the second half of the walk was through a lovely woodland section (Angley Woods) where the autumn colours were spectacular. We have a few walks left before Christmas, so let’s hope for some bright, sunny days!

*Maurice Dickens*

## SUNDAY WALKS

Starting off the new programme in July, Dermot got the Sunday walks going with an unusual lunch break in a field full of lettuces and spring onions with picnic benches, toilets and sanitiser!



Then for various reasons I was unable to join the group until September, when starting from Ofham with Keith, our lunch break was underneath a tree laden with damsons, and from Wateringbury with Joan, when we finished with tea from a lovely pop up van by the river.

Also in September, having been at the official opening of the Wealdway at Camp Hill on Ashdown Forest in 1981, I attended the ceremony below Tonbridge Castle to celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to join one of the walks organised by the Ramblers, who had walked the whole route in sections over the previous few weeks. Nigel led two very successful walks in October in Ashdown Forest, and then in the Darenth Valley finishing in a quirky tearoom. It has been great to welcome some new members on our Sunday walks, some of whom joined us for a walk to include the Remembrance Day service by the Airman's grave on Ashdown Forest, together with crowds of people, dogs and horses. Once again, thank you Janet for managing to organise the programme for us.



*Mary Blinks*

## EDITOR'S BIN END

I am sitting in our little office looking out into a cold and damp garden wondering what on earth I can write about in this newsletter. I don't want to talk about the obvious and we haven't had any ornithological adventures in and around the house this time.

Pat is in the kitchen measuring ingredients to make biscuits or scones or something. We were to go out for our usual daily after lunch walk. I put on my coat, went out and promptly stepped back inside as it had started raining and the wind was bitterly cold. So newsletter and baking it is then.

We were very lucky to get away in our motorhome twice this year. A couple of weeks in the Cotswolds at the end of June into July with some very gentle walks. Then in September we had nearly three weeks of remarkably good weather - staying in Wensleydale, the Lakes and ending up at Hayfield to mass trespass part way up Kinder Scout. This was a beautifully sunny Sunday and the world and his wife seemed to be out enjoying the countryside that those intrepid walkers on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1932 had opened for future generations.

It has already been mentioned that Len and Christine are leaving us but it is perhaps not widely known that Joan will be standing down from your Committee at the AGM. Len and Joan will be hard acts to follow. Len with his cheeriness, taking in good part the ribbing he gets about his quizzes, and also for his administration of the website. Joan, whilst she will still be walking with us, will be sorely missed on the Committee for the very efficient job she does in keeping our membership records and making sure that we are all paying our subs on time. We thank them both for the service they have given to the Club.

If there is anybody that feels they can do either Joan or Len's jobs please, please let any Committee member know. The club needs you to help keeping things running smoothly.

*Editor*



*Merry Christmas and a Very Happy and Healthy 2022 to all of  
you and your families from the Committee*

