

NEWSLETTER January – June 2023

EDITOR'S BEGINNINGS

It is raining again. Dreary wet November Tuesday morning. Pat is cleaning the cooker. What am I going to do?

I know. Why not start preparing the next Newsletter? I have one contribution, from Eric, so let's slot that into place.

Bong! What have we here? An email. Mary must have read my mind as her contribution has just plonked itself into my inbox. Whoopee!

All contributions in. Newsletter 90% done. What's this? Nearly all contributors have made amendments. No sympathy from Maurice though – "That's what happens if you are the Newsletter editor". Thanks a bunch!

Bye the way Maurice – I hope your surname is right this time. Eric sent me the picture in his report – don't blame me.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I would like to thank Peter (Stallwood) for all his hard work in trying to organize a coach trip which never got off the ground. He put a lot of work into it only to find there was insufficient interest which I think is rather sad. Not really sure whether it was the place, Weald & Downland Living Museum, the fact that Covid was still lurking or some other reason. Thank you, Peter, anyway.

Bearing in mind the difficulty I had last year when arranging the Summer Supper, where it took a lot of effort to get sufficient numbers to allow the event to go ahead, I wonder whether we should continue to arrange events for the whole Club or whether we leave individual groups to arrange their own events. If anybody has any views on this, then do please let me know.

I was very sorry to learn that Celestine will be resigning from the Committee and as Secretary of our Club at the AGM due to her desire to spend more time at her home in France, which is understandable. She has done an excellent job and will be sadly missed and so I am sure you will all join with me in thanking her for all she has done. It therefore follows that we need a new Club Secretary, and we invite anybody who feels they could do this to contact any of us on the Committee. The task isn't too onerous and involves booking the hall for the AGM and taking the minutes of the AGM and the four Committee Meeting we hold each year, now by Zoom so there isn't the need to turn out on a cold winter's night. Also sending out the Newsletter/Programme to all members on email twice a year and sending out a Welcome Email including the Newsletter and Programme to any new members, together with answering the occasional email. Celestine will, I am sure, help the new Secretary settle in.

Prior to the last AGM I asked people to put forward suggestions for stiles that needed mending in the hope that we could spend some of the money that was originally in the 'Footpath Fund'. The most votes were for two of the three stiles at Brenchley which were in serious disrepair but by the time I had managed to track down the right person with whom to discuss this, the stiles had already been mended! May I invite you, once more, to put forward any suggestions for stiles or anything else that needs our financial help.

Janet Wilson

AN EXPERIMENT – THREE MILE WALKS

Having realized that there are members and ex-members who find the walks we provide too long, I will be experimenting with shorter walks of around three miles. They will be on Mondays starting at 10.15, the intention being that with a short 'banana break', we should be finished around midday.

For the experiment I will lead all the walks and there will be just two a month on the second and fourth Mondays. You will, of course, find these walks in the programme. If you know of anyone who is an ex-member or not a member at all who might be interested do, please tell them about this.

At the end of the three-month trial, if it seems to be worthwhile, it is my intention to hand the organization over to someone else and they can keep it in the same format or change the day of the week, the time, or the frequency as appropriate.

Janet Wilson

GROUP REPORTS

WEDNESDAY 5 MILE WALKERS

The second half of 2022 got off to a bad start with our Wednesday Five Milers Group. The first walk was cancelled because the leader's wife had Covid and there followed another cancellation of the Lamberhurst walk because it was too hot. The third week saw our leader, Sue, with Covid and we were grateful to Jean & Charlie who led for her, or we would have had yet another non-starter. The next week James was to have led over the Ashdown Forest. He had been holidaying abroad and was due to fly back on the Monday. This was at the time of numerous flight cancellations and, indeed, his flight home was postponed from the Monday to Tuesday and then, come Tuesday, it was postponed again. Fortunately, his sister, Lisa, was able to stand in for him for which we were most grateful. After that Jean and Charlie led their own walk from Hadlow which was very popular, attracting 26 walkers and very nice it was too.

The next walk was led by Barbara, a newish member, and her first lead. Unfortunately, I was unable to make this walk but understand that although there were only a handful of walkers due to yet more excessive heat, those who braved the

sunshine had an enjoyable time. Brian's walk from Toys Hill was well attended despite 133 upward steps and numerous other hills and I have to say that, personally, I was rather exhausted and so happy when our cars came into view. This was followed by a very nice walk led by Brian's daughter, Lisa, from Penschurst.

After this our walks jogged along with June's lead from West Peckham attracting 22 walkers, maybe some encouraged as they knew

June was providing cake afterwards to go with our coffee, which Bob usually provides and for which we are all most grateful. Jennifer led us from Mayfield with another low turnout, this time due to persistent rain and my own lead from Hartfield had a very disappointing turnout despite delightful weather. I was unable to go

on our walks for the next month but thereafter things went along nicely.

On 9th August something very sad happened – our lovely Ron passed away and our condolences go to Sheila. His funeral on Friday 26th August was well attended with standing room only at the crematorium and I believe about 26 of us Wednesday Walkers attended. A lovely man who will be sadly missed.

In view of the difficulties trying to organise a Summer Supper last year, I decided that this year I would do a small supper for just our Wednesday Group at a restaurant where it wouldn't matter whether the numbers were high or low. I was surprised to find that within a week of advising our group I had 30 interested people, 28 of whom were able to attend on the date chosen. Most people thanked me and said they had thoroughly enjoyed it, requesting repeat performances in the future.

As I type, we are looking forward to our Christmas lunch at High Rocks where, as usual, we will be having a raffle with proceeds going to The Hospice in the Weald and I plan to try to come up with a couple of quizzes to entertain or frustrate everyone.



LONGER WEDNESDAY WALKERS



Yet another very wet winter which meant mud and slipping and sliding everywhere. Even a walk on the 6th April from Eridge which is normally dry at that time of the year was muddy all the way round. However, the winter weather has produced some spectacular displays of bluebells and wild garlic this Spring and they have appeared earlier and lasted longer than I can remember previously.



We regularly have about 15 walkers now as some have joined us from the Sunday group. We are very pleased to

welcome them as they have led new walks that we haven't done before. Also, a big thank you to two new(ish) walkers Bob and Keith who have led new walks this year and plan to do many more.



Usually, we arrange to end up in a tearoom for tea and cakes afterwards and some of us have even taken to have coffee before the walk!



However, because of this, we have managed to persuade garden centres who have cafes to allow us to park on their property for the duration of the walk which is very helpful as finding somewhere to park 10 or more cars is becoming a problem. *(Not for some though- Ed.)*

Eric Botley

FRIDAY WALKERS

Walking in the second half of 2022 has been noteworthy for extremes of heat and rain – more of this later.

A few of us did a walk on Jun 3rd which coincided with the Queen's platinum jubilee so there was no scheduled walk. It was a repeat of a walk from Charcott on a beautiful sunny day. We saw lovely butterflies –two Tortoiseshells and a Speckled Wood, a couple of herons en route and a red kite while having our dinner at the Greyhound. A highlight was three fields which were SSSI designated at Polebrook Farm. They were absolutely rammed with wildflowers, especially orchids (see pictures). Also notable for a replacement steel gate en route – we met a route inspector when we walked this previously, mentioned the dodgy stile, and lo and behold a new metal gate has appeared to replace the dodgy stile!



Christine Simpson led a nice walk from Four Elms which gave us the chance to call in for our dinner at our Christmas lunch venue – Hever Castle Golf Club. The following week Jenny M led from Ferbies at Speldhurst. Notable because the temperature was over 30 degrees, although we walked in the woods a fair bit. Jane (Joan Scott-G's daughter) took a great picture of a bracket fungus in the woods near Ferbies which had the size and shape of an old tractor seat – enormous!



Next up was John and Evelien from Sandhurst Cross. A new venue for me – lovely walk with sunny weather. Took in Bodiam on the bottom loop and a perfect place for a halfway stop. Good pub on the road through Sandhurst – the Swan.

Friday 1st July – Sarah and Diana led an all-day walk from Rye. Absolutely glorious sunny day, starting from Gibbet Marsh car park at Rye. We did the walk a number of years ago but in the other direction. Starting from Rye out past the Nature reserve, a quick visit to Camber Castle (it rained for a very short time here but rapidly cleared!). Then we moved on to the Ship, that fantastic, quirky, seafaring cafe for coffee. The nets, anchors are all still there, but the foliage has grown! On to

Winchelsea beach and the New Inn at Winchelsea – lovely pub and we were well looked after. Returned to Rye with some wonderful views.



The following week, Nigel led from the Kentish Horse at Markbeece. Another beautiful summer's day out from the pub, along the road to Newtye Hurst woods and Trugger's Gill (usually very boggy). On to the Rock at Chiddingstone Hoath and back via Cowden station to the church and pub. We had to do a bit of furniture moving (mega dodgy bench) to get some shade under the trees for our dinner.

John and Evelien led a new walk from Teston Bridge Country Park, devised by John. A long one – billed as “6 miles and no stiles!” It turned out to be a bit longer than that – 7 miles. Absolutely gorgeous weather – needed and drank lots of iced water! Out through Teston village past Alfred Reader's Cricket and Hockey Ball Factory and headed North to cross North Pole Road. Finished by walking along the river back to the car park (past the pink flamingos!)

The next Friday was from Frittenden, a walk usually led by Carol, but “borrowed” for the day by your correspondent. Memorable for the halfway stop at Sissinghurst Castle – the plant shop / coffee shop was open, and everybody had coffee and/or ice cream! Lots of stiles though, particularly in the first half to Sissinghurst. Bonus was the shorter, straighter part of the route back to Frittenden. Lots of great cattle en route, friendly Friesian bullocks, redpolls (a beautiful colour) and a little pocket of Jersey/Guernseys (cows and calves) - Sarah took a picture.



Jenny M led from Wadhurst, another lovely walk on a very sunny day with lots of stiles. Dinner at the Greyhound. Memorable because of the horrendously long wait at the pub for Eileen’s lunch – best part of an hour.

Next up was Janet starting from Edenbridge. A blisteringly hot day (32-33°C!). Only 6 turned up – nice walk even though a lot of it was out in the open, so no shade. Only 3 at the pub – the Old Eden at the bottom of the High St in Edenbridge.

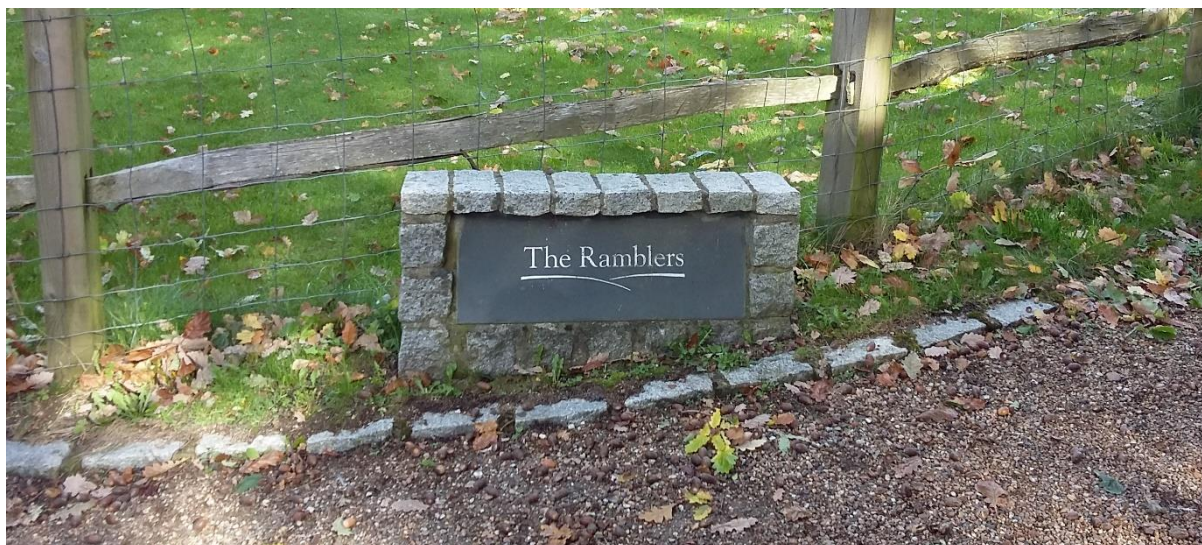
The following week Sarah led from the White Dog at Ewhurst Green. A wonderful day out – the weather was a bit worse than forecast, but a relief from the recent heat. Great walk, south and east of Ewhurst Green. Lots of horses on route – one field with three whoppers - VERY friendly – you had to get up close and personal when going over the stile into the field. There was a great view of Bodiam Castle (less than a mile away as the crow flies) from the pub garden. The hanging baskets at the pub (mainly begonias and petunias) were fantastic (front and back). We were also treated to champagne – John and Evelien’s daughter had a baby boy while we were walking, so we wet the baby’s head!

I missed a couple of walks so my next one was led by Eileen. Nice walk from Leigh to Penshurst and back to the Little Brown Jug for dinner. Victor had ordered the “whale” and chips typically available from the LBJ. It arrived, leaving the rest of us waiting for our food – what would we have done without a supply of Victor’s chips!

Celestine then led us from Frant. Bear in mind Celestine had just got back from France to lead this walk! The George at Frant was a great pub – the email order for our food had not arrived but they served us all with our requests in no time at all – not bad considering there were 19 of us!

Brenda led us from Shoreham Station and Eileen from Shoreham car park. Notable for the vicious climb up a long set of steps in the early part of Brenda’s walk. A bit damp two thirds of the way through, but a great walk. Nice to all meet up in the pub afterwards at the Kings Arms – newly reopened after a fire at the pub.

Ian and Joan led us from Waldron (“where’s that?”, I hear you cry) – just down from Cross in Hand on the Frant - Mark Cross Road. Notable for the remote “toilet” pedestal in the woods – “kindly provided by Ian” for those caught short! Sarah led from Goathurst Common the following week – we started from the Pheasant Plucker pub on Bessel’s Green Road (formerly the Woodman). It was a lovely walk with a just a touch of rain near the end. We walked past a house called “The Ramblers” about two thirds through. Great pint of green hopped beer – I loved the name – the brewery was the Musket Brewery, and the beer was called “Flash in the Pan”.



The following week we walked from Mayfield – a walk originally devised by Fred. A lovely, undulating walk – a bit wet in the middle and it rained quite hard just before the end. The Middle House did us proud – glad we pre-ordered, because we had a big group, but the food was excellent and arrived very quickly.



The next walk was led by Nick and Diana from the George and Dragon at Tudeley. This was the Three churches walk, starting from Tudeley, via Capel and Pembury Old churches, returning to Tudeley.

The following day was Tony Conway's 90th birthday party at Langley Park Golf Club, Beckenham. A good number of the Friday walking group attended and had a whale of a time. Sheila took a great picture of Tony in his maroon jacket and natty bowtie!

The next Friday Christine Simpson led us from Groombridge, a rearranged start venue. This enabled us to attend a birthday bash for Tony after the walk at Nick and Diana's house. The walk was from Coresley Wood Road car park near

the pumping station. Great spread at Nick and Diana's – loads of quiches, Coronation chicken, salads, bread, cheese, pate and fabulous cakes and desserts, including a magnificent walker's cake with boots (see picture).



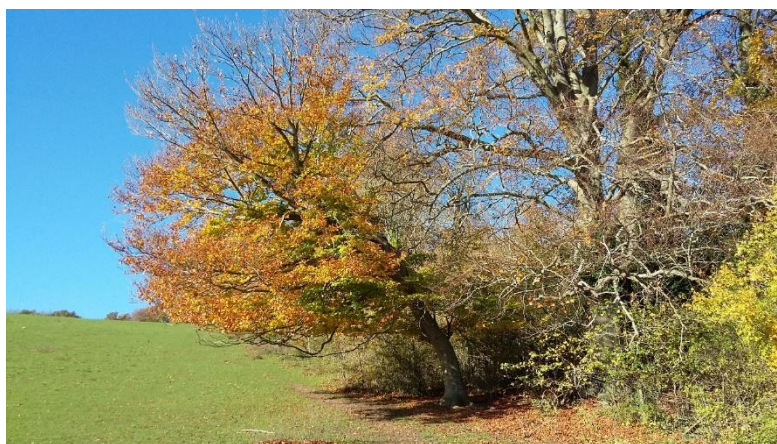
On to November – Janet's walk, starting from the bottom of Smarts Hill in Penshurst. It was a very truncated walk – only 3 miles in total – because there had been very heavy rain (totalling 2 ½ inches!) in the previous couple of days. As a result, we got to the pub (the Spotted Dog) at just after 12! The weather on the day of the walk was fabulous – sunny, coldish



with lots of blue sky. The problems started as we moved away from the village and walked along the riverbank. The fields and banks were saturated and there was a lot of deep, standing water (see picture). Some parts were way over the top of conventional walking boots. Lots of us opted for wellies from the start. For some wearing conventional walking boots, there was a considerable degree of manhandling required to get them over deeper sections of standing water near the river. Diana decided to check empirically whether or not the water was actually waist deep, at which point we abandoned our attempt to ford the flood plain of the Medway. Undoubtedly the wettest walk of the year (underfoot that is, remember it was a gorgeous sunny day above ground) and the only walk we have had to abort before we even got halfway!

The following week was Susan's walk from the George at Trottscliffe. At the start of the week, the weather was horrendously wet, with very heavy rain. However, Friday 11th was a lovely day. We had a two-minute silence at the top of the North Downs for Armistice Day. It was a very steep climb up the steps to the top of the North Downs – a subset of the group took the lower-level trackway and joined us for the halfway break. Dinner was back at the George at Trottscliffe. The food and service were very good – Jane's two course senior citizen's special including coffee was stupendous!

The next week was John and Evelien from Otford – a walk modified to avoid Brenda's vicious steps after a further bout of heavy rain! It still featured a steepish bit up the North Downs and back into Otford – but it was a beautiful day with some lovely autumn colours (see picture).



SUNDAY WALKS

What a strange 6 months we have been walking through, from intense heat and drought to heavy rain and floods. But like most walkers tea and cake is always a draw and 10 of us enjoyed finishing the walk in Amanda's garden in July, and 5 of us enjoyed a tea break at King John's nursery in August with Bob doing some card tricks! We also came across these strange art works on our route.



Funnily enough we didn't follow Keith who managed to walk into a bog up to his middle during the drought.

The extreme heat in the summer obviously curtailed some of our walks, but the wet weather of Autumn doesn't seem to have put us off, with the biggest turnout to date being for a wet start.

Thank you to all the leaders for all our varied walks, and a special thank you to Janet for gathering up all the details.



Mary Blinks

IMPORTANT NOTICE

SOCIAL EVENING & A.G.M.

7.30pm TUESDAY 28th MARCH

King Charles the Martyr Church Hall
A Social Evening with free Drinks and Nibbles
Incorporating the AGM.

This is your chance to elect a new Committee and have a say in what goes on in your Club. Please see Janet's advice that the Club Secretary is standing down and a new one will need to be elected.

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS



Since the last newsletter, Pat and I have been lucky enough to have had 5 weeks away in our motorcaravan. We have walked in the Peak District, climbing Mam Tor twice, on two of the hottest days in the summer, and going in different directions once at the top. Walks along the river at Barnard Castle – one of which was easy but, the absence of a clear footpath and continual meanderings through bracken and along the steep side of the valley, made the other walk most unpleasant. I will draw a veil over our stay in the Scottish Borders. The hills weren't alive with the sound of music but rather covered in heavy mist or it was raining. Shouldn't have expected anything else.

September saw us going west. Listening to the tolling of the bell of Bath Abbey the day after the Queen's death. Then onto the Gower and on to St David's. At St David's we did two walks along the coastal path, on one we saw where he was reputed to have been born – St Non is his mother, and on the other we trampled over his head – Pat is standing on him! We were then privileged to have Sunday lunch with the mayor, at least he was in the pub at the same time and even checked what I was eating to see if he fancied the same dish.



I know this is not the Oscars, but I must pay tribute to all contributors with special mention to: -

Mary, who will always come up trumps.

Maurice for his magnum opus and Eric for his exotic arch.

Janet, for all her work in keeping us all on course.

and a special thanks to Pat for putting up with my strong words to our computer when it won't let me insert pictures where I want, and for her dedication in proofreading the Newsletter several times during the course of its production. Any errors are, of course, all mine!

Editor



**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2023 TO
ALL OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**



SUBSCRIPTIONS.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Your committee, after a lot of careful consideration, has decided to run a trial this year to see if we can cut down a lot of the administration and paperwork involved in collecting subscriptions.

Many members now use online banking to pay bills, membership fees, online purchases etc. so we thought it time to see if collection of subscriptions could be done online. To this end, this will be your notification that your subscription is due at the beginning of January, and we would ask that you pay online directly into the Club's bank account. Nigel, our Treasurer, will pass on details of money received to Rosalind, our Membership Secretary, for her to monitor.

Don't worry if you do not wish to pay online, you can still pay by cheque.

If you are paying online and there are no changes to your details, there is no need to send in the form.

Here are the details-:

TUNBRIDGE WELLS RAMBLING CLUB

Subscription Renewal.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for 2023 are due on **1st January** 2023. If this is not paid by 31st March, it will be presumed that you no longer wish to be a member.

New Payment option for TWRC 2023 Membership Renewal.

We are now able to receive bank transfers for membership to the following Bank. As the payment advice will show the membership name(s), a renewal form is not required for this method.

- **Lloyds Bank plc, Tunbridge Wells Branch. Sort Code: 30-98-77. Account: 00434372.**
- **Reference to enter in available space: TWRC Sub.**
- Standing Orders are also acceptable.

If you are not able to pay by the above methods, cheques should be made payable to **Tunbridge Wells Rambling Club** (do not use abbreviated initials) and sent to: - **Membership Secretary:** Mrs Rosalind Rabbitt, Newhaven, Brenchley Road, Matfield, Tonbridge, Kent **TN12 7PH.**

All Members £4.00 each per annum.

Please advise if you have changed your telephone number, email, or home address,

Name.....Tel. No.....

Address **if changed**.....

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Email **if changed**.....