

NEWSLETTER July - December 2020

In these very strange times the Committee decided that we should still send out our half yearly Newsletter. You will see that some of the regular articles are still here but there are also contributions that are a little different from usual. I do hope that you enjoy the read.

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

I have no idea what things will be like when you read this but I am writing it in the week where the May Day Bank Holiday has been moved to Friday in celebration of VE Day. This, of course, leads me to think about World Wars I & II – our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers sent to war, during the first living in stinking muddy trenches with rats and then going ‘over the top’ to become fodder for the German guns and in the Second War the life expectancy of a pilot during the Battle of Britain was just four weeks. Now in 2020 we are fighting the war on Covid-19 and we are asked to stay at home. We don’t have to go out and fight, we simply snuggle down and take life easy – just how lucky are we?

I wonder how you are all coping with this semi-isolation. Painting doors so you can sit and watch the paint dry? Discovering why people paint their toenails? I certainly hope not. As the majority of us are retired and have homes with gardens it is not so bad but imagine having young children and living in a high-rise flat with no garden – makes you feel thankful doesn’t it? So, how are you keeping yourselves amused? I am sure you all now have pristine gardens, squeaky clean homes, clean silver, clean windows, clean mirrors, clean ovens, even cleaned out the cutlery drawer and, in our case, we have three clean cars all at the same time and nowhere to drive them!

So once we have caught up on all those things we have been putting off, what next? How about writing your life story? I’ve just finished mine and hope that when I am six foot under the grand-children might find it interesting, especially as I have added some social history such as when the National Health Service was introduced, when the Queen broadcast her first Christmas Message, when the death penalty ceased and a whole load more together with some snippets such as a quote from Darryl Zanuck, Movie Producer with 20th Century Fox who in 1946 said “Television won’t last because people will soon get tired of staring at a box in the corner of the sitting room all night”, and the fact that in 1959 a director of IBM said to the founders of Xerox that the photocopier had no market large enough to justify production. Now that the life story is completed, hopefully to be continued, I am moving on to tracing my ancestry.

There are the obvious things to keep us going like reading (thank goodness for Kindle and an endless supply of books downloaded to your device with just one click), crosswords, Sudoku, jigsaw puzzles – some groups, my local W.I. for one, is arranging a jigsaw swapping service. You could maybe join or start your own group of people swapping their favourite recipes – it is always nice to try something new. You could take up a new hobby or interest, learn something new like a language, learn to paint etc. – the web is such a wonderful place for help and information.

Some of us having been getting some exercise walking from our front doors and I think we are very lucky indeed that in this vicinity we have so much beautiful countryside virtually on our doorsteps. A friend from my Wednesday Group who is no longer able to walk with us due to health problems (but renews her membership so she can keep in touch) says she is doing exercises sitting on a chair following the guidance of ‘some gorgeous chap’ on You-Tube.

If my diary tells me I would have been meeting a friend I simply ring them for a chat instead. Indeed, I have made more phone calls in these last few weeks than ever before. It is also a good idea to ring people who are living alone or under the weather.

The world has turned upside down with old folk sneaking out of the house and their kids yelling at them to stay indoors! We have all delved into the depths of cupboards and freezers to finish off stuff we had forgotten we’d ever bought in the first place (and sometimes wondering why) but we are not bored, are we – it is simply nice and peaceful.

And finally, and most important of all, you now have plenty of time to study those maps and books and plan some interesting walks for the future.

Don’t count the days – make the days count.

Janet Wilson

This was sent to me by Janet and Bob Fermor. I have seen it before but it gives some food for thought.

MAYBE WE DON'T HAVE IT THAT BAD

It's a mess out there now. Hard to discern between what's a real threat and what is just simple panic and hysteria. For a small amount of perspective at this moment, imagine you were born in 1900.

On your 14th birthday, World War I starts, and ends on your 18th birthday. 22 million people perish in that war. Later in the year, a Spanish Flu epidemic hits the planet and runs until your 20th birthday.

50 million people die from it in those two years. Yes, 50 million.

On your 29th birthday, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25%, the World GDP drops 27%. That runs until you are 33. The country nearly collapses along with the world economy.

When you turn 39, World War II starts. You aren't even over the hill yet. And don't try to catch your breath. Between your 39th and 45th birthday, 75 million people perish in the war.

Smallpox was epidemic until you were in your 40's, as it killed 300 million people during your lifetime.

At 50, the Korean War starts and 5 million perish. At 55 the Vietnam War begins and doesn't end for 20 years. 4 million people perish in that conflict.

Your parents and/or grandparents were called to endure all of the above – you are called to stay home and sit on your couch.

MARY BLINKS

I have great pleasure in welcoming Mary into a very select category within TWRC. Mary is only the second of our members to reach her 50th year of membership and joins Sylvia Richardson on our Roll of Honour. She was a member of our Committee for many years and was my predecessor as Newsletter Editor.

Thank you, Mary, for all the work you have done for the Club. Also please accept my personal thanks for the support you have given me, firstly in initiating me into the secrets of getting the Newsletter produced and, secondly, providing some very readable articles two of which I am very pleased to include in this edition of the Newsletter.

Janet, above, says we now have time to plan some walks. Thanks to Mary, how about this one from 1978?

A CROWBOROUGH WALK

Extract from the Crowborough Field Society Journal by Pat Combes 1978

“Hamsell Lake is well worth a visit. It is about 2½ miles only from the Cross and so within an easy walk. There are two roads or paths to this lake. The one by Pilmer Lane leads through the lower point of Beechen and Bream Woods and every break in the leafy canopy opens up charming glimpses of the opposite hills while the blue-grey distance occasionally adds its beauty to the scene”.

This walk, described by Boys Firmin in his ‘Crowborough Guide’ published in 1890, can still be enjoyed by anyone who departs from the tarmac trail. The footpath is a last relic of a network of roads which crossed this valley, the main path leading directly from Crowborough Cross to Hamsell and the lake, which was originally constructed to power the bellows of a blast furnace.

The Goldsmith Recreation Ground beside Pilmer Road was given to Crowborough in 1930 by the Goldsmiths' Company when they owned the Hamsell Estate. This estate was acquired as an investment by the Goldsmiths' Company in 1856 and sold in 1937. Many of the farmhouses and cottages have the Goldsmiths' coat of arms displayed.

Charcoal burning was an integral part of the Wealden Iron Industry, for both the early bloomery furnaces and the later blast furnaces were fuelled with charcoal. In the woodland on either side of this road are the cinder banks left as the only visible evidence of the early bloomery furnaces. Bloomery cinder can be picked up beside the new dam where a pond has been constructed in the stream below Renby Grange. One of the bloomery sites on a field near here has been dated by pottery found on the site as Romano-British 1st Century AD. All the other sites in this valley remain, as yet, undated.

About ¼mile before Stonehouse Farm there are large minepits either side of the road. The road was already in existence before the pits were dug, otherwise there would only have been one large pit. Iron ore from these pits may well have supplied both the early bloomery furnaces and the blast furnace at Hamsell, to which the road gave direct access. There are also minepits close to Renby Grange and the hollow ways from there lead one again to Hamsell furnace. These pits were also a source of marl, the farmers' earliest ally in improving the acid Ashdown sand. Later, lime was used to lighten the heavy clay soil. Improved transport enabled chalk to be brought from the pits on the Downs, possibly by water to Shortbridge near Uckfield, the nearest navigable part of the Ouse. The chalk was reduced to lime in kilns. The name Limekiln Forest shows where these kilns were situated. Occasionally flints with a white cracked porcelain surface are found on fields - these are probably flints that went into the kilns with the chalk and were spread on the fields with the lime.

Our road passes straight through the farmyard of Stonehouse Farm. This has a new front built by the Goldsmiths' Co., whilst the old stone farmhouse still remains at the back.

Then the path goes through a small shaw and round the edge of a large wheatfield, part of Renby Farm. At one time the path ran straight across the field past a barn standing in the middle, but the barn has now disappeared and the path is diverted. At Hollybridge where the road takes a sharp right angled bend at the end of this field, a cottage once stood and fruit trees in the hedge show the sad remains of its garden. A little farther to the west stood another cottage thought to have been an inn. These were on the map 100 years ago, but have now disappeared without trace.

At Hollybridge the road turns sharp right up a deep cut hollow way concreted now for farm machinery. At the top where the main footpath turns left, a short walk along the right hand footpath will reveal a beautiful example of a hollow way, the clay surface eroded by rain and wear until the banks rise up to 12feet on either side - Sussex was renowned for its impassable roads and one look at a hollow way like this makes it easy to understand Horace Walpole writing in 1740 'We are returned from our expedition miraculously well, considering all our distresses. If you love good roads, good inns, plenty of postilions, be so kind as to never go to Sussex - Sussex is a great dampener of curiosity.' You can follow this hollow way out on to Majors Hill, or complete the path to Hamsell."

Now for Mary's second contribution.

Remembering 50 years in Tunbridge Wells Rambling Club

I am writing this on Sunday 10 May when I had planned to lead a walk along the Medway Valley from Maidstone to Tonbridge, to celebrate the 50 years of fun and adventure which I have enjoyed in our wonderful Club. Sadly it was not to be, as everything was cancelled. But lockdown has given us all an opportunity to catch up on some of those jobs we never seem to have time for, like sorting out some of that *stuff*. So I came across some of my old Club records and I thought I would share this with you, if you are interested!

Today would have been 50 years to the day, when I answered an article in the local press advertising the Tunbridge Wells Rambling Club event for National Footpaths week. I left my husband Dick in charge of our four children aged 12,11,6 and 4½ to meet the walkers at Tonbridge Station, despite my husband's warning-"You don't want to go with them - they wear big boots!" We were to walk the 17 miles along the Medway towpath from Tonbridge to Maidstone and catch a train back - all the walks used public transport in those days, as few members had cars. I wore my most comfortable pair of shoes which were blue sling-backs, and one of the older members, looked at me and said "You're not going to walk in those, are you?" But I skipped in and out of the mud, and they washed up as good as new. Everyone was very friendly and welcoming, so the following week I started bringing my children on the local half day walks. There were other families walking with children then. On one occasion when Dave, my youngest, objected to struggling through the mud in Shadwell Woods, Tom Manser picked him up and carried him! Tom was one of the many wonderful characters I have met in the Club. He was an ambulance driver, who loved to stop the traffic for all the walkers to cross the road.



My first Club holiday was at Barmouth CHA in 1978. A number of the Club were school teachers, so Club holidays were in August. It still remains one of my best holidays, having everything - beautiful coastline, estuary, river and best of all, wonderful mountains. And as I was evacuated near there during WW2 the area has a very special place in my heart. Then in the Autumn half term week 1983 a dozen Club members went to Grasmere CHA - this was my very first time in the Lake District - and we all enjoyed it so much, we planned another trip, this time to Derwentbank HF. As it was out of season, no leader was provided, but Geoff and Betty King came to our rescue and

kindly offered to lead some of our walks. Well, what an exciting week we had-oh how I wish I had discovered these scrambling excitements when I was younger!



The Club continued to organise holidays, weekends away and social evenings. Coach rambles enabled me to walk the long distance paths, particularly the Wealdway, which Geoff King had played such a huge part in its creation. I could go on about breakfast rambles and breaks in members' gardens with their homemade wine and so many enjoyable activities. Having taken 31 Club members to Guernsey for a walking holiday in 1997, Shirley Smout took over as holiday organiser and together with her husband John, I have enjoyed many holidays, including the Coast to Coast and Offa's Dyke, to name but a few. We were very privileged when John became the minibus driver enabling pickups on the long distance paths and even sussing out the best coffee shops for us!



To celebrate the Millennium I helped to produce a booklet, 'Footsteps', being a history of the Club from 1931-2000 and a book launch was held in the garden of Betty and Geoff King attended by 80 members and the Courier.

Another 20 years have passed since then and gradually, as with society in general, the Club changed. But new members have joined with new ideas. The weekday groups have grown and the Sunday group with which I mainly walk, has shrunk in size, but not in enthusiasm. I continue to enjoy the long distance walks, and especially the weekday recycling of walks. Now with lockdown we are changing again, discovering walks nearer home, and hearing and seeing a lot more of what's around us walking alone.

But I feel very fortunate to have been able to take an active part for so long - I've lost count of how many walks I have led, how many miles I've walked or pairs of boots I've worn out. Thank you all for being such lovely walking companions - keep safe! Let's hope we can all meet again soon.



Mary Blinks

Thanks again Mary -Ed..

GROUP REPORTS

LONGER WEDNESDAY WALKERS

How best to sum up this winter's walking - mud, mud and more mud. We spent the whole walk slipping and a sliding. Sometimes head first sometimes, if you were lucky, on your bum but always covered from head to foot in mud. At the end of the walk some people were unrecognisable.

We started out in the autumn with an average of 18 walkers but by the end of the winter we were down to single figures with people pulling muscles, tendons and sinew or just losing the will to live.

I can't really remember where we went, it all looked like The Somme. Never was a tea room after a walk so welcome. Even if we did get some looks from rest of the dry, clean and respectably dressed clientele horrified to see a gaggle of tramps (is gaggle the right pronoun for a group of tramps?) dripping wet and leaving a trail of mud after them.

We were all looking forward to some dry, warm summer walking and look what happened to that!

Eric Botley

WEDNESDAY 5 MILE WALKERS



Well, what a year! Following almost constant rain from September until March which plunged a huge part of the UK into floods, including the road from Fordcombe to Penshurst, we found ourselves wading through mud up to our armpits and slipping and sliding around as if we were all drunk. It was hardly surprising that our New Year Walk had to be cancelled as it was considered dangerous. They did, however, hold their New Year Nibbles at the time the walk would have ended and I understand it was an enjoyable festive occasion. I say 'they' as I was unable to join them as I was grounded and forbidden to drive due to a slight medical problem – little did I know that I was practising for what was to come! I led an Urban Walk at the end of January which was well received with 24 walkers and Adaire & Sue's walk from Groombridge was also well attended, again there being 24 of us.



Then we were hit by the Coronavirus Pandemic and that put a stop to our walking activities but we have kept in touch with each other with little competitions thanks mainly to Brian who circulated a picture of someone's muddy boots and we all had to try to guess who was wearing them. Nobody except the person to whom they belonged got that – I think Adaire had the most votes, including mine, and it turned out to be Julie! Then there are the word competitions where each week there is a favourite. When it would have been my turn to lead I wrote a poem about the walk in the hope that it would amuse and people could imagine the walk and Jackie & Bob posted photographs of bluebells at Staffhurst Wood (*see Jackie's poem below – Ed*) so we could all imagine them on the day they should have led from there. On the day that Peter would have led we had a virtual tour of his immaculate (*I wish –Ed*) garden together with not one but two poems and Sheila, our poet laureate, has been keeping us going with her offerings (*see below –Ed*) and, of course, there have been a few jokes and such like circulating to keep us amused.



Hopefully it won't be too long before we can all get together once more and enjoy the fresh air, exercise, beautiful countryside and wonderful company again but I fear we are in for the long haul.

Janet Wilson

FRIDAY WALKERS

Maurice writes: The Friday walkers kicked off this year with a walk from Southborough Common. Some mud – a taste of things to come. By mid-month we were at Friar's Gate – Sylvie's walk – and the terrain was very, very wet. Storm Brendan (not Storm Brenda) had zapped through earlier in the week, with strong winds and loads of rain, giving some local flooding. The Crown at Groombridge (rapidly becoming one of your correspondent's favourite pubs) was waiting at the end of the walk.



Next up was Brenda's St Mary's Platt walk. Nice walk with lots of lovely old trees – hornbeams and Wellingtonia. Excellent pint of Tribute at the Blue Anchor. The last offer in January was from Horsmonden (Janet). A strong candidate for the worst mud of 2020 – lots of it and for considerable stretches. Lots of flowers though – crocuses, snowdrops and primroses. A highlight was a wonderful mural on the side of a barn at Swigs Hole Farm (painted by Sue Westlake's son) – a gorgeous view, like the South of France. Diana took a photo. (*Note to self – Must go and see this – it is just half a mile from where I live on a path we seldom use. – Editor*)

And then we got to February – the wettest February in the UK since records began in 1862 (Met Office). John and Evelien led from Rotherfield with some great views, followed by Mary's Chevening walk which led us past lots of snowdrops and violets. On Sarah and Nick's walk from Ticehurst we had more fallers than the Grand National. People were scrambling up the banks to avoid the mud, especially past Bewl Water. A new pub for me at the end of this one – the Bull at Three Leg Cross – a big rambling place, good food and beer.

We had our regular walk from the Halfway House at Brenchley on the first Friday in March. The water table was very high – about 1.5 inches of rain fell on the previous day – but the Friday was a real beauty with lots of sunshine. Still sopping wet underfoot. This was also the case on the following week – Wet (sorry West) Peckham with Nick and Diana. Only eight of us on the day. Memorable because of the inappropriate footwear worn by Joan S-G. She was the sequel to "My Left Foot" starring Daniel Day – Lewis - I called it "My Two Left feet" starring Joan Scott – Goldstone – she wore two left welly boots on the day!



All further TWRC rambles were then suspended due to Covid-19. However, Nick and Diana have since organised a number of "virtual" Friday lunches via Zoom technology. It is good to hear and see everybody over the computer. Attendance is very good – better than for some of the walks!

Nick: During lock down, I've discovered a couple of birding facts that have fascinated me. First, that though the birds have sounded as if singing very loudly during lock down, in fact they have been singing more quietly than usual, as there has been so little background noise. They have apparently been averaging 60 Decibels, whereas they can commonly sing up to 66 Decibels, which is many times louder, not just 10% louder, because the Decibel scale is a logarithmic one. The second fact is that our local male blackbirds work in a team to feed and support their local female. A younger, non-breeding male, probably related to the dominant male, is foraging alongside the latter and contributing to the collective effort, as well providing safety in numbers. The dominant male has a bright yellow eye-ring, which the non-breeding male lacks. You might observe the same phenomenon in your own back garden. (*See Nick's link below for Birdsong- Ed*)

Maurice Dickens and Nick Churchill

ALL DAY SUNDAY WALKERS

2020, a year to remember.

January started well, with our annual Tonbridge walk courtesy of Amanda. Fordcombe, Blackboys, and Sevenoaks walks followed successfully. Sunday the 9th Feb dawned with the arrival of Storm Ciara, rapidly followed by Storm Dennis, on both Sundays for some reason no one wanted to walk !!!!

Eventually Sally led a sunny and dry (overhead at least) walk from Ticehurst, with tea at St Johns Nursery, sitting outside. Heather followed this up with an interesting walk from Robertsbridge, during which we had a unexpected private tour of the cellars (crypt) of the House in the grounds of the Abbey ruins at Robertsbridge. Mary squeezed in a walk from Southborough Common before the doors swung shut with a resounding clang and Lockdown arrived.

We are all walking (within legal guidelines) as much as possible, dreaming of the day when we will be released. We have found one advantage of exploring the now very well walked local PRW footpaths on a regular basis: we are noticing the small things, plants, wildlife, birdsong, light and shadows that change day by day.

Ending on an optimistic note, can we start thinking of Sunday walks for the next programme? Perhaps versions of local exercise walks taken by you during lockdown.....

Hope to see you on a Sunday walk soon,

Stay safe,

Janet and Dermot

EDITOR'S FOOTNOTES AND OTHER MISCELLANY

Coach Trip to Waddesdon Manor

Well here we are again. It is the 2nd May and another fine day and time for the annual TWRC away day. The coach was as smooth as usual and once again the M25 was remarkably empty – in fact probably the emptiest I have seen since the road was built – so empty one might have thought that people were not going out for some reason – can't think why!



We arrived eventually at Waddesdon Manor and after the usual use of the excellent facilities and a piece of cake – I do seem to be obsessed by cake at the moment – we were left free to have a stroll around the lovely gardens.



Lunch was in the first class cafe (what else would you expect from the Rothschilds?) and once replete we congregated at the entrance to the house for our entry at 2pm. Unfortunately there are no guided tours at the weekend so we were free to wander and wonder at will.



I marvelled at the elephant – don't people have strange tastes? What about the silver table setting how opulent but what a chore to keep clean? My personal favourite was the room full of the most magnificent paintings and furniture – fancy being able to see that every day and to sit at the lovely desk composing the flowing prose such as in this Newsletter (*You flatter yourself- Ed*).



Unfortunately at 5pm we had to retire to our coach. Some had returned to the cafe for yet more refreshment including yet more cake.

The journey back to Kent was, again, smooth and fast. The M25 was again eerily empty.

Dig, dig. Somebody was digging me in the side. Had I fallen asleep on the coach and started making noises no human or animal should hear? I gradually came to and found that I was sprawled out on our couch. I had been dreaming of what might have been. Oh well maybe next year!

For those of you that sent me booking forms, I confirm that all forms and cheques have been shredded and disposed of.

Editor

Summer Supper

The Summer Supper has not, so far, been cancelled with High Rocks. Current Government guidance says “Some restaurants and cafes with outdoor space will be allowed to re-open from July.” It seems very likely that the event will not be able to go ahead but we will have to wait and see.

Editor

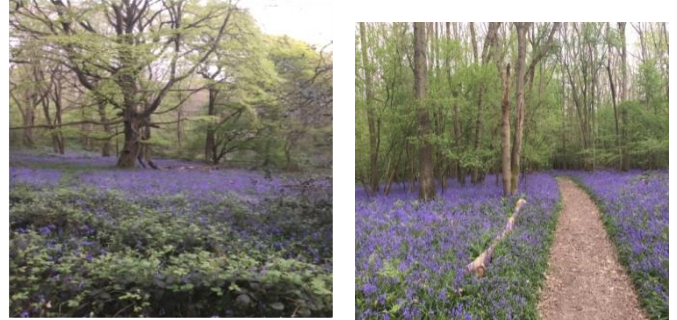
We have a number of contributions from our very talented crew of poets.

The first is from Jackie and should be sung to the tune of “A Teddy Bears’ Picnic”.

“If you go down to the woods today
It’s a place to feast your eyes
A sea of bluebells, left and right
They’re at their peak - a glorious sight
Yes, today’s the day we should have gone to Staffhurst!

Walking and talking for all 5 miles
Always someone to help with the stiles
In the warm spring sun
We would have had fun
Wandering round the beautiful woods of Staffhurst!

But Wednesday Walkers do not fear
We’ll meet again same time next year
When someone will bake
Lots of scrumptious cake
And again we’ll see the bluebells down at Staffhurst!”



Jackie Houlston

Now from one of our regular contributors.

“Well here we are all stuck at home
But with our walking friends we are not alone.
We can jog around the garden or roam round the house
We must do it alone or with our spouse.
This nasty virus we can tell it to Bugger off
So we don’t get the fever or that nasty cough.
We will all meet up and walk again
In lovely weather and not soggy rain.
Today is Brenda's birthday she is 76 today
So lets wish her happy birthday and shout hip hip hooray.”

And another one.

“Ron is busy with a 1000 piece jig saw
it’s 8 different posters recruiting for 1st world war
Me I’m getting my exercise fix
By tuning in each morning to You Tube with Joe Wicks

Caravan park is closed so no escape down there
Will have to pretend with the paddling pool and an old deck chair
At last some good news our friend Bob is on the mend
So to Jackie and Bob best wishes, hugs and cake we all send”

Welcome to my imaginary walk.

“It’s a mystery walk, its 10.30 and our leader says lets go
We cross the road then down a track, where we’re going we just don’t know
we cross a field where lambs are skipping and leaping
and very close by their mums are lying in the sun sleeping
We climb a hill, a long one but at the top the view is amazing
We have our lunch here just eating and gazing
On our way back its the down hill track we take
Back to the car park for a nice cup of tea and a nice bit of cake.”

I hope you enjoyed my mystery walk. Its a nice sunny day, no stiles and no mud. Sorry about the one hill but worth it at the top. Take care all of you. Stay safe xxx”

“Well here we are at Bodiam a lovely little spot
The weather is sunny and warm but not too hot
Our leader today is a bonny lass called Nesta
Who some of you may not know Nesta is from Leicester

The walk takes us along the river Rother
not too many stiles so shouldn’t be a bother
Birds are singing and many wild flowers for us to see
I couldn’t think of a nicer place I would rather be

After lunch we are on our way again
The sun is still shining not a sign of rain
Back to the river that sparkles in the sun
We’re taking a slow walk back too weary to run

Back at the car park our walk is complete
It’ll be nice to sit down and take the weight off our feet
We all thank Nesta for our lovely walk today
Before we all jump in our cars and be on our way”

*Hope you like my little poem now I am back to room roaming, window watching and then garden gazing busy busy.
Take care.*

Sheila xx

From Geoff a Friday Group Walker.

“I’m normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can’t go out the gates.

You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died.

They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told.

We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60s -
If you only knew the truth!

There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll



The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts.

Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become?

We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like a red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside
For 4 weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no bloody flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer.

At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whiskey, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal!

So let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this bloody virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth.

We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!"

Geoff

We were unable to do Janet's walk on 15th April but we received this poem in compensation:-

"My walk from Biddenden has taken a knock
So we won't be passing the Millennium clock.

The walk's fairly flat but has numerous stiles
and I think it works out at exactly five miles.

The ground should be lovely and dry at last
I think that continuous rain must have passed.

We'll sit on a slope for our sarnies and tea
With a wood to the side should we need to wee.

When pre-walking this walk back in May 2011
The pigs had escaped and were in Seventh Heaven.

Passing through woods I'd hoped for bluebells
We'll just have to make our own sights and smells.

I hope you've enjoyed my beautiful walk
It's a lot less tiring when it is all talk."

Janet Wilson

I don't know who came up with this but know that if I don't include it I will be in trouble:-

"There was a young(ish) man called Pete
Who put walking boots on his feet
He went off for a walk
But no-one would talk
Cos what he had failed to see
When you walk virtualee
Is there is nobody there to greet Pete."

Pat Stallwood

I was told in no uncertain terms by our esteemed Chairman that I had to come up with a poem for the Wednesday I was due to lead a walk. I think it is brilliant others may have a different opinion, I wonder why?

"Roses are red
Violets are blue
I am missing
Walking with you."

Editor

People do strange things in strange times. Here is a Wednesday walker experiencing a new reality:-

Its 2,30am on Friday 1st May 2020 and I cant sleep so I have come down stairs and put on the computer to RAMBLE I am going to RAMBLE on about my day but with no punctuation although it will actually be about yesterday of course I got up late at 9.am and had porridge then took coffee to david who had been in the garden since silly o clock preparing the ground for the new shed which is expected any day now after which I put on the dishwasher and washing machine then swept and washed the kitchen floor then went upstairs and made the bed and vacuumed the bedroom I then looked into the other bedroom come study come sewing room come clutter room and decided against venturing in there so I cleaned the bathroom then I decided to bath the dog then I cleaned the bathroom again after which I had a cup of coffee while ironing and catching up on some old episodes of casualty then I went into the garden to plant out some bedding plants then it rained so I came in and got on the computer to look for some material for making a patchwork quilt for my youngest great grand childs cot but after looking at dozens couldn't find what I wanted so gave up as it was now lunchtime after which back into the garden for some more planting out then made some phone calls to friends and family to see how everybody is now its time for an afternoon cuppa and think about what to cook for dinner david wants a steak so he will cook it himself I don't like steak so had scrambled egg with mushrooms and ham time to take the dog for a walk now then back to clear up the kitchen after davids cooking efforts at eight oclock outside to clap for the NHS and captain tom that wonderful 99 now a 100 year old gentleman who has raised 30 million pounds for the NHS back inside to sit down and watch TV after such an 'exciting' day!!!! Oh I said no punctuation!

I hope I haven't bored you all with my RAMBLING!

Take care and keep well everybody and hopefully we will all be back RAMBLING for real. Now I'm off to bed again and hopefully to sleep!

Heather Allchin

Wilson's Wonderful Wednesday Walkers Word on Wednesday – a selection:-

TOGETHERNESS, UNPRECEDENTED, JIB, VIRTUAL, WHIMSICAL, COMPANIONSHIP, FURLOUGHED, DYNAMIC, INVENTIVE, WARMTH, FRIENDSHIP, STILES, PEACEFUL, BIRDSONG, BLUEBELLS, WONDERMENT, SUNSHINE, CAKE, HORIZON, EPIDEMIOLOGY.

Editor

OTHER MATTERS

The Committee

Just so you are aware your Committee has been labouring long and hard on your behalf. Unfortunately we could not hold the AGM but we did have a Committee meeting by email. Sheila has decided to leave the Committee when we eventually have the AGM but will continue to play her part especially in preparing the buffet that has become a traditional part of that occasion. Maurice has attended Committee meetings and has agreed to stand at the AGM to be formally voted in if that is the will of the membership – a proposer and seconder have been obtained. The Committee would also welcome other suggestions as to who might be prepared to join us.

Birdsong

This is the link to a website recommended by Nick to help identify birdsong:- www.xeno-canto.org/explore

AND FINALLY

Well that's all for now folks. I hope that you got at least a little enjoyment from, what must be, the longest Newsletter ever produced – certainly by me anyway.

I should like to thank all the contributors, both new and old, as without them the Newsletter would be a chore to produce rather than a pleasure.

Until we can start walking together again remember:-



WALKING PROGRAMME JULY – DECEMBER 2020

Due to Coronavirus Restrictions and Social Distancing we are not producing a Programme for the second half of this year.

Should normal walking become possible later in the year:

Wednesday Five Milers:

A programme will be sent to all regular walkers.

If not on the list then contact Janet Wilson

on 01892-610382 or 07990-576081

or email

janetwilson21@talktalk.net

Wednesday 6 – 8 Milers:

Eric will advise regular walkers of any walks planned

or contact him on 01797-214253 for a

month by month programme

Friday Walkers:

A programme will be sent to all regular Friday walkers.

If you are not a regular walker with this group

then please contact Nick on

churchill.family1985@gmail.com

Sunday Walks:

A programme will be sent to all regular Sunday walkers.

or contact Janet Chandler on

jmchandler827@gmail.com