

Long Distance Walkers' Association

SUSSEX GROUP

<http://www.ldwasussex.org.uk/>



NEWSLETTER

February 2019

1. Chairman's Chat

Phew, what a scorcher! It was a glorious summer – maybe too hot for some and certainly there were days when any strenuous or long distance walking was not a wise pursuit.

Long before the hot weather set in we had to contend with exceptionally cold weather including the “Beast from the East”. Undeterred we ploughed on with the walks programme, putting on a total of 22 Social Walks during the year. Chris' 12 miler January opener “First of The Year” attracted a record number of attendees with 37 walkers enjoying the delights that the Eastern Downs offer. Two walks in January were followed by the same number the following month. Early March brought the only occasion when we did fall victim to the weather - on the grounds of safety it would prove necessary to cancel the walk and AGM, the latter subsequently rescheduled for an evening later in the month. We are always pleased when members volunteer to lead a walk for the first time and in August Cath and Jane made their Sussex Group debut with their very professionally led “Mayfield circular”.

Having been conscious that over the past few years the majority of our walks have been in East Sussex, 2018 saw a concerted effort to organise walks further west. Manfred's “West Sussex Revival” in May and three walks during the year led by Jerome Ripp provided a much better balance of activity across the County. The Committee would like to thank all those that organised, led and participated during the year to make it a success.

2018 saw the Group organise two Challenge Events. In May 143 entered and 119 started the *South Downs Marathon*, a 20% reduction in entries from the previous year. Given the fine weather the reason for this was not clear but the LDWA 100 event (the *Cinque Ports*, from Hastings to Dover) was only two weeks later and this may have had an impact. The *Sussex Loops* event in September proved to be a success with the entry limit of 100 reached, mainly due to the introduction of runners.

In addition to the Group's own events, it supported the Kent Group on two of theirs. On a hot May Bank Holiday we ran the first Checkpoint on the *Cinque Ports 100* at Pett Level. On a wet and windy September day we did likewise at Dover for the *White Cliffs 50*. Particular thanks to our Events Organiser Chris Baines-Holmes for his hard work and dedication and to all the marshals and helpers for giving up their time without which these events would not happen.

During the year, Shirley Greenwood announced that she wished to step down as the Group's Treasurer having taken on the responsibilities for 15 years. The Committee would like to thank Shirley for her dedication to the role and commitment to the Group. Shirley departs with finances in good shape and with a surplus of funds that will help sustain the Group going forward into 2019 including the running of two Challenge Events.

Happy walking to all our members in 2019.

Trevor Beeston, Chairman

2. Sussex Group Committee

Chairman:	Trevor Beeston	Compliance Officer:	Chris Coates
Treasurer:	Shirley Greenwood	Newsletter Editor:	David Weatherley
Secretary:	Paul Collis	Member:	Manfred Engler
Events Organiser:	Chris Baines-Holmes	Member:	Anthony Mitchell
Walks Organiser:	Trevor Beeston (acting)	Member:	Jane Bates
Webmaster:	David Hodge	Co-opted Member:	Chris Kennedy

3. Challenge Events

Recent Events

The Sussex Loops, 9th September 2018.

To Recap. This event comprised three loops, each of which started and finished at Forest Row Village Hall. Entrants could choose to walk the South Loop only, or the South and North Loops, or all three. This choice was made when the person entered the event.

The three Loops provided a variety of landscapes. The South Loop toured the heathland of the northern Ashdown Forest, the North Loop the rolling farmland and woods to the north east of Forest Row while the West Loop explored the northern edge of the Weir Wood Reservoir and the Forest Way. A waterpoint was provided on each Loop, used as much to keep track of the walkers as to refresh them.

The Weather. Dry and warm with sunny periods.

The Numbers. A total of 102 people signed up:

S only	- Entered 25, Finished 24, Non-starters 1
S+N	- Entered 13, Finished 11, Retired 1, Non-starters 1
S+N+W	- Entered 64, Finished 53, Non-starters 11

The one retiree stopped at the South Loop waterpoint – a previously broken foot had not recovered as well as its owner had hoped.

Inclusion of Runners. This proved a success. 33 runners signed up on our website. I think some of these were actually walkers and the odd walker may have been a runner.

Route and Waterpoints. A few minor errors in the route description were highlighted for future attention – no one, however, got (completely) lost. The extended opening times at the waterpoints did not appear to cause a problem. The West waterpoint was moved from the mudhole on the West Hoathly road to the National Trust car park at Hill Top Shaw. Permission for its use was readily forthcoming from the NT, at no cost to the event.

Hall and Catering. The 89 participants and their friends/partners/fans rather strained the hall's resources at the start. Lunch (cold) and dinner (hot) overlapped due to the runners' early finishing. This was anticipated and the catering staff coped well, but starting the runners an hour after the walkers would alleviate these bottlenecks. Fruit pies and custard were served for dessert but some requests for fruit salad and rice were received!

The Badge. The cloth badge created for this event proved very popular – 39 were sold. One person, probably taking advantage of the busy marshals, paid for his or her badge with an old style £5 note. No (printable) comment.

Conclusion. The event proved to be a success. The entry limit of 100 was reached, mainly due to the runners although the biggest percentage increase was for the 'South Loop only' option. The financial surplus wiped out last year's loss. (Event surpluses are used to maintain and replace the equipment used on our challenge walks).

My grateful thanks to all those who helped on the event, many working a very long day. Without you these events wouldn't happen. Many thanks too to all our customers – be they first timers or those who had the good taste to come back for more. Sad to say – no Loops in 2019 as we are staging the 51 mile Sussex Stride (our element of the KSS Triple Challenge) on 21st & 22nd September.

Chris Baines-Holmes, Events Organiser

Sussex Loops 2018 Feedback

Louise:- Thanks for a brilliant day on the Sussex Loops yesterday. Great route, lovely scenery and we were very well looked after at the checkpoints. Struggling to move today though!

Steve:- I enjoyed the Sussex Loops. I hope that you repeat it as I liked the idea of a hot cup of tea every 10/11 miles and a place to leave any extra tops if likely to be needed on the last loop, although this was not required yesterday.

Sharon:- My first challenge event! The loops are a great idea for someone like me as I was very doubtful about doing all three loops - I managed 2. And I haven't been put off. I'll be back next year to do all 3. Thanks so much to the organisers, the cheerful marshals and the lovely ladies who looked after us back at the village hall. Oh and the walkers who showed me the ropes and got me back to the hall.

White Cliffs Challenge, Sunday 28th August 2018 Dover Checkpoint (the Wet One!)

Checkpoint 1 on the Kent Group White Cliffs Challenge is located within the White Cliffs of Dover National Trust area, close to the Langdon Cliffs Visitor Centre, 8 miles from the start. The Centre has car parks, a café, toilets and a panoramic view over the Dover ferry terminal – an ideal location for a checkpoint from the marshal's point of view!

Half a gale was already blowing when the marshals arrived at about 11am so the tent was set up in the lee of a substantial hedge. Because the hedge appeared to provide good protection the tent was erected without its walls – this would later prove a sad (and wet) misjudgement as the day passed. The food - snacks and squash - was delivered by the Kent Group. By the time the checkpoint opened at 1130 the rain could be felt in the wind. The walkers* started arriving in a steady stream, the wind got gustier and the rain heavier.



At first all seemed well ...

Despite a gallant defence the hedge lost its battle with the elements and the checkpoint – marshals, water containers, tables and chairs - was slowly soaked. Even some of the food looked damp, despite the deployment of large amounts of cling film. The tent walls, which could not be attached without taking the tent down, looked on smugly. The day wore on, ever damper. The last walkers were checked through and the checkpoint was packed, soggily, into the backs of cars. With air con and heaters turned to the max the marshals headed homewards, leaving the wet and windy day – and night – to the walkers. Well, it was the August Bank Holiday weekend!

* 'walkers' – this generic term refers to all the participants in the event, in the same way as 'actor' now refers to all members of that profession irrespective of gender, whatever gender means these days. And I get fed up with writing 'participant' all the time.

Pathtrekker

The KSS Triple Challenge

The Kent Surrey Sussex (KSS) Triple Challenge, started in 2008, is formed of three events which alternate over a three-year cycle: The *White Cliffs* from the Kent Group, the *Surrey Tops* and our own *Sussex Stride*. In order to achieve the Challenge all three events must be completed in consecutive years in the time allowed. The time limit for Sussex and Surrey is 20 hours, and for Kent, 22 hours.

A bronze award is given for three consecutive completions, a silver award for six, a gold for nine, platinum for twelve. After that, what follows? Any suggestions?

KSS awards in 2018

Bronze Jackie Barker Mick Dodge Malcolm Dyke Sonia Edwards John Gorman Nina Lambrou Mike Tuke David Weatherley Tara Williams		Silver Helen Abbott Bryan Darney Manfred Engler Marta Kunicka Andrew Moore Chris Munt
		Gold Mary Dumble

To date 121 bronze, 21 silver and 5 gold certificates have been awarded.

The KSS event in 2019 is the *Sussex Stride*. We can expect some platinum finishers, that is, twelve consecutive completions.

Shirley Greenwood, KSS Triple Challenge Administrator

Forthcoming Events

Coming soon ...

LDWA South Downs Marathon, Sunday 12th May 2019

This will be the twelfth iteration of the Sussex Group's premier challenge walk. Originally held in the Harting area of West Sussex the event moved east to East Dean – the East Sussex one – in 2010. The c27 mile route is considered quite tough but is highly rated for its scenery, views and the variety of landscapes through which it passes. Full details and entry can be found on the SiEntries website <https://www.sientries.co.uk> or via the link on the Events page of the [Sussex Group website](#)

To ensure the success of this event a number of marshals and helpers are needed. The event 'day' runs from about 7.30am until 8pm. If you would like to help on the event, even if just for a few hours, please contact me by email at chrisbainesholmes@gmail.com or on 01273 772076 or 07977 810964.

Chris Baines-Holmes, Events Organiser

Management and administration of future Sussex Group Challenge events

The Group has signed up to SiEntries to manage and administer its future Challenge events. Those familiar with pre-entering events run by other groups and organisations will know the process:

- A list of events is available on the [SiEntries open website](#)
- Once an individual has registered, all that is needed is an email address and password to pre-enter details on their chosen event and then to pay the appropriate entrance fee.

The move to SiEntries will alleviate some of the burden of administration, management and data protection. Hopefully it will also widen the audience of prospective entrants for our Challenge events.

4. Group Social Walks - 2019 programme

Date	Walk	Start	Miles	No.
2018				
28/07	Circular from Lewes	Lewes	19	
11/08	Mayfield circular	Mayfield	20	14
25/08	Common Fish	Ditchling Common	20	9
15/09	High Weald wander	Wadhurst	19	11
29/09	Lancing circular	Lancing	19	11
13/10	Hogtrough, Bodle and Crouch	Catsfield	19	10
10/11	River, Downs, cliffs	Newhaven Bridge	18	17
24/11	Clayton circular	Brighton	16	11
09/12	Christmas walk and lunch	Alfriston	10/16	16
2019				
12/01	First of the year	Firle	12	23
27/01	Jerome's literal appearance	Billingshurst	18	10
09/02	Wander from Washington	Washington	19	12
23/02	Walk and AGM	Milton Street	10	
09/03	Pett circular	Pett	17	
23/03	The Secret Sisters	East Dean	21	
13/04	From the Top - take 2	Ditchling	22	
28/04	One loop or two?	Robertsbridge	11/18	
12/05	<i>LDWA South Downs Marathon</i>			
25/05	Wadhurst Loops 1 and 3	Wadhurst	20	
08/06	Low Weald and Downs	North Chailey	21	
22/06	Arundel and the Downs	Kithurst Hill	20	
06/07	Three Cups full?	Burwash	20	
20/07	Long Man stride (<i>Joint walk with Kent Group</i>)	East Dean	22	
03/08	Waldron circular	Waldron	18	
17/08	Back to Beckley	Westfield	20	

Late changes are sometimes necessary. Please check the [website](#) to confirm details

5. Compliance

Third Party Liability Insurance

The LDWA insurance provider now requires participant information to be recorded prior to each group social walk. ***Please be prepared to give the walk leader your name and membership number or, if you are a prospective member, your name and either postal/email address or mobile phone number.***



Christmas walk and lunch



Mayfield circular



Hogtrough, Bodle & Crouch



6. Miscellany

Rubbish Collection on the South Downs Way

Early last year there was a segment in one of the BBC *Countryfile* episodes showing an initiative on one of the long distance paths in the north where small stretches of the path had been allocated to various groups. Most of these groups were schools or youth organisations like the Scouts. The idea was to keep each section free of litter and highlight any maintenance that may be required. The groups that were interviewed were very proud of their section and enjoyed the responsibility that they had been given.

Chris Baines-Holmes and I approached the South Downs National Park Authority to discuss a similar project for The South Downs Way. We volunteered the Sussex branch of the LDWA to be “guinea pigs”,

assuming responsibility for the two sections of the SDW that pass between Eastbourne and Alfriston, and we will be collecting rubbish on this stretch on Saturday 30th April. Bags and litter-pickers will be provided. It is hoped that if enough people volunteer to help, we should be able to complete the task in a morning. The idea would be to operate in pairs, each with responsibility for about two miles of the path.

Hopefully the publicity gained will not only help the group, but also ensure that organisations will volunteer to take responsibility for other sections of the route. We would aim to eventually pass on our section to appropriate groups in the near future.

If you are able to help, please make yourself known via our website.

Anthony Mitchell

At some stage our descendants won't know which way is up

"Beddingham Hill ... I hate it! ... this first bit after the checkpoint seems to go on for ever and the mud gets deeper every year. Why do I enter the Stride? ... trudging up here in the dark and rain is sheer misery ..."

"Not long before it eases, mate ... look at the horizon glow ... the lights of Seaford ..."

"No mate, that's not Seaford, it's the aurora borealis! The replacement cranial chip that marshal inserted at the checkpoint must be confusing you ... strange that it still didn't register you on the system ... but of course the old Sussex folklore says they never could get PACER to work reliably at Norton ..."

"True. This mud really is awful ... I can't wait for my trip down south to get away from it"

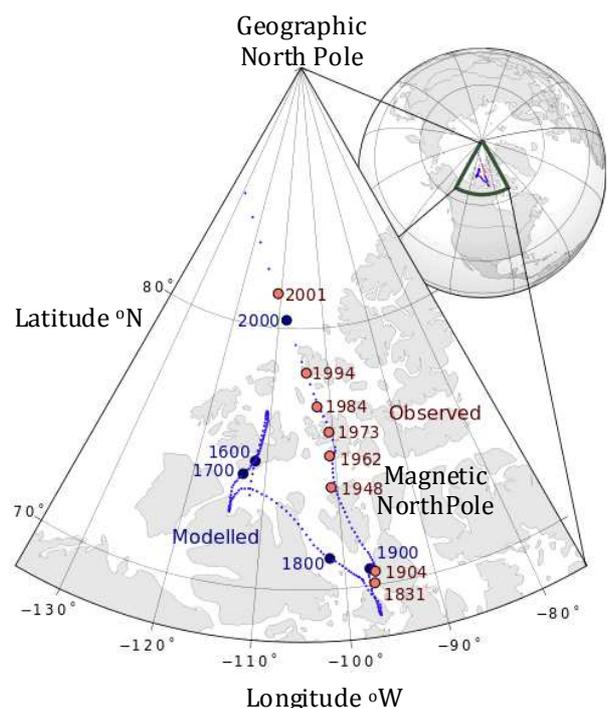
"Which bit of the south?"

"The Yorkshire Dales."

Data taken from 17th century ships' logs and from more recent scientific measurements show that for the past 400 years the north magnetic pole has moved around northern Canada slowly and in a random manner. Not any more - detailed scientific studies show that it is now heading relatively rapidly towards Siberia, a consequence of the formation and influence of a narrow 'jet stream' in the Earth's liquid metal outer core.

This movement mostly affects those navigating at high latitudes, for example in the Arctic regions. In the event of failure of their primary satellite navigation systems, crew on aircraft and ships rely on backup compass-based navigation systems for which up-to-date magnetic data are needed. For example, on approach to Fairbanks airport in central Alaska aircrew would set their flight deck system to steer a course 20deg or 200deg magnetic, depending upon the prevailing wind and their direction of approach, to align with runway 2L/20R. Until 2009 they would have selected 10deg or 190deg to land on runway 1L/19R: it is the same runway and its geographic alignment has not changed - but the location of the north magnetic pole has.

In the UK below the northern tip of Scotland, i.e. at latitudes lower than about 55deg, the pole's recent movement makes only a slight difference to the declination correction necessary to convert bearings from magnetic north to true (geographic)



Historical movement of the magnetic north pole

north. But the Earth's magnetic field is steadily growing weaker and the belief of the scientific community is that it will eventually reverse, with the north and south poles changing places (and with the aurora following the north magnetic pole) in the manner of a bar magnet flipping over. Geophysical data gathered from rock formations show that magnetic field reversal has happened before but most recently in the distant past - more than 780,000 years ago. A future reversal would be gradual, probably taking more than 1,000 years to complete.

Our Events Organiser may rest easy in the knowledge that he need not yet begin thinking about reversing compass bearings in the route description for The Stride.

A tarmac-free idyll

Last year a member of the walking fraternity contacted staff of the Ordnance Survey and asked a simple question: "What is the longest distance you can walk in a straight line in Britain without encountering a road?" Rather than issue a bland and unhelpful response along the lines of 'Thank you for your recent communication but the issue to which you refer is outwith the scope of our mission statement' the geographers of that illustrious organisation were allowed to embrace the challenge and set to work with database and mathematical toolboxes.



The result represented good news and bad news: It is theoretically possible to walk 44 miles in a straight line without encountering a stretch of concrete or tarmac, but the route is in an area rather too far away to provide an opportunity for a new Sussex Group challenge event.

The straight line revealed by the OS calculations runs from the tiny settlement of Cock Bridge at the northeast corner of the Cairngorm National Park to the Pass of Drumochter in the southwest. Following a practical route between those two points would take the walker across the more remote side of the Cairngorm plateau and over the summit of Beinn a'Bhuird (3,924ft), through terrain that in the main is wild, empty and pathless, and it would involve an unsupported trek, probably of three days. Tent, stove, sleeping bag, provisions and trowel

would need to be lugged across a multitude of watercourses in wet weather, whilst clouds of midges in plague proportions would provide 24 hr entertainment in the warmer months.

Eddie Bulpitt, the Ordnance Survey geographer who made the calculation, recommends that anyone walking the route should do so from north-east to south-west, because that way refreshment is available close to the finish: "The end is not too far from the Dalwhinnie distillery ... so there is light at the end of the tunnel."

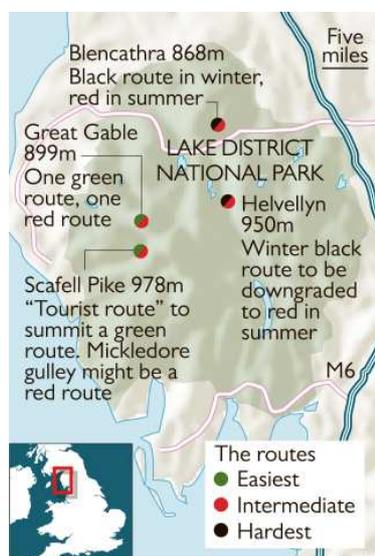
I rather like the sound of it.



View from the summit of Beinn a'Bhuird

Colour coding for popular routes

Proposals to grade popular Lake District routes in the same way as alpine ski slopes, by colour coding them from green (the easiest) to black (those suitable only for experts), have been tabled by Richard Warren, regional chairman of the Lake District Search and Rescue Association. If the initiative was to be carried through to completion the most popular hiking routes in the National Park would be rated according to their length and difficulty, with the number and nature of past rescues also being taken into account.



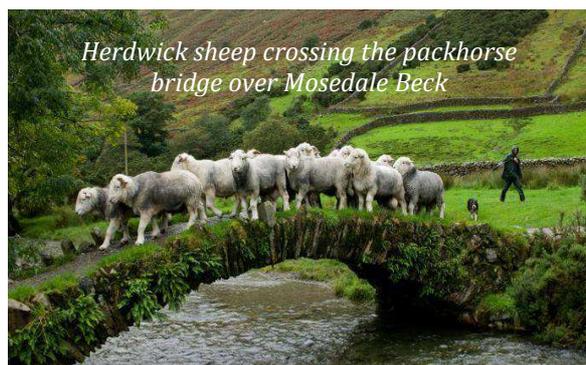
The graded route principle

The underlying purpose is to educate tourists and the many enthusiastic but inexperienced walkers who take part in the burgeoning number of fund-raising events, hopefully thereby to reduce the number of "entirely avoidable" rescues and deaths. The first stage would be to improve signage to make it clear to people what they should be wearing and what they should be carrying (map, compass, torch etc.) when venturing into and onto the mountains. Local authorities and the National Trust are understandably reluctant for Britain's most popular national park to be dotted with additional signage, but all appear to have accepted that better signs should be placed in the region's car parks and at the start point of each of the most popular routes. The fundamental (and most difficult) issue yet to be addressed is of course that of how to persuade people to take notice of what they read and to behave responsibly.

The scheme could be adopted in Sussex and I am sure we could all nominate some of our favourite Wealden areas for special grading in the wet season:

● Brown route: deep and glutinous mud

Lake District special breeds



Herdwick sheep crossing the packhorse bridge over Mosedale Beck

The Herdwick

Prized for robust health, the ability to live solely on forage, and the tendency not to stray over the difficult upland terrain of the Lake District.

The breed, native to Cumbria, was introduced into the area by Norse settlers - the name is derived from the Old Norse 'herdvyck' meaning sheep pasture.



Kilan Jornet (left) in action

The Fell Runner

Prized for extreme endurance, the ability to survive long periods on an energy bar and two bananas, and the tendency to hurtle headlong across the length and breadth of Lake District terrain.

Kilan Jornet, native to Catalonia, was lured into the area by the challenge of the annual Bob Graham Round.

you are B&Bing, camping, YHAing and then there are slow, medium and fast versions of each. The cumulative ascent on the SWCP is 4 times Everest so big mileages were a no-no. In the end I realised that I could not over-plan but my best guess would have to be the standard 48 days.

The question of **when** – and very soon the window started narrowing, I was retiring at the end of May, the school holidays are late July to end of August which would make accommodation difficult at that time, and I needed a 6-7 week uninterrupted slot of time. The best idea seemed to be go straight after retiring and hope to finish by the start of the school holidays.

The question of **who** – would it be just me on my own or with company. A few feelers were put out but no one else was interested in the whole SWCP. So solo trip then.

The question of **how** – This tied in to my value for money criterion and my desire to be flexible. B&Bs were soon ruled out, since on a single room basis with pub dinner this could easily be a budget of £100 per day and for 7 weeks that would be £4,200, not value for money. The terrible realisation soon hit that I would need to backpack although I was prepared to treat myself to the occasional B&B or YHA. But the prospect of 7 weeks of backpacking soon got a bit better when my dear walking widower ('Dear WW') of a husband volunteered to come along for the first couple of weeks and chauffeur me around to the start and finish of each day's walk.

Thus the detailed 'how' started emerging although a little hiccup occurred with the date for my eldest daughter's PhD graduation ceremony being announced for late July. We settled eventually on:

- First night in B&B in Minehead
- 1 week cottage near Bideford to do the North Devon section
- 1 week cottage near Wadebridge to do the first part of the Cornwall section south of Bude
- Then backpack on my own for about 4 weeks, taking it slowly to start with and then, as I get used to it, building up the mileage and hopefully ending up near Plymouth by the date of the graduation
- Then Dear WW suggested we then came back down together from graduation and base camp for 2/3 days in various locations for the remaining 10 days or so of the coast path. Dear WW had spent many miserable nights in tents in the Scouts 50 years ago, so this time it had to be closer to glamping.

The training regime

The strict answer is nothing. Well, nothing specific for the SWCP - instead I just trained for the Kent LDWA 100. Over the winter and spring, I trained for the Marshals' 100 by doing as many challenge events and social walks as I could.

What I did not do was train with a backpacking pack. I just hoped that first 2 weeks walking with daypack would hill-toughen me, then backpack acclimatisation would come by taking it easy for the first week carrying a full load.

... So much for the theory. Would all this be OK? ...

For that you will have to wait till the next instalment in the next Newsletter!



Jane Bates

8. Shirley Greenwood

"Welcoming", "friendly", "helpful". The same words are heard time and again from participants during Sussex Group Challenge events, or recur in written feedback provided subsequently. Our enviable reputation is in no small part due to the warm and friendly manner in which for many years Shirley has quietly and kindly (but firmly) devoted herself to the care of her 'customers' at event HQ. These two aspects of her character were displayed frequently during the annual Group Christmas lunches which, until recently, included carol singing organised and directed by her. Each year many *Cricketers* regulars would assemble in the doorway to savour (?) the 'performance' but one year a group of two unsuspecting families - parents and 3 young children - found themselves sharing the room in which the muddy walkers were belting out 'Good King Wenceslas' and the rest of the familiar repertoire. Shirley quickly charmed the youngsters into leading a verse, then signalled for their mothers to join in and finally, amazingly, caused the fathers to forget their self-consciousness and sing. And the firm side of her character? Group newcomers quickly learned not to make eye contact with her at the end of a carol, for doing so risked being chosen to sing a solo verse for the next one ... and she would brook no argument!!



Shirley (left) wearing her customary smile whilst officiating during the 2016 Sussex Stride

"I joined the LDWA as member 4733 sometime in the 70s. There were 64 members registered in 1985 but no written records for Sussex before then. Members mostly came from the east of the county. We enjoyed regular joint walks with the Kent group.

The LDWA is a great organisation, and the groups are the most important part of it. Without the active participation of group members we'd have no events and no walks. I didn't realise what an important part the LDWA would play in my life when I first joined. I've enjoyed so many wonderful walks with great company, and check-pointing has been just as rewarding.

It's been a privilege to be able to support the group as treasurer and on events. Time now to resign from the committee but I shall continue to act as recorder for the KSS Triple Challenge. This is an event dear to my heart because of the interaction and cooperation of the three groups. I wish everyone as much fun and good walking as I've had."

Thank you, Shirley, for many years of dedicated service.

A sincere "thank you" to those who have provided material for this edition