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Per-Rambulations
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Below: **WINTER WALKING
ON ASHDOWN FOREST**



I recall writing in the last *Per-Rambulations Newsletter* about what I believed then were important decisions we were having to make in the early part of 2011. I needn't have worried. Here we are in the back straight of the year, which seems to have flown by, and everything (well almost everything) seems to have gone to plan and we are now already busy planning for 2012.

The one disappointment I suppose was the cancellation of the *South Downs Way - In Stages* event through the spring and summer. A difficult event to plan and organise we do still believe there is room in a busy walking calendar for this, the alternative way to walk the National Trail. The event is aimed at those who wish to enjoy the South Downs through two seasons and at those who may find the discipline of nine consecutive days too demanding or those who are unable to take that sort of time away from work or home. Not deterred we will be organising the event again for 2012 (see overleaf for the details) and have already started to take bookings.

But first of all we have to get through another winter which seems to have started already after that beautiful Indian Summer we experienced just weeks ago, and which thankfully lasted through to the West Sussex Walking Festival. Walking in winter can be some of the most rewarding with clear skies and long views. The weather and good Sussex mud can often throw doubt on that statement and yes we have all experienced a dreadful day now and again but we always seem to get over them and begin planning the next walk.

Having the correct clothing and footwear is half the answer to those days. Recently whilst browsing through some of the latest hi-tech gear now available (yes I was out shopping!), the growth of the walking 'industry' was once again re-enforced. It seems there is now no excuse to get wet, cold, or indeed too hot, providing you have enough money! I left the shop empty handed with a list for Santa!! So go on, look forward to your winter walking.....

Terry (October 2011)

AT A GLANCE - LOOKING AHEAD 2011 & 2012

- Sun 30th Oct - Ardingly Amble - 8m Discovering Sx
 - Sun 20th Nov - Adur from both sides - 7m Discovering Sx
 - Sun 18th Dec - Xmas on Ashdown Forest - 7m Dis Sx
 - Sun 29th Jan - Discovering the Mardens - 7m Discovering Sx
 - Sun 26th Feb - A Telscombe Twosome - 8m Discovering Sx
 - Sun 25th Mar - Early Spring in Ebernoe woodland - 7m Dis Sx
 - April through to July - South Downs Way - *In Stages*
 - Sun 20th May - Hello to Henley - Per-Rambulations day walk
 - *Sat 8th/Sun 9th & Sat 22nd/Sun 23rd Sept - Ten Ways Walk
 - *Fri 5th to Sun 7th Oct - West Sussex Walking Festival
- * To be confirmed*

'DISCOVERING SUSSEX'

For two years now **Footprints of Sussex** and **Per-Rambulations** have jointly published their own walking programme, '**Discovering Sussex**'. Offering a wide range of walks across Sussex, copies of the programme are automatically sent to anyone on our e-mail lists and hopefully everyone has now received that latest edition which takes us through until March 2012.

WEST SUSSEX WALKING FESTIVAL

Assemble one hundred and seventy one walkers over three days, offer up fifteen very different walks, lead and back marked by a team of thirty-two, mix in some super walking weather and finish off with a barbecue for over one hundred and twenty offering great refreshment, and what have you got? That was the story of the 2011 West Sussex Walking Festival that took place between 7th and 9th October.

Supported as never before by organisations such as HF Holidays, the National Trust, the RSPB, Horsham Healthy Walks and Chichester Harbour Conservancy the Festival, jointly organised by Per-Rambulations and Footprints of Sussex, was a thorough success and has gone a long way in ensuring the Festival is an annual event.

Many will know this is the first year that West Sussex County Council have not been involved in any way and it was touch and go earlier in the year as to whether the event could proceed without their backing.

Both Per-Rambulations and Footprints offer a huge thank you all the Leaders and their back markers who volunteered their time and expertise to lead one or more of the walks. It goes without saying that without them the event would not have got off the ground.

Per-Rambulations and Footprints members aside those to whom we are indebted are (in no particular order):-

Gary Liddle (National Trust), Jill Shuker and Mike Powell, (Horsham Healthy Walks), Jenny Clark and Lorraine Constantine, Judi Darley and Barry Williams (Chichester Harbour Conservancy), Julia Simpson and Brenda Goodman, Liz Timmer (HF Holidays and Horsham Healthy Walks), Margaret Pearson and Emmy Goode (Horsham Healthy Walks), John and Cathy Darwood (HF Holidays), Cathy Owen and Don King.



"Wait for me!!"

HF Holidays were very supportive and by hosting the barbecue at their country house, Abingworth Hall in Thakeham, they provided the perfect location for the end of Festival celebration. Special thanks go to HF House Manager Heather, and her assistant Wendy.



Scenes from the Festival barbecue, the terrace at Abingworth Hall, tucking in and a nice plate of food.



Richard McKenna, ably supported by family members Mal and Jo, and Brenda Goodman, provided a superb selection of quality barbecue food. And if you didn't try one of the very special home made ice creams on offer then you missed a real treat.

So the next question is where do we go in 2012? We already have the dates pencilled in the diary (see page 1) and we are actively searching for a suitable venue.

So if you are someone who has a large garden, a large car park (50+ cars) and you are located in an area surrounded by an abundance of good West Sussex walking then tell us and we will do the rest!

SOUTH DOWNS WAY - IN STAGES 2012

As mentioned on page 1 we are currently organising the **South Downs Way - In Stages** event for 2012 and have already begun taking bookings, with post-dated cheques being the preferred means of securing a place at this stage. We are hopeful that there will be enough interest for the event in 2012 following the disappointment of having to cancel the 2011 walk.

We have decided to walk the Winchester to Eastbourne route, as experience has shown this to be the preferred direction, although we are aware that there may be some of you out there who are waiting to walk the trail the 'other way' one day. We have also changed the Stages that finished and started at Steyning, thereby removing the challenging and unnecessary descent and ascent in and out of the town on Days 5 and 6.

The dates and stages for the walk are as follows:

Weekend One: Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th April - Winchester to Exton (13 miles) and Exton to Queen Elizabeth Country Park (12 miles) - Springtime walking across the Hampshire Downs and finishing the weekend descending from Butser Hill, the highest point on the South Downs.

Weekend Two: Saturday 5th, Sunday 6th and Monday 7th May - Queens Elizabeth Country Park to Cocking (12 miles), Cocking to Whiteways (9 miles) and Whiteways to Washington (9 miles) - three shorter days as we cross West Sussex during springtime.

Weekend Three: Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th June - Washington to Devil's Dyke (12 miles) and Devil's Dyke to Newmarket, Lewes (12 miles) - Crossing into East Sussex with summer upon us.

Weekend Four: Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th July - Lewes to Alfriston (14 miles) and Alfriston to Eastbourne (12 miles or an alternative shorter route of 9 miles via Jevington avoiding the cliff tops of the Seven Sisters) - potentially the longest and most challenging days, but worth the effort as the journey is completed in mid-summer along what is probably the most spectacular coastline in the south of England.

The walk will be lead by **Per-Rambulations**, but you can walk at your own pace, it's your choice. Coach transport will be arranged from Horsham, Pulborough, Midhurst, Arundel, Shoreham and Lewes (depending upon where we are on the journey).

The cost? Well we have kept the cost of the full nine days down to £198. We are open to requests to walk only one, two or three of the weekends but these requests will obviously depend upon places available on the coach. The cost for individual weekends is £46 (two days) or £69 (three days). Post dated cheques are all that are required at this stage of registration

So, are you tempted to join us? If you are **please** register that interest as soon as possible. One of the problems we experienced during the organisation of the 2011 event was the amount of late interest shown, too late for us to proceed with the walk, with the requirement to confirm coach hire and other daily arrangements unable to be left to the last minute.



Picture right - Reflecting at the end of Day One in the River Meon

MOON WALKING ON THE SOUTH DOWNS

It was 9-30pm on Friday 15th July and 45 walkers gathered beneath the sweeps of Jack and Jill Windmills at Clayton to prepare for the first venture out onto the South Downs Way at night. Preparation involved donning waterproofs (rain was forecast) and snacking from the trays of savouries supplied to help sustain us on our walk and eagerly washed down with two different specially prepared summer punch's.

Daylight disappeared and we set off east towards Ditchling Beacon. Without the aid of artificial light it was surprisingly easy to following the path as the eyes became accustomed to the darkness. After some early very light drizzle it remained dry and we were able to see the lights of Brighton and the coast far below us, even if the full moon did fail to appear.

We turned and retraced our steps to complete the 6 mile walk without incident. But before setting off to our homes and warm beds we all enjoyed mugs of hot chocolate and a selection of biscuits.

A great experience and perhaps one to be repeated in the future when the full moon might just consider coming out from behind the clouds?

2012

Two other events are planned besides the South Downs Way event. On Sunday **20th May** we are off to explore **Henley-on-Thames** and the beautiful surrounding countryside and Thames Path. Booking has commenced. Numbers will be limited.

In **September** we are planning a new 4-day walk that will use some of the many long distance footpaths that exist between Winchester and Portsmouth. The "**Ten Ways Walk**" is ambitious and still in the early stages of the planning. Details will follow soon.

1066 Country of Castles and a Conqueror

The *Per-Rambulations* walking event for September this year, following successful excursions in previous years, across Surrey, into Kent and thro three Counties into Hampshire, involved crossing into East Sussex and exploring **1066 Country**.

Much of the route taken over the four days followed the official *1066 Country Path* but we couldn't resist the temptation to stray a few times (deliberately) to explore other places of interest on the way. Starting in historic Rye the 44 mile walk took in Winchelsea (where we paid our respects to Spike Milligan), Icklesham (passing Paul McCartney's windmill and recording studio), to the dramatic coastline within Hastings Country Park. On then through the Ashburnham Estate into Battle. We paused a while in Battle to allow Amanda to buy a sofa (but thats another story that only Amanda can tell !!) before onwards to Herstmonceax and finishing the walk in Pevensey.



We were blessed with wonderful weather and the countryside, although noticeably different to West Sussex, took many by surprise with its beauty and with the different views on offer each day. At the end of each day we enjoyed the delights of a tea room or pub (the *Ash Tree Inn* at Brown Bread Street is shown above) before the journey home.



Of course a quiz was held each weekend and we must congratulate both Alison Bowman and Marilyn Charleton for battling through the difficult questions and emerging winners of the special prizes.

Herstmonceux is the home of the famous Sussex Trug and a special 'lucky number' prize of a hand-crafted trug was won by Carol Short.

All in all a thoroughly enjoyable four days walking in our neighbouring county.

A very wet SOUTH DOWNS WAY

The 180 walkers taking part in this years nine day annual South Downs Way walk between Eastbourne and Winchester experienced probably the wettest weather since the event has been organised by Footprints of Sussex.

Normally blessed with great weather, most days saw something of the rain and dull weather that June threw at us this year.

However as is often the case when walking in adverse conditions it is those days that we remember and talk about in years to come. Remember the day several years ago on the same event when many walkers abandoned the walk across Chanctonbury due to the extremely strong winds? A day still talked about on quiet nights in the snug.

Its what makes walking in Britain so memorable!

And finally, a man and his dog bringing new meaning to the request for a 'comfort stop'



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