



# Newsletter and Programme

January 2010

## Happy 20th New Year!

Our 20th Anniversary plan to walk the whole of the **CAPITAL RING** starts later this month and you can read more about this route and its attractions inside. Below you'll find a copy of the passport we'll be issuing to all participants: get every section stamped and you'll receive a special completion certificate.

Other plans for 2010 are shaping up nicely. We kick off in the **SOUTH DOWNS** in February, based in a comfortable hotel where we can walk straight from the door. Just one room remains available so act now if you'd like to join us. Because of the need to book the hostel so far in advance we are now asking for deposits for **MEVAGISSEY** (May). Details inside, too, for our week in the **JULIAN ALPS** (June/July): there may still be time to join our party if you act soon, subject to flight availability. We are also planning weekends in **EXMOOR** (July) and the **BRECON BEACONS** (August). And to get you panting with anticipation, there are just a few details inside of our **SPECIAL 20TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND** in September. It's booked, but we're not saying much about it yet as we put more detailed plans into place. But do note the date in your diary now.

Like what you see in this year's programme? Prefer something else? Got a great idea for an event? Then make sure you come along and give us your ideas at the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** on 11th March. We'll go through the formalities, elect a new Committee, try to capture and act on members' ideas and cheer everyone up afterwards with a glass of wine.

One idea we're keen on is another **OUTDOOR FIRST AID COURSE**, which we now have booked for 13th February. This is a great opportunity, subsidised by SAR, to learn some new skills or brush up on the latest techniques. SAR are subsidising places on this course because of the importance we attach to first aid skills.

### MONTHLY DAY WALKS

We're sticking with our traditional 2nd Sunday for our 2010 day walks, dates as follows, and fuller details as the dates approach:

- 9th January\*
- 14th February
- 14th March\*
- 11th April
- 9th May
- 13th June
- 11th July
- 8th August
- 12th September
- 10th October\*
- 14th November
- 12th December\*

\*Capital Ring weekends

**Could you lead one of these walks? We are always looking for volunteers ... please contact anyone on the Events Committee**



Sat 9th January 9 miles <b>HIGHGATE TO HACKNEY</b> Finsbury Park, Clissold Park, Walthamstow and Hackney Marshes	Sat 9th October 10 miles <b>CRYSTAL PALACE TO WIMBLEDON</b> Biggin Wood, Norwood Grove, Streatham & Wandsworth Common
Sun 10th January 8.5 miles <b>HACKNEY TO WOOLWICH</b> The Greenway, the Olympic site, West Ham, Royal Albert Dock and Woolwich Ferry	Sun 10th October 11 miles <b>WIMBLEDON TO OSTERLEY</b> Wimbledon Common, Richmond Park and Syon House
Sat 13th March 10 miles <b>WOOLWICH TO GROVE PARK PALACE</b> Thames Barrier, Shooters Hill and Eltham Palace	Sat 11th December 10.5 miles <b>OSTERLEY TO KENTON</b> Grand Union Canal, the Millenium Maze and Harrow on the Hill
Sun 14th March 8 miles <b>GROVE PARK TO CRYSTAL PALACE</b> Beckenham Place and Crystal Palace Parks	Sun 12th December 11.5 miles <b>KENTON TO HIGHGATE</b> Barn Hill, Brent Reservoir and Park and Highgate Woods

- ✓ Join in as many of these day walks as you wish
- ✓ No overnight stays are necessary
- ✓ Travel to and from each section will be by public transport wherever possible
- ✓ Travel card discounts should limit the transport costs per person per day to under £10
- ✓ Train times will vary slightly over the year
- ✓ Last-minute route changes may need to be made if there are transport difficulties
- ✓ The daily starting time will normally be 8.30 a.m. for 8.45 a.m. at St Albans Station
- ✓ Bring a packed lunch though there will be opportunities for snacks along the way
- ✓ Your passport will be stamped on the day for each section walked
- ✓ If you complete the whole route you will receive a special certificate

Name .....

# Forthcoming Programme

All events in January, February and March

## Express interest!

Helps us get a handle on likely numbers. It does NOT constitute a firm booking.

## Book now!

To secure a place you need to confirm your participation with the named contact and send them a deposit cheque payable to St Albans Rambler.

All monies paid to SAR are accepted on the understanding that members agree the terms in the Finance Policy.

## Fully booked!

If you're interested in an event flagged fully booked, do ring the event contact. Participants drop out sometimes, especially for events planned a long way in advance. We may still be able to find you a space.

And apologies if you find many events fully booked. We have to work well in advance to secure the accommodation we want, especially at peak times.

## Your ideas?

Please ring one of the Events Co-ordination Team if you have an idea for a walk or event or have seen a good place to stay. Even if you don't want to organise or lead, we can pass ideas on for further investigation.

**SATURDAY 9TH AND SUNDAY 10TH JANUARY 2010**

### **Capital Ring Stage 1**

**THE CAPITAL RING** threads its way through London's parks and green spaces for 78 miles. We'll be tackling the whole thing in sections to celebrate our 20th walking season. Liz has produced a 'Passport' for participants which you can have stamped with every section you complete. Walked the whole route? Then you'll receive our special certificate at the end of the year. The guide book, **The Capital Ring Path Guide**, by Colin Saunders, is highly recommended.



Our Saturday route (9 miles) starts at Highgate, where the underground station is the deepest in the network. We walk along the path of an abandoned railway track to Finsbury Park and Clissold Park. The original north London reservoirs and filter beds are here and the pumping station is now a museum. The 'New river', neither a river nor new, flows here. Abney Park Cemetery has the grave of William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. We finish on Hackney Marshes. On Sunday we walk along the canal towpath, cross rivers and move towards the Thames and the Olympic village. Later we explore the dock area of Woolwich and cross on the Woolwich Ferry to journey's end.

[www.walklondon.org.uk](http://www.walklondon.org.uk)

**Mike and Tina 01727 962788**

**THURSDAY 21ST JANUARY 2010**

### **January Weekday Walk: Ware**

An easy 6 miles or so on footpaths and towpaths through Ware and Hertford.

**TUESDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2010**

### **February Weekday Walk: Shenley**

Starting and finishing at the tea rooms: what a great idea for winter! Our circular walk will be about 6-7 miles and we should be back in time for tea or something more substantial.

**Book now!**

**SATURDAY 13TH FEBRUARY 2010**

### **Outdoor First Aid Training**

Some time has elapsed since we last ran a course and a number of you have asked if we could run another. We've arranged for our Red Cross trainers Adrian and Glen to run a course covering emergency first aid in the morning and walking-related first aid in the afternoon. It will give you plenty of hands-on experience to develop skills and build confidence in the company of other SAR members. We should finish around 5.00 p.m.

We value such skills among members and this course is suitable if you are a first-timer, or if you need to brush up existing knowledge. Because of its importance, SAR is subsidising this event to the tune of £20 per head, meaning the cost to you is just £30 (including a light lunch and tea and coffee during the day). Numbers are limited so book early to guarantee a place.

**SUNDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2010**

### **February Day Walk: Great Missenden**

Celebrate Valentine's Day, and hope for its traditionally fine weather, on this 7-8 mile circuit in the Chilterns, taking in the pretty villages of Little Kingshill, Great Kingshill and Prestwood.

**Last chance!**

**19TH TO 21ST FEBRUARY 2010**

### **South Downs**

Findon Manor Hotel is actually the old rectory, the oldest parts of the building dating to 1584. Findon village appears in Domesday book and was once an important crossroads between the Lewes/Chichester coach road and the London/Worthing turnpike. The hotel is also home to the Snooty Fox bar, which functions as the local pub and features in the Good Beer Guide.

## Joining a day walk

Please ring the contact a few days in advance for full details: start time, directions, car sharing, etc. They will look out for you, especially if you are a new member.

If you're unable to come please try to let the organiser know, so we don't keep the whole party waiting. Most organisers can give you a mobile phone number.

## Your safety

Our leaders take all reasonable care for the safety of the party. But it's your responsibility to see that you are properly equipped, to take responsibility for your own safety and that of others. SAR has appropriate Public Liability Insurance but you should have your own personal accident cover.

## Our next

Our next committee meeting will be 18th February. If you have items for consideration please send to Angela by 10th February. The next newsletter will be on 1st March 2010. If you have anything for inclusion, please send to Dee by 18th February.

Early risers may see the race horses from the village's stable exercising nearby.

Close by are the impressive ramparts of Cissbury hillfort (over a mile round), site of a giant flint mining operation in the Iron Age. We will certainly walk there, and to nearby Chanctonbury fort and on Church Hill. Both Saturday and Sunday we shall be able to walk straight from the door, taking in parts of the South Downs Way and the Monarch's Way.

**We have just one room left, suitable for a couple, two sharing or a single. Cost for two nights B&B plus dinner with drinks on Saturday and tea on Sunday afternoon will be just £120. NO single rooms, so there a £50 surcharge for single occupancy of a double. To book send a cheque for £50 to Dee now.**

### THURSDAY 11TH MARCH 2010

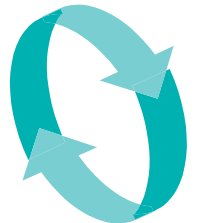
#### Annual General Meeting

As usual we'll be at St Michael's Parish Centre from 7.30 p.m. Receive the accounts for 2009, hear the review of the year's activities and reports from members of the Committee, elect committee members for the coming year and air your views on what we did last year and what you'd like to see in future. A glass of wine afterwards ...

### SATURDAY 13TH AND SUNDAY 14TH MARCH 2010

#### Capital Ring Stage 2

**THE CAPITAL RING** threads its way through London's parks and green spaces for 78 miles. We'll be tackling the whole thing in sections to celebrate our 20th walking season. Liz has produced a 'Passport' for participants which you can have stamped with every section you complete. Walked the whole route? Then you'll receive our special certificate at the end of the year. The guide book, **The Capital Ring Path Guide**, by Colin Saunders, is highly recommended.



On Saturday we walk from Woolwich, for views of the Thames Barrier, via Shooters Hill and Eltham Palace to Grove Park. On Sunday our section takes us through to Crystal Palace, where you may spot some dinosaurs, by way of Beckenham Place Park.

[www.walklondon.org.uk](http://www.walklondon.org.uk)

Liz and Malcolm 01727 851420

### TUESDAY 23RD MARCH 2010

#### March Weekday Walk: Northchurch and Ashridge

A six-mile circular walk starting at Northchurch Common, climbing up through the Ashridge Estate, with views over the Bulbourne Valley) and returning along the Grand Union Canal and through the streets of Berkhamstead.

## Advance dates for your diary

Book now!

### FRIDAY 14TH TO MONDAY 17TH MAY 2010

#### South-West Coast Path 5: Mevagissey

Our next stretch of the SWCP will be based in the beautiful area around Mevagissey in Cornwall. We will be staying at Boswinger YHA for three nights and intend to do two circular walks that take in long stretches of the coastal path. On the Monday morning, before coming home, we have the option to visit either the Eden Project or The Lost Gardens of Heligan.

**Cost around £80 for three nights B&B and packed lunches. Travel using own transport. Evening meals will be extra (either self catering or at local pubs). Owing to changes in YHA policy we have to confirm numbers now, and there's no guarantee that further places will be available later. To confirm your space please send £25 to Pat and Ray (9 Bridle Close, St Albans AL1 4DL) now.**



**Last  
chance!**

**26TH JUNE TO 3RD JULY 2010**

### **Julian Alps, Slovenia**

The Julian Alps are the most south-easterly part of the central European Alps, and Bohinj is in the south-east on the borders of the Triglav National Park, named for Mount Triglav ('three-headed') at 2864 metres. We will be staying in the Hotel Jezero (*right*) centrally located in Bohinj right by the lake. Beside the fantastic local walking and scenery it has a swimming pool, fitness centre, sauna, mini-golf and garden. There are boat trips on the lake and the possibility of a day trip to Bled Castle, as well as to other historical and cultural sites. Excellent, well-marked walks at both high and low level, supported by cable car.



**Cost per person half-board in a twin 462 euros or 532 euros in a single. Flights from Stanstead to Ljubiana are currently £125 (non-refundable), and have now been booked for those who have paid a deposit. Places may still be available subject to flights. You will also need to allow for airport transfers at both ends, lunches and incidental costs. To confirm your place please send a cheque for £200 to Meg.**

**Express  
interest!**

**FRIDAY 23RD TO MONDAY 26TH JULY 2010**

### **Exmoor**

To make the most of the distance we are making this a long weekend, travelling down on Friday and returning Monday after a half-day walk. Our base is the YHA at Exford in the heart of the moor, a beautiful Victorian house with mostly small dorms.

Our Saturday route (about 10 miles) takes us to the Chains, one of the most extensive areas of unenclosed moorland remaining, and the source of many of Exmoor's rivers. On Sunday it's Lorna Doone Country. Starting in the valley of Badgeworthy, we pass through an atmospheric landscape of bracken-covered coombes, rock-strewn streams and empty moorland, made more attractive by its literary connections. On Monday morning (optional) we shall visit Withypool and Tarr Steps.

**The cost of three nights accommodation with breakfast and dinner provided by the hostel and our usual DIY packed lunches will be around £100. You'll need to allow for travel to Exmoor and for optional meals at a local pub.**

**Express  
interest!**

**FRIDAY 13TH TO SUNDAY 15TH/MONDAY 16TH AUGUST 2010**

### **Brecon Beacons**

We'll be in the recently refurbished hostel at Llwyn-y-Celyn, right at the foot of Pen-y-Fan, the highest mountain in the Beacons range. On Saturday and Sunday we'll have full day walks in these splendid mountains, straight from the door. You'll have the option to stay over on Sunday night too, with a half-day walk on the Monday morning. The hostel will cater for our breakfasts and dinners, but we'll make our own packed lunches as usual.

**The cost of accommodation in 2- and 4-bed rooms is likely to be in the region of £75 pp for two nights or £110 for three nights.**

**FRIDAY 24TH TO SUNDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2010**

### **Special 20th Anniversary Weekend: 'An Oxford College'**

Hold the date! This special weekend will see us dining in an Oxford College on Saturday evening and exploring the rolling Oxfordshire downland and river valleys on Saturday and Sunday. Heaps of accommodation options, from a luxury night in college, via the YHA, local B&B or even a good campsite. If you don't want to stay over it's close enough to get home afterwards.

Full details in our March issue.



# Recent local outings

## NOVEMBER DAY WALK: GREAT AND LITTLE HORMEAD.

We met on a sunny Remembrance Sunday in Great Hormead, with its 14th century church, and soon discovered the charms of this and Little Hormead, to the south with its smaller but older Norman church. Our path through the fields and lanes was circular as we crossed the road where we had left our cars having previously stopped for two minutes silence at 11am.

We then followed Black Ditch stream northwards and caught sight of the timber-framed and rendered Hormead Hall with its octagonal brick chimneys. This was soon followed by the Brick House built in the 16th century, so named because of the then unusual material used for its construction. The group proceeded past Anstey Bury Farm through arable land to a suitable high point where we stopped for our picnic lunch.

Later we augmented this with a stop for refreshments outside the Chequers in Anstey and thence for a look at the motte and bailey behind St George's Church. The Hertfordshire Way led us back to Great Hormead to remove several inches of the countryside from our walking boots! Many thanks to Richard and Penny for researching and leading us on this delightful walk.

**Chris**

## NOVEMBER WEEKDAY WALK. KEW AND RICHMOND.

On a brilliantly sunny and warm day, our little group met at St Albans station and picked up one more walker at Radlett. We arrived at Richmond and proceeded to Sheen Common. We walked through woodland paths rather than open land, quiet and calm and into Richmond

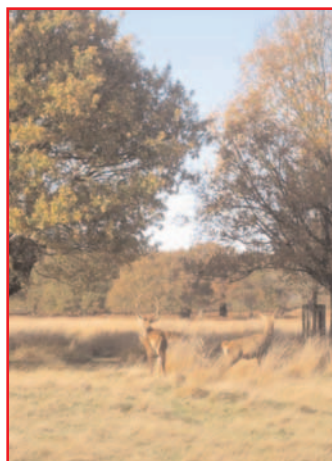


**Great and Little Hormead. Above, Richard's compass bearing keeps us on track but we still have to scrape half of Hertfordshire off our boots after crossing this field. Below, Richard and Liz play photographic snap!**

Park. It was looking lovely in the sun, golden leaves still on a few trees and appears to have changed very little in fifty years. We walked up to a high point with clear views of London and picked out Tate Modern, the London Eye, St Paul's and round to the Wembley Arch. Below us were Penn Ponds, almost a Mediterranean blue. Walking past them we saw several deer well camouflaged by the bracken,



**Richmond. Left, hazy winter sunshine. Right, we spot some local residents**



a horse rider and ducks, very tranquil.

We then went along Ham Common and up the long drive towards the house which looked very imposing and round to the towpath. There we sat on a sunny bench for our picnic, viewing the river with a grebe, ducks, many boats tied up and the odd person rowing. The tide was very full as we walked to Richmond up the hill to the viewpoint, seeing the North Downs in the distance. Then down Richmond Hill with its fascinating shops to the river and along to Kew, seeing Syon House and alongside Kew Gardens on the way.

We made our way to Kew station and had a slightly interesting journey, getting on a tube instead of the Overground train. This was rectified and we arrived at West Hampstead to run for a train to beat the cheap ticket deadline. Our leader was in front and gallantly held the doors for the rest of us to get in.

This was a truly memorable walk and great thanks to Jane for organising it and looking after us. **Janice**

**END-OF-SEASON PARTY.** Sadly none of our photographers were in action at the St Michael's Parish Centre to record the goings-on at our last social event of the year. So if you weren't there you'll just have to imagine it ...

Thanks to all those who contributed food, wine and entertainment.

## DECEMBER DAY WALK: WINDSOR.

Seven of us met at Bishops Gate on a cold but dry morning. We headed south through Cumberland Gate then skirted round the back of Savill Gardens to the visitor centre: coffee was very tempting but we had only walked a mile so carried on past The Obelisk – commissioned by King George II to commemorate the services of his son William Duke of Cumberland and his victory at Culloden – and along a broad grassy ride on the edge of Smith's Lawn heading for Cumberland Lodge, Chaplains Lodge and Snow Hill with its imposing Copper Horse, the equestrian memorial to George III.

Here, at the highest point in the park, we had panoramic views down the Long Walk to Windsor Castle, across to Heathrow and even Wembley

## WALKING GRADES

*Just how far are we going, how much climbing, what sort of terrain?*

For some time we've been aware that we're not always giving as much info as members might like or need about the nature of our planned walks. As a result we're adopting a modification of Ramblers Holidays grading. This tells you about how long and tough walks are, and what kind of footwear and other equipment we expect you to bring along.

For all our walks, except local walks of short duration in good weather, participants should always have adequate waterproofs and warm layers, as well as adequate food and drink.

We'll be using this to grade all our weekend events from the next newsletter.

### **GRADE E: EASY**

For people who wish to enjoy the hills and mountains but without too much strenuous activity and at a slow pace. Expect three to five hours walking per day. Opportunities for relaxing or sight-seeing.

We recommend walking boots with good ankle support, moulded soles and waterproof, breathable uppers.

### **GRADE D: EASY TO MODERATE**

Reasonably energetic walking on hills, rather than mountains, but not too strenuous although some paths may be rough. The average daily walking less than five hours.

We recommend walking boots with good ankle support, moulded soles and waterproof, breathable uppers.

### **GRADE D+: MODERATE**

Energetic days among hills and easy mountain walking. Daily walking time about six hours.

Walking boots with good ankle support, moulded soles and waterproof, breathable uppers are essential.

### **GRADE C: MODERATE TO HARD**

Daily walking time about six hours.

Walking boots with good ankle support, moulded soles and waterproof, breathable uppers are essential and mandatory for safety and insurance reasons.

### **GRADE C+: HARD**

Strenuous, exciting and challenging, with up to seven hours walking and occasional scrambling.

Walking boots with good ankle support, moulded soles and waterproof, breathable uppers are essential and mandatory for safety and insurance reasons.

### **GRADE B: HARD TO SEVERE**

Hard walking and scrambling, up to an average of eight hours daily. High altitudes are likely to be reached.

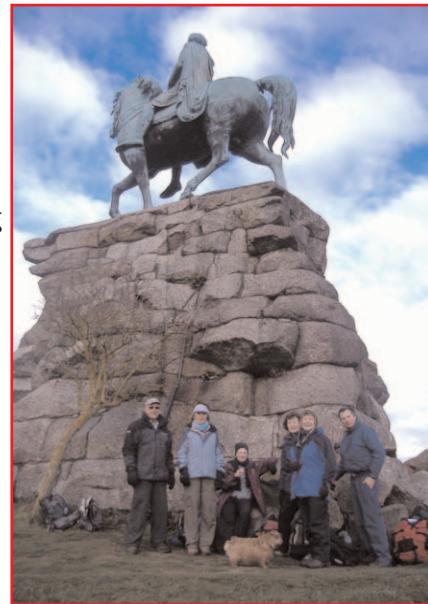
Walking boots with good ankle support, moulded soles and waterproof, breathable uppers are essential and mandatory for safety and insurance reasons, as is previous experience of hard mountain walking. A good head for heights is also necessary.

Stadium in the distance.

The wide green track of Queen Anne's Ride then took us to yet another equestrian statue, but this time a more recent one of our Queen marking her jubilee.

Walking through the farmland that flanks Duke's Lane brought us to a nice quiet woodland spot overlooking the lesser known part of Virginia Water, just ideal for lunch.

We then returned to the visitor centre via Valley Gardens for a welcome cuppa. **Meg**



**Windsor: at the Copper Horse**

## 2010 Subscriptions

If you've not renewed your sub already, now's the time to act so you can be sure of joining us on our great selection of events this year. £14 for a single or £22 for two members at the same address. Send your cheque to Bryan now.

If you've already paid, we thank you and you'll find your membership card with this issue (or by post if you get the electronic version).

