

## REPORT of the RIDGEWAY WALK on SATURDAY 12 MAY 2012 by ALAN SMITH



Some of the 96 special 50th anniversary cupcakes made by Lesley Chandler for checkpoint 6. (photo Dave Dare)

**WEATHER** After several very wet weeks preceding this year's walk, a small miracle happened; the 12<sup>th</sup> May was dry and sunny with excellent visibility. For the past two years, these scenarios have been reversed. It was a bit chilly at first, especially in exposed places but it became warmer later in the day; some walkers got a tan.

**CONDITIONS UNDERFOOT** These were remarkably dry with a little bit of give though the first few miles are still rutted and there was some water about.

**COACH TIMINGS** Unless walkers had their exact start times recorded by a marshal at Overton Hill, or they were runners with an 08:30 start time, start times for walkers on the coaches were adjusted by adding five minutes to the time of arrival of the respective coaches they were on. The arrival times (adjusted times in brackets) were – **coach 1** - 07:40 (07:45); **coach 2** - 07:50 (07:55); **coach 3** — 07:50 (07:55); **coach 4** - 08:10(08:15).

**STATISTICS** We limited the entry to the 40 mile walk to 300, though we accepted entrants up to 325 on the basis that there would, inevitably, be cancellations. As cancellations came in, we filled up the vacated spaces with people on a waiting list and we actually had 300 potential walkers on the day. As it turned out, there were a considerable number of no shows without any notice that they weren't coming. The number of starters was 272 (including one dog) and 250 of these completed the walk.

The fastest time of 6 hours 05 minutes was recorded by Peter Cusick while the last walkers were Ian Smith and his 14 year old son, Tom, in 14 hours 53 minutes. At the other end of the age scale, Derek Savage recorded his third crossing at the age of 80.

The record number of 40 mile starters was 274 in 2011 but the number of finishers this year is the highest ever recorded. One walker, Edmund Walters slipped over shortly after the start and injured his right knee. He struggled on to checkpoint (CP) 3 but was so late arriving there that he had to retire. Meanwhile, Shahina Ahmed took a wrong turning at Barbury Castle and followed the Ridgeway National Trail down towards Ogbourne St George, adding three miles to the route. This put her at the back of the field and she was scraping in at each CP near its closing time. At CP6, she decided to retire.

In the 20 mile walk, organised by Ron Cutler, there were 66 starters and 64 finishers. The fastest time was recorded by Hannah Rees in 5 hours and the slowest was Maggie Weir in 8 hours 14 minutes.

**BARBURY CASTLE TOILETS** The toilet block in Barbury Castle car park has closed for technical reasons. Apparently, a bore of 200 metres is needed to reach a water and special equipment for this has to be brought in from abroad. We arranged for a portalo to be placed at checkpoint 1.

**The Bull at Streatley** Another alteration affecting the Ridgeway Walk was the closure this year of The Bull at Streatley. Marshals and a few walkers who had booked accommodation there had to decamp to other locations in Streatley and Goring as it wasn't known when the Bull would re-open if, indeed, it re-opened at all. As it turned out, a new landlord and landlady took over the pub which was refurbished and it then opened on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May. The new management was informed about the Ridgeway Walk but they were unprepared for requests for meal after 9.00p.m. and several Ridgeway Walkers were disappointed.

**Organisers of the Ridgeway Walk** This is the last year that I will organise the walk. It was February 1997 when Ridgeway walkers learnt that, following the retirement of the previous organiser, Charlie Pritchard, no successor had come forward and that there would be no Ridgeway Walk that year. However, I and a few others cobbled together a walk for 1997 and from 1998 I took over full responsibility for organising the walk.

The walk was popular with a small group of veterans who turned up year after year, but I saw the possibility of making it more widely popular. Numerous improvements were made and old traditions restored and each year the walk got better. I was helped in the organisation by Stuart Walker who took over organising the marshalling in 2005 and, in 2008, Anne Goulding took over registration of entries, a job which became increasingly onerous especially after we introduced internet entry in 2011 and in this year when the number of entries reached figures undreamt of in 1997/8.

In addition to this help, I co-opted willing helpers from amongst my friends to run several CPs, one of which is the now legendary CP6 with its tea and cakes and general bonhomie which enabled many a flagging walker to recharge batteries and go on to the end. After 2012, my friends at CP6 are standing down to have a well earned 'retirement' after 15/16years working for Ridgeway Walkers.

This year, along with the flapjacks, bread pudding and ginger cake, CP6 was supplied with lemon drizzle cake (as in 2011) baked by marshal Helen Walker, a lightly fruited cake with cardamom baked by walker Marlena Kniestedt and cup cakes made by Lesley Chandler. The cup cakes were each surmounted by a sugary representation of the general cloth badge of the walk. Many thanks to Helen, Marlene and Lesley.

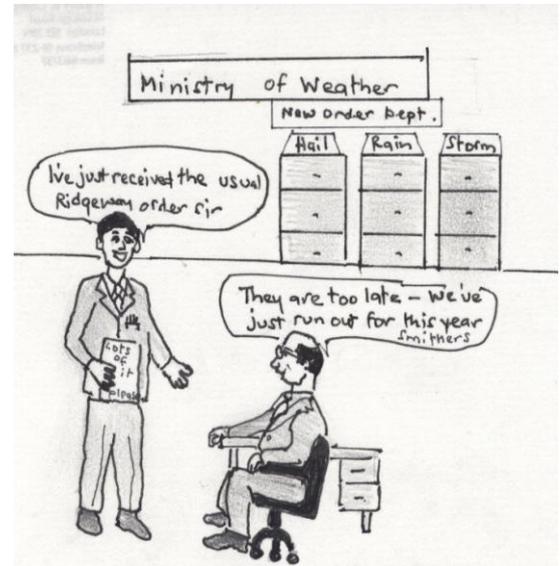
Lesley Chandler is the daughter of the wardens of Marlborough Youth Hostel who hosted the Ridgeway walk at the western end of the walk from 1963 to 1966. Lesley entered the walk this year and recorded a finishing time of 13h 45m. Lesley contacted me last year, having found the walk on the web. Coincidentally, I also heard from Jan Pearson, the daughter of the Marlborough hostel wardens in 1962, the year of the first Ridgeway walk. Jan helped out with the marshalling this year and enjoyed herself so much that she intends to help out again.

Another walker, Barrie Dannenberg, supplied the sandwiches for CP4 (as in 2011) which he and his wife Bee prepared on the night before the walk. Many thanks to you, too, Barrie and Bee.

Thanks also to Nick Crivich, manager of Streatley Youth Hostel, and his assistants Anthony and Kathy Drake, for, once again, going out of their way to make the running of the walk at the hostel end of the walk go smoothly. Thanks also to the team from St John Ambulance, comprising several volunteers new to the Ridgeway Walk who provided medical cover and to Raynet who provided excellent communications and directed our drivers to the places where retirees needed transport.

I am also grateful to all the marshals mentioned in the list of marshals whose joint efforts ensured the smooth running of the walk. I also thank Neil Higham of the LDWA who lent us, in the words of Pam Deverill, 'a monstrous gas tea urn,' which Mike Acott and Heather Owen spent much of the afternoon topping up. The urn made the lives of those providing tea at CP6 much easier than it would have been without it.

Thanks to Dave Wright for the cartoons on this page and on page 9. **Photos** on this year's walk were taken by Dave Dare and can be viewed at [www.dgdare.com](http://www.dgdare.com) and copies purchased.



**Checkpoint 4**

**(photo Dave Dare)**

**An unexpected award** On the evening 12 May, I was presented with a large clock by Ron Cutler on behalf of Reading Outdoor Group in recognition of my (in the words of the accompanying card) "diligent, detailed and conscientious work in organising 16 very successful Ridgeway Walks."

**Future of the Ridgeway Walk** A wide search amongst Ridgeway walkers, Ramblers and LDWA groups resulted in Phil Heneghan (a Wilts LDWA Group member) offering to take over the organisation of the walk. His LDWA group have **declined to take** over the walk as they already have a challenge walk of their own (the Pewsey Downsaround). So Phil and a few like-minded friends have formed a separate organisation called the **Ridgeway 40 Walk Association**.

Phil and his friends can do with all the help they can get. Many marshals have said that, all things being equal, they will be prepared to help out on future Ridgeways. But, Phil would appreciate a few more volunteers to marshal and to take part in the organisation itself. In particular, a volunteer to oversee hostel bookings and liaise with Streatley hostel would be very useful. Please contact Phil at [phil.heneghan@virgin.net](mailto:phil.heneghan@virgin.net).

The association will organise the walk on the same lines as hitherto and the next walk will be on **Saturday, 11 May 2013**. Those walkers who have expressed no objection to their details being passed to the new organiser(s) may hear from the association with details of the 2013 walk.

---

**2012 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first walk.** This took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1962, an extraordinarily significant date for reasons unconnected with the Ridgeway Walk. The following is an article about the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1962, most of which was published in Strider, the journal of the Long Distance Walkers Association and which appeared in abbreviated form elsewhere. The article will also appear in my updated history of the walk which will be made available to all those involved in the 2012 walk later this year.

## **Just Another Saturday – The Day of the First Ridgeway Walk**

The first Ridgeway Walk took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1962, a day that we came closer than we have probably ever been before or since to nuclear war.

Five days earlier, the world had learned through an address to the US nation by President Kennedy that the USSR had covertly constructed missile sites on Cuba.

The President was wrestling with the problem of getting the missiles removed from Cuba without starting a war. Days had passed with no progress being made in that direction. The situation became most tense on the 27<sup>th</sup> October.

US warships were patrolling the seas to prevent further missiles and equipment being shipped to Cuba. And American U2 reconnaissance planes were flown over the island to check on the progress of bringing the missiles to launch status. About 10.00 (local time) on the 27<sup>th</sup> October, a U2 was shot down and, later that day, another U2 strayed into USSR airspace prompting Soviet and then American fighters to be scrambled. No shooting took place. But President Kennedy had to rein in his military men who were getting increasingly anxious to take action against the missiles on Cuba.

The US was coming under threat as never before but the battleground, if it came, would have been as much in the UK as anywhere else because we had nuclear weapons trained on the Soviet Union.

In this nuclear age, with warheads deliverable by missiles across a continent in minutes, minutes counted. And this war, if it came, would not start like earlier ones with ultimatums and deadlines. Winning, or perhaps just survival, might depend on getting your retaliation in first!

In Britain our V bomber force and Thor missile sites were brought to a high state of alert. On the 27<sup>th</sup> October, bomber crews were stationed by their aircraft, which were armed with their deadly payload, and missiles readied to launch. Each were prepared to set off at 15 minutes notice or less as soon as it was known that a nuclear attack was being made on the US from Cuba or was on its way to Britain. But, the British public knew nothing of this and the prospect that we faced possible annihilation; as Mike Thompson said in the BBC programme 'Document' in 2008 'For most of Britain it was just another Saturday'.

The media was, of course full of the crisis but, hey, this was the weekend, time for sport and entertainment. And wasn't Cuba an American problem anyway?

There were the usual sporting fixtures including the first home win for Arsenal since the 21<sup>st</sup> August; Arsenal beat Wolverhampton Wanderers by five goals to four. There was racing at Newbury and steeplechasing at Towcester. Sports enthusiasts could watch the English Empire Games on Independent Television (ITA) or listen to reports of various sports on the BBC

Light programme and cricket fans would have been disappointed to hear that the MCC was not doing as well as it was hoped against the Western Australia Combined XI.

Those with television could enjoy the popular BBC programmes such as 'Lone Ranger' or 'Dixon of Dock Green' while ITA offered 'Bonanza' and 'The Avengers'. People who preferred the cinema could see such films as 'Term of Trial' starring Laurence Olivier and the first James Bond film, 'Dr No' while 'The 300 Spartans' could be seen in London.

It was a significant day for some people. The villagers of Scholes in Yorkshire voted in favour of replacing their street gas lamps with electric ones. And at Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight, the Beatles recorded their first radio interview for a programme called "Sunday Spin" which was subsequently broadcast on close circuit radio to patients of Cleaver and Clatterbridge hospital.

It was also an important day for Reading and District Local Group of the Youth Hostels Association. The group was holding a challenge walk along the Ridgeway between Streatley and Marlborough hostels.

However, had the enthusiastic hostellers of Reading and those who had entered the walk known the true situation regarding the crisis facing the country, they might well have wanted to be with their families trying to find out how they could minimise the risks of death and radiation or preparing to die in the company of those they loved.

Had the threat been known and the walk postponed, this would have been another in a series of postponements which had pushed the date of the walk back to the end of October.

The walk was originally planned for July by another group which had got cold feet about what they had taken on. The warden of Streatley Youth Hostel asked Reading Group if they could help.

Reading Group fixed a new date of 30<sup>th</sup> September, but this clashed with another big YHA event so the date was put back to the 27<sup>th</sup> October, the day before summer time ended.

The number of starters was lower than expected, but this was nothing to do with the international crisis; the weather had been very wet during the week. Out of 25 to 30 entries, only 17 turned up, one more than the number of group members marshalling the walk. Walkers were given the choice of walking in either direction so checkpoints at both ends of the walk had to be set up early and remained open late.

Understandably for a first effort, several things went awry. Underestimating the speed of the walkers, a few marshals walking to their checkpoints were overtaken by participants or arrived only shortly before the walkers. In the cold temperatures, it was hard to get water hot enough for tea, and an urn containing soup was inadvertently left unused on the roadside miles away from the checkpoint where the soup was to have been served.

Communication between checkpoints was by means of two roving marshals on a scooter. It sometimes took as long for them to get from one checkpoint to another as it did for the walkers to walk between them. And as marshals hadn't been told how many starters there were, those near Barbury Castle decided to remain at their camp overnight in case any late walkers were still to come after the last ones arrived at 20.05

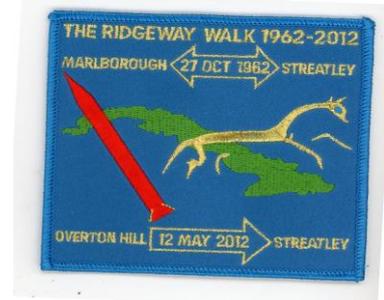
Across the Atlantic, at 19.45 (Washington time), Attorney-General Robert Kennedy was discussing the Cuban crisis with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin. During that discussion, as well as repeating an offer made earlier that day to the Soviet Government, Kennedy suggested a secret deal to remove American Jupiter missiles from Turkey which had become another Soviet demand.

On the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> October, the Soviet Union agreed to remove the missiles from Cuba in exchange for the US's agreement not to invade the island. Later American Jupiter missiles were withdrawn from Turkey, though this was not flagged up as part of the deal.

The great powers had pulled back from the brink of nuclear war. But important benefits flowed from the crisis. The US and the USSR took action to help ensure that a situation like the Cuban missile crisis did not occur again. In 1963, a hot line between Moscow and Washington was set up so the leaders could speak directly to each other, and arms control agreements and a nuclear test ban treaty were signed.

The world breathed a sigh of relief on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> October, at least the part of the world which knew what was going on. The Ridgeway Walkers probably breathed a sigh of relief that the long walk was over. But these walkers not only each received a certificate to mark their achievement but the warden of Marlborough Youth Hostel, Norman Pearson also marked it. Addressing the members on Sunday morning he said something to the effect that, "While you lot have been bimbling about getting on and off buses and going in and out of pubs, this lot, [indicating the Ridgeway Walkers] have walked 40 miles."

**TO MARK THE 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**, every participant in this year's walk will receive a free badge pictured aside (in a reduced form). The badge reflects the tense international crisis referred to in the above article. The rocket is based on the Soviet SS4 rocket which had a range of about 1100 miles. Nine missile sites were being prepared in Cuba, six for SS4s and three for SS5s which had a range of about 2200 miles. Between them, the rockets brought every US city under threat (with the exception of Seattle).



<b>THE RIDGEWAY WALK INDIVIDUAL LEAGUE TABLE 2012</b> (Includes crossings on dates other than the traditional Ridgeway Walk dates.) *					
		Nicholas Syfret	13	Trevor Powell	7
		Linda Wright	13	Peter Servante	7
		Gerald F Bateman	12	Paul Caines	6
		Ian Campbell	12	Ian Davis	6
		Gerry McEvilly	12	Bob Emmerson	6
		Mike Sandford	11	Nigel Hickson	6
Dave Wright	45	Martin Bingle	10	John Hobbs	6
Geoffrey Dumper	41	Barrie Dannenberg	10	Rebecca Lawrence	6
Ken Royce	38	John Harrison	10	Sue Leonard	6
Graham Butler	37	Marta Janiskova	10	Deanne Macbeth	6
David Young	37	Ian Mitchell	10	David Powell	6
Colin Saunders	36	Norman W Smith	10	Graham Sarah	6
Pete Clegg	35	Tom Stagles	10	Richard Spraggett	6
Carl Roe	31	Edmund Walters	10	Lesley Secker	6
Bob McGavin	31	James Whittaker	10	Robert Attwood	5
Neil Lawrence	26	Douglas Aspinall	9	Jenny Boyle	5
Alan Smith	25	Peter Darnell	9	Bradley Bright	5
Christopher Cambray	24	Malcolm T W Green	9	Patrick Breydin	5
Ken Fancett	24	Peter Naish	9	Fiona Cameron	5
Mike Kershaw	23	Helen Rosamund Abbott	8	Emily Danaee	5
Alan Palmer	23	John Beardsley	8	Peter A Edwards	5
Ken Saunders	23	Philip Bedford	8	Stuart Fletcher	5
Bill Colson	22	J Comber	8	David Hall	5
Ernie North	21	Jono Dennis	8	Anthony Hammond	5
Derek Smith	21	Dr Francis L Thomason	8	Jason Harrison	5
Abigail Elrick	20	David P Wright	8	David Hoben	5
John Elrick	20	David Cleverley	7	Alan Iwi	5
John Rollinson	20	Vaughan Dennis	7	Alistair Lawry	5
Michael Clarke	17	Susan Goddard	7	Pip Lloyd	5
David Sheldrake	17	Susan Gunning	7	Anthony Maplesden	5
John Harding	16	John Leather	7	Michael J Middleton	5
Steve Rackett	16	Catherine Mann	7	Keith Rix	5
Colin John	15	Andrew McMinn	7	Tim Smee	5
Mike Cambray	14	Victoria Morris	7	Ian Smith	5
Susan Clements	14	Connie Pflanz	7	Helen Thurman	5
Walter Cullis	14	Simon Plint	7	Dan Unwin	5

\*Anytime crossings: Some walkers are not always able to enter the walk on the day fixed because of other commitments or for other reasons. Some of these walkers do the walk as a private walk and I have awarded certificates to them, resulting in some increments in the number of their crossings in the above table. Amongst these walkers are Mike Cambray, Bill Colson, Bob McGavin and myself (each in 13h09m on 8 September 2001), Abigail and John Elrick (each in approximately 12 hours on 9 April 2005) and Andrew McMinn (10h39m on 23 May 2008). And, on 11 July 2011, Barry Everett did the walk in 13 hours.

I have also decided to mark Jason Harrison's overnight crossings from east to west on the night before (and early morning) before the 'official' walk in 2010 and 2011. Entrants had the option of doing the walk in either direction in the early years of the walk and I see no reason why an east to west crossing should not count nowadays. Accordingly, Jason's crossings have increased to five, bringing him into the Individual League table for the first time.

## MARSHALS

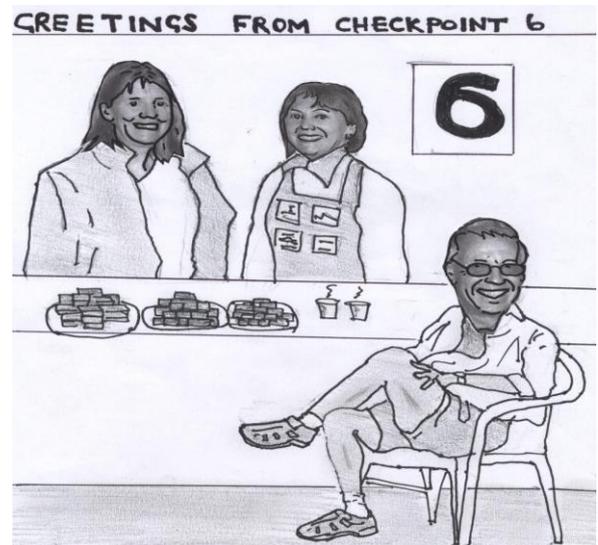
[Regular type - marshals who were at CPs for part of the time the CPs were open.]

Coach	<b>Graham Butler, Gail and John Elrick, Colin Saunders, Dave Young</b>
Start at Overton Hill	<b>Mike Acott, Heather Owen, Alan Smith, Helen &amp; Stuart Walker, and Jeff Ware</b>
CP1 Barbury Castle	<b>Anne &amp; Tim Ardill</b> , Jan Pearson, Steve Riddiford, <b>Mark &amp; Michelle Tullis</b>
CP2 Whitefield Hill	Mike Acott, <b>Angela &amp; Brian Bellwood</b> , Heather Owen, Jan Pearson, <b>Keith Rix</b>
CP3 Foxhill car park	Mike Acott, <b>Gerald Bateman</b> , Angela & Brian Bellwood, <b>Veronica Hope</b> , Andy Mansfield, Heather Owen, Mark & Michelle Tullis
CP4 Uffington Castle	<b>Malcolm Cox, Anne &amp; Arthur Goulding</b> , Andy Mansfield, Phil Noel, <b>Lesley Secker</b>
Ridgeway 20 hostel	<b>Christine Cogger, Ron Cutler, Tom Stagles</b>
Ridgeway 20 start	<b>Andy Mansfield, Tom Stagles, Helen Walker</b>
CP5 Eastmanton Down	<b>Dave &amp; Wendy Bagshaw</b> , Roger & Barbara Chambers, Andy Mansfield, Phil Noel, Jan Pearson, Tom Stagles
CP6 Yew Down	Mike Acott, <b>Pam &amp; Steve Deverill</b> , Ken Fuller, George Juggins, Andy Mansfield, Ian Mitchell, Heather Owen, Steve Riddiford, Keith Rix, Carl Roe, Ken Royce, <b>Linda Wright</b>
CP7 Bury Down	Roger & Barbara Chambers, <b>Dave Dowsett</b> , Phil Noel, Jan Pearson
CP8 Compton Down	Roger & Barbara Chambers, <b>Peter &amp; Sue Dziwior, Liz Rees</b>
CP9 Starveall Turn	<b>Ian Mitchell, Ken Royce, Carl Roe</b>
Finish	Judith Calverley, Douglas Chester, Christine Cogger, <b>Ron Cutler</b> , Mike Fleet, Annelise Hill, Andy Mansfield, Corinne Nabavi, <b>Derek Smith</b>
Certificates	<b>Christine Cogger</b> (20 mile) and <b>Linda Wright</b> (40 mile)
Roving/Fold up marshals	<b>Alan Smith</b> , Jeff Ware (to 18.00), and <b>Helen &amp; Stuart Walker</b>
Support for checkpoints	<b>Helen &amp; Stuart Walker</b>

**Drivers** (responsible for delivering water and in some cases marshals and tents to CPs, helping to put up and take down tents and transporting retirees off the Ridgeway. In some case, drivers also helped out running CPs. And some drivers took on these duties after finishing at their own CPs) – Mike Acott, Gerald Bateman, Brian Bellwood, Roger & Barbara Chambers, Veronica Hope, Andy Mansfield, Phil Noel, Jan Pearson, Steve Riddiford, Keith Rix, Mark Tullis, Jeff Ware  
**Tents** were supplied by Pam & Steve Deverill (CP 6), Peter & Sue Dziwior (CP 8): John Beardsley (CP9);  
**gazebo**s at CPs 4, 5 and 7 were supplied by the Ridgeway Walk. **Raynet** also put gazebo's up at several CPs.  
**Brian & Angela Bellwood** put up and subsequently removed the waymarks at Whitefield Hill  
**Photographer - Dave Dare**

**ST JOHN AMBULANCE** – Claire Bull, Peter Burningham, Eddie Chan, Nigel Domaingue, Ian Faulkner, Suzanne Hyde, Kendra Johnson, Petra Kagledar, Lina Lukanova, Stuart Morgan, Karen Thomas, Steve Tuckett, David Vowell, James Wickham and A N Other.

**The RAYNET team** this year was: **CP3**: George (2E0FEC) and girlfriend Mel (M6IDB); **CP4**: Richard (G1CTF) and Phill (M1DMC); **CP5**: Ian (M0ICM) and his wife Kathy (M0KMM); **CP6**: Mike (G4FVG) and David (M6FJY); **CP7**: Denis (G4KWT) and Simon (G6ZYZ); **CP8**: Wally (G7FHN) and his son Jonathan (2E0VJO); **CP9**: George (M0GXB) and Norman (M0JEC);  
**Finish**: Paul (G7JCP) and his son.



## LETTERS

.....I struggled a bit as far as CP1 due to the muddy ruts and slight unwellness but perked up after that point and enjoyed the rest of the walk. It was very sad to hear CP6 is to be no more, in its current format, and were bidding us a cheery goodbye with their usual hot tea, generous spread and welcome. The walk was very well organised and thought out given the number of entrants and I never had to queue behind more than one or two others at a checkpoint. I was a marshal myself on the Oxon 40 the week before and appreciate how much hard work it is, especially when problems crop up

at the last minute (at least the Ridgeway didn't have a flood as we did). This year I followed the advice to walk on the opposite verge of the busy main road before CP2 and did find it a better option as a track has started to develop, give or take a few nettles, at a safe distance.

**Helen Abbott**

I wanted to say many thanks for the excellent organisation etc on Saturday at the Ridgeway 40. I was one of the two runners who 'missed the coach' Saturday and would like to extend a special thanks to the marshal (*Keith Rix*) who went the extra mile and out of his way to drop us at the start line and for you who also waited for us to start. It was much appreciated on all counts.

**Tim Adams**



**Setting off from Overton Hill**

**(photo Dave Dare)**

Thank you, Alan, for another splendid day. Very well organised as usual. Many thanks to all the marshals and helpers all helping to make a great day; even the weather was kind to us after days of being unsettled. Many thanks also for the wonderful ladies at CP6; it's certainly a tremendous boost for everyone.

**John Beardsley**

An opportunity to express gratitude and respect to all the ones who have contributed by their presence and efforts to make this walk possible on Saturday. Great organisation, great people!

**Axel Bonet**

My thanks to you for all your hard work in organising another excellent Ridgeway 40.

The weather was excellent and I made my 3rd crossing in 10 hrs & 3 minutes.

I was actually given a badge that said 2 crossings, but as my name is Ian Robert Brown I can't remember if I used Ian or Robert on previous entries. (*I am checking this out. Alan*)

I did want to ask if it was possible if my Dog Lady Lei Lei could have a crossing certificate as this was her first crossing and probably her longest walk in her tender 2 and a half years! (*Pleased to give Lady Lei Lei a certificate. Alan*)

It was also my friend's first crossing also - Michelle Armour who is a keen member of the LDWA. The checkpoints were run very well and the checkpoint at 28 miles does deserve acclaim for the tea and excellent lemon drizzle cake!!

My thanks to you and the team on a first class 2012 Ridgeway Walk, and I hope to be free to make next year.

**Robert Brown**

It was a wonderful day on Saturday and a privilege to take part, even the weather was perfect. Thanks so much to you and the many others involved for the hard work and dedication required to ensure the day goes so smoothly. We were so impressed with all the checkpoint helpers, providing much needed refreshments and encouraging us along. This was the first organised walk Mike and I have ever done and such a challenge, we were very pleased with ourselves to complete it, even if our time was slow! A great remembrance to my Dad, the last warden of Marlborough Youth Hostel. Such a shame that you are giving up the organisation, but you have surely done more than enough over the years. I do hope you find someone else to pick it up and do such a good job as it would be a pity to lose such a fantastic event. **Lesley (and Mike)**

A very short email to say a heartfelt thank you for another wonderful Ridgeway 40 yesterday. It was a perfect day and it was good to meet you both (*Anne & Alan*) along the way. I had a great crossing - finally managing to get to Streatley in under 7hrs at the third attempt. The weather and the excellent checkpoints were a great help!

The amount of work you have had to put in every year to make these events so successful must be enormous. Thank you very much! I may well be back next year!

**Mark Clay**

Anne/ Just wanted to let you know that as usual cursed the walk whilst I was doing it but a couple of days later was raring to go for next year, which I am sure we all hope will happen. I especially wanted to thank the ladies of checkpoint 6 for the tea and cakes - the highlight of the day which I am sure everyone else looks forward to. For their years of producing these mouth watering dream inducing goodies for us. A warm thanks for all the work over the years: I hope a team will be found with as much talent to replace them. Also, this year the special treat for the regulars - the cup cakes were wonderful. A special thanks to the lady that did them. A lovely way to mark 50 years.

**Barrie Dannenberg**

Ian and I both wanted to record our sincere thanks and congratulations to all those involved in this year's Ridgeway 40 walk. It was our first attempt, and although we are both avid runners, this was a challenge far beyond anything else we have attempted. The organisation was superb and provision and care at every checkpoint was first class and extremely welcome.

My thanks must also go to the St John Ambulance team who, once I had finished the walk and returned to the Youth Hostel, patched up my very blistered feet. They were so attentive and played a crucial part in me even being able to get into the car to head off home! So well done to you all on a fabulous event and our biggest thanks for all you have done.

**Jayne Dart-Cassidy and Ian Dart**

Dear Anne and everybody involved,  
I so often mean to write an email like this but equally often don't seem to get round to it!  
Both Catherine and I wanted to thank everybody yesterday for making our 40 miles so enjoyable.  
Each check point was so efficient but more than that people were so encouraging and supportive.  
It made a real difference, so thank you and well done for such organisation (none of you had to spend however many hours of your precious Saturdays, watching the likes of us hobble around!)  
**Bridget Davey**

..... it was a most enjoyable day and very well organised. I had never run beyond marathon distance before, and my last marathon was in 1995, so I was slightly nervous about finishing beforehand. (I hadn't even run over 11 miles in the past 4 years), but I think a combination of doing a steady rotation of 5 minutes running and 1 minute walking helped me through in a time of approximately 8 hours 45 minutes.  
**Richard Disney**

Many thanks for another fab Ridgeway walk; we had a great day.  
**Sarah Dryden**

After completing 40 consecutive crossings (1971 -2010), I decided in 2011 (because of a back problem) to marshal instead. Becoming a 'roving' marshal and driving between several checkpoints I soon realised how much work goes into making the Ridgeway Walk run smoothly each year, thanks to Alan! (*Modesty requires me not to claim all the credit for this! Alan*) Plenty of ferrying retirees back and forth and closing and clearing up at checkpoints!  
On to 2012 and I returned to walking once again. With the Walk, at least one has only to put one's foot in front of the other and grit one's teeth! Whether easier than marshalling.....??  
**Geoffrey Dumper**

Just wanted to drop a quick line to say thank you for your advice before Saturday, it really helped!  
AND..... we did it! To be honest I got to checkpoint 6 and thought I was done for but I got a second wind and by 7 was back to my old self! Jeff and I now have a few days off work to recover and try to convince my legs I still like them but amazingly I only ended up with 4 small blisters even though I was convinced my feet were destroyed!  
And best of all we've raised over £1400 for the premature baby unit at Royal Berks hospital so it all was more than worth it!  
**Kye Gater**

Many thanks for organising the walk again. It was a great walk and the weather was very kind to us.  
**Breda Hickman**

This is just to thank you, Anne, and all the others for yet another splendid day. How clever of you to arrange it for the one dry weekend out of so many soggy ones! Only complaint - how come that final stretch of road into Goring seems to have mysteriously doubled in length since I started doing this walk?  
Although I have done relatively few (5) of the crossings compared with some of the others I have really appreciated the hard work and effort that you all have put in over the years and I hope that you enjoy your and the others who are leaving enjoy your well earned break. Special mention to wonderful cupcakes at mile 28. The crew there will be sorely missed.  
Yet more thanks as ever to all marshals, especially those at the last couple of CPs waiting for the last walkers arriving far into the night.

A further honour must go to manager of the Streatley Youth Hostel whose cheerful persona and efficiency I very much appreciate and adds to the overall positive experience of the entire event.  
**Pip Lloyd**

Just a quick note of appreciation for everything you and your team did on Saturday. It was the first time I'd attempted anything like this, and I found the experience most enjoyable. What really impressed me was how you fixed the weather! I have to say that having walked for a short while with a chap who was tackling his 37th "Ridgeway", I don't think he has anything fear from a late surge of interest on my part.  
**Nick Millea**

Thanks for another great Ridgeway40.  
**Anne Mograby**

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to you (*Anne*) and your team for the outstanding support and organisation of the Ridgeway 40. My team mates and I have completed many endurance events with some good support along the way, the support at your checkpoints, the friendliness and help that all competitors received was absolutely fantastic, second to none. Many many congratulations on an outstanding event, you and your team were remarkable.  
**Graham Priestley**



**Checkpoint 4** (photo Dave Dare)

Just a quick note to say thank you both and all the team for the Ridgeway40. The whole day was really well organised and ran very smoothly and everyone at the CPs were very friendly and helpful. It was my first time doing the walk and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

**Peter O'Donoghue**

Thanks Helen and Stuart/ I think you all did an amazing job - I am so impressed with the set up. ....I really enjoyed the day and meeting interesting people. I know I was fortunate with the weather for my first go but am interested in being involved again next year come rain or shine!

I really want to walk some of the Ridgeway now but will probably do it under my own steam some time.

Yesterday I visited the old youth hostel in Marlborough and the owners showed me round. They bought it after it had been empty for 2 years after Lesley Chandler's family left so it is nice there has been continuity for the building. The \*\*\*\*\* brought up their 2 sons there and one of them is still there with his young family so there have been four lots of children playing in the lovely garden over the years.

It seemed much smaller of course to me than I remember it. I think I could work out which was my bedroom and the dormitory that I 'helped' my father paint pink! The former dining room is now the family living room - the yellow paint (my father's favourite colour) was still showing through the current paint on the walls

**Jan (Pearson)!**

Thank you for the Ridgeway 40, over all the years you've 'produced' it. I did yesterday's walk, which will most likely be my last, owing to a condition known as AGE, being 80. Done some 'unofficially', as did not register, and just a couple officially. How lucky we were over the weather yesterday - someone loves us.

**Derek Savage**

As a first timer in this year's Ridgeway walk, I would just like to say thanks to you and the other organisers, the people manning the checkpoints, the St John's Ambulance guys and everyone else involved in this year's event. This was the first walk of this length that I have ever done, and it was quite an experience. I hope the event continues in future years.

**Chris Smith**



**Checkpoint 9**

*(photo Carl Roe)*

Dear Alan, Tom and I wish to thank you and all the volunteers for another enjoyable and successful Ridgeway 40. We very much appreciate the time and effort that you have all put in to make this such a well run event. The encouragement and sustenance at the check points was gratefully received and certainly helped motivate us to finish. I would also like to thank the gentleman who stopped and helped tend Tom's feet, along with providing a few motivational words just after CP1.

**Ian Smith**

Hi Anne and Alan/Well, we completed it, a little worse for wear as it was harder than we expected, but I just wanted to say a big thank you for organising it. The whole operation ran like clockwork and the support at the checkpoints along the way was brilliant, both in terms of the moral support and

the physical support from drinks, cakes, tea & coffee, and food. You have done a fabulous job, and I hope you are proud of your achievements as we are of our own small one.

**Hefin Thomas**

Just wanting to thank everyone involved in organising and running Saturdays event. I'm pleased to say I finished the walk and was really impressed by how well it was run and by how helpful, friendly and kind everyone was.

**Kate Tredgett**

Thank you once again to you & the many volunteers who organise the RW40.

All of the entrants from the Newbury Mountain Club who started finished, almost all with personal best times. There were some of our members who entered just as themselves, who also all finished.

Weather was perfect, the wind often a tail wind & the going under foot not as bad as we'd expected.

Cakes were great, as usual, and despite some sore muscles & blisters everyone had a good time out on the route.

**Dan Unwin (NMC Secretary)**

A very big & heartfelt thank-you to you and all the other volunteers without which this wonderful event couldn't happen. Every marshal, every checkpoint was as good as you could wish for. This is such a wonderfully organised and supported event.

I did it for the first time last year with my wife and our dogs. This year I decided for some reason to run it (Well, run some of it anyway....) After the complete soaking we got last year, I managed to get a little bit sunburnt this year! Don't you just love the British weather? Thank-you so much for all the effort you have put in to organising this over the years.

**Malcolm Ward (aka Baldric)**

I just want to say thank you for a great day! At every checkpoint, the marshals were supportive and friendly, and I had a great day. Feet are in recovery with lots of TLC.  
**Claire "276"**

Hi there - just a quick note to thank the organisers, marshals and other helpers for another enjoyable event. The weather, although cold at the start, turned out to be about perfect, the mud was minimal, and the refreshments on route ensured satisfactory progress.  
**Roger Wilson**

---

## OBITUARIES

Ridgeway walker Ray Taylor died on 23 December 2011. Ray recorded three crossings over the period 2004 to 2007. Ray's wife, Julie, who also has three crossings to her credit, together with Hilary Evans, Roz Fullylove and Nick Slade walked this year in his memory and for the Hospice of St Francis. Julie says of Ray that he was a keen Ridgeway Walker who always enjoyed the walk.

Another Ridgeway walker, Dianne Pegg died after suffering a massive heart attack while on a skiing holiday in Val d'Isère, France, on the 30<sup>th</sup> January. Dianne did four Ridgeway crossings in the 1970s. She walked as a Rock Hopper in 1973, 1975 and 1976 and an LDWA independent in 1974. In each year, she was the first lady home, improving on her time each year (10.15 in 1973, 9.25 in 1974, 9.03 in 1975) until 1976 when she recorded 9.09. Her 'slower' time was remarked upon, even lamented, by another participant but 1976 was a particularly hot Ridgeway Walk. In 1975, she wrote to the organiser, Norman Griffin to say, "At last, I have seen what it is all about – I have been along the route three times (*one of those times must have been a private walk – AS*) and not had a glimpse of Wayland Smithy!" A fuller account of Dianne's life and her achievements was published in the April edition of 'Strider', magazine of the Long Distance Walkers Association

Our condolences go to Julie and her family and to Dianne's family.

---

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**"With persistence first and patience last, and doggedness all through,  
A man can think the wildest thoughts, and make them all come true."**

or, for those who prefer the original text

Μ'ἔπιμονή κι ὑπιμονή καὶ θέληση ἄλλη τόση  
"Αυθρηγος ἴντα θὰ σκεψτεῖ νὰ μῆν τὸ κατορθώσει!

A Cretan mantinada (rhyming couplet)

Doggedness applies to dogs as well! As the photo aside shows, Lady Lei Lei, the only dog to do the 40 mile walk, is determined to get through any obstacle in her way along the route!  
(Photo Robert Brown)

